

'Parting is such sweet sorrow,' but thankful for friends, memories

As I am a senior and the school year is coming to an end, I am now reflective on my four years here at Illiana; especially my senior year since this year has honestly been the best year for me as a high schooler. It's been a

wild ride but one thing that will never change is my thankfulness for my friends, teachers, and academics this past year



Hailey Ross
Arts Editor

First off, I would like to say that I am thankful for Kelly Elizabeth Stegenga and Danielle Bonnema for being amazing friends and peers through every trial and tribulation, every smile or laugh, every pep band performance or cookout: they have been there for it all; and of course, I can't forget my besties, Raelyn Sederstrom and Mia Van Prooyen. And I can't leave out Citlali (Lolly) Sanchez, who has been there with and for me since middle school. From singing in choir together, carpooling to ACT prep and ice cream together, attending school dances together, and getting our middle school and now our high school diplomas together, Citlali has always been there. I am very appreciative of her and wish her only the best

Next up would be the amazing teacher Mrs. Aardsma. When I first met her, I was just a little freshman struggling with math, and within my first couple of days I knew she was going to be amazing. Ever since then she has helped me with all my problems, mathematical and otherwise. Sweet, gentle, and kind, she has offered good advice and supervision. I am grateful to have known her. Another is Mr. DeVries who puts up with my loud headphone listening and constantly asking about a feature as he reminds me that everyone feels some type of way. Or Ms. J who still lets me come in and learn after announcing to everyone that I hate her class.

Lastly, I consider academics. Even though they have been challenging and stressful, I am thankful for all the knowledge that I have soaked up from "Hamlet" with Miss J, "Sing Gently" with Mrs. Slikers, and different religions with Mrs. Lagerwey. Their instruction has been very rewarding.

So goodbye, Illiana. Goodbye, Echo. Thanks for the experience and memories. I'll never forget it.



Students clap their hands to the beat while dancing to the Cha Cha Slide.

Photo by HR Imaging

Students celebrate prom at new venue

Cameron Evers

Reporter

Juniors and seniors donned their formal wear and hit the dance floor at the annual prom on Saturday, May 16. The event took place at the Hall of St. George and it was decorated with an enchanted forest theme chosen by the prom committee. The venue featured a drink bar that served students with pop and water all night and a photo

backdrop to tie together the forest look.

Mrs. Terri Schaaf, the director of the prom committee, said, "The new venue was beautiful. The food was excellent and they provided a lot of extra things. I was very impressed by how we were treated."

The night began with a toast from the junior class performed by Gracie Jania and Kevin Corcoran. The senior class fol-

lowed with Ian Van Beek and Olivia Wegner. Next, there were devotions and prayer led by Sophie Gaich and Graham Goodfellow.

Then began a full course dinner starting with bread and salad. They served chicken, beef, pasta, and multiple side dishes. The dinner ended with a scoop of ice cream.

Senior Nick Boersma led the group through two games, one being Illiana trivia, where

a boy and girl from the Junior class went head-to-head with a pair from the senior class to see who knows more facts about ICHS. The second game was "Name the Tune" where representatives from each class were chosen, then a small part of a song was played and the first person to run to the mic and sing the next lyric won a point. The seniors won both of the games. The dance officially began at eight and finished at ten.

Seniors create time capsule at breakfast

Aubrey Porter

Feature Editor

The senior class gathered in the commons one last time over breakfast to share fellowship, memories, and food on May 19. Laid out on the tables were breakfast casseroles and French toast that was cooked up by Mrs. Roeda's cooking class.

Not far from the food sat a set of Sharpies next to a 20x20 inch box, the surface of which was soon filled with signatures of everyone in the class. This box was used as a time capsule that students could drop off an item that they would reunite with at their ten-year reunion. Senior student council member Christine DeYoung said they came up with this idea to make a way for the students to leave their mark, as opposed to physically leaving a mark on the building like past

classes have at the old campus.

Next Principal Peter Boonstra gave graduation information regarding appropriate attire, caps and gowns, timing, location, and more.

Senior student council member Matthew Smits said there was lots of planning and preparation that went into this yearly tradition. From gathering pictures from students for weeks on end, to coming to school early to set up tables and centerpieces, the student council spent lots of time making sure this was a memorable experience for everyone involved.

After everyone finished eating, they enjoyed the slideshow that displayed numerous pictures reminiscing all of the good times that the class of 2022 has had.

"The senior breakfast was truly a great way to bond as a class one last time before graduation," DeYoung said.



Seniors help themselves to eggs and sausages.

Photo by Dan Blom

Choirs, bands, orchestra perform variety of well-known songs at pops concerts

Hailey Ross

Arts Editor

The music department delighted crowds with a series of pop concerts over the last two weeks of school.

The Concert Choir, Women's Chorale, and A Capella Choirs performed on May 12, and

the Chamber Singers on May 14. The choirs sang a medley of songs from "Frozen," "Say Something," and "Sir Duke" among others. Chamber Singers sang fan favorites like "I Can't Help Falling in Love with You." The choral program also honored its seniors at the concert.

"The concert was fantastic,"

alumnus Jenna O'Brien said. "They sounded awesome."

Instrumental music also gave pops concerts. The orchestra performed on May 16, playing music from film and radio.

"I thought "Raider March" sounded really good," said senior Hannah Slikers, who attended.

On Thursday, May 19, the

Jazz Band, Symphonic Band, and Wind Ensemble performed, playing songs such as "Big Swing Face," "Theme from Spiderman," and music from "Guardians of the Galaxy." After recognizing seniors, the bands combined to play a medley of songs from "How to Train Your Dragon."

Illiana community spends morning praying over students, alumni

Citlali Sanchez
Reporter

While students were in their first period classes on May 6, a prayer meeting was taking place in the commons. The meeting was directed by Lance Davids, the Head of School. A prayer meeting is held about 2 to 3 times during the school year. Because of the bad weather, the meeting was held inside instead of in the courtyard. The meeting started at 8 am and ran to 8:45 with

coffee and donuts being served. “I think it’s important to spend some time in prayer for our school, our kids, and our mission here at Illiana,” said Davids. Although an email was sent to the Illiana community, not many people showed up. However, those who did were divided into 2 groups and each one was given the opportunity to pray. Some of the prayer requests were that Illiana students could find the balance between school, work, and

God. Others prayed that students would spend time with God and read devotions. In addition, people prayed for Illiana as it expands and the challenges that expansion may bring. Attendees also prayed for Illiana alumni and for current seniors who are about to move on. Marla Olthof and Amy VanDrunen, who both attended that morning, said that there is strength in prayer when a community comes together and has the heart for God.



Photo courtesy of ICHS Facebook
Darren DeBoer and Peter Boonstra pray in a group with other meeting attendees.

Students able to earn free college credits with Indiana College Core

Kyla Bennett
Reporter

Illiana, in partnership with Ivy Tech Community College, is making available to its students the Indiana College Core (ICC), a technical certificate that signifies 30 hours of complete college work and which must be accepted at any state university in the state of Indiana. The certificate is available to students who take dual credit classes at Illiana. The classes must fall within certain fields such as science, math, communications, and the humanities. When students take the right combination of such classes, Ivy Tech awards the ICC certificate, enabling students to start college with 30 credit hours (about one year of schooling) already completed. Some of the ICC credits may also be awarded by earning a certain score on specific AP exams in the spring. “Students would want to participate in the ICC because they can earn

up to 30 free college credits,” said Mrs. Melanie Benes, guidance counselor. Senior Isabella VanderWoude, a senior at Illiana and participant of the ICC said, “It’s really cool that my hard work is being paid off because even if I don’t stay at one college for all four years, my college credits will still transfer.” Because Illiana Christian has continued to add dual credit courses over the past few years, the school now offers enough such classes that students can now earn this certificate and have to take only one class not offered at Illiana. This is a tremendous advantage to Illiana students. In all of Northwest Indiana, only one other high school offers enough dual credit through Ivy Tech to be in the same position. “I feel wonderful about the dual credit program because Illiana managed to put together a great opportunity for our students. A lot of it has to do with our advanced degree teachers,” said Principal Peter Boonstra.

Department Awards

Art: Allison Tillema
Bible: Isabella VanderWoude
Business: Anna Haemker, Jessica Bailes
Drama Acting: Hannah Sliekers
Drama Crews: Emma DeBoer
English: Lorelee DeYoung
Family/Consumer Sciences: Grace Foster
Journalism: Olivia Oostema
Math: Tony Jin
Physical Education: Colin DeVries
Science: Amanda Swets
Social Studies: Hannah Sliekers
Spanish: Citlali Sanchez
STEM: Michael Gutierrez
Sousa Award: Rachel VanDerZee
Instrumental Award: Christine DeYoung
National Choral Award: Alayna Knoll
Vocal Music Award: Alex Bosman

Memorial Scholarships

Richard Vanden Berg: Grace Goodfellow, Isabella VanderWoude
Luke Witvliet: Madison Derks
Cathy Beezhold-Peerbolte: Christine DeYoung
Joshua Daniel De Boer: Natalie Scott
Matt Zandstra: Sabrina Lopez
Vern Boerman: Audrey Yonkman

Student dedication, achievement recognized at awards assembly

Leadership Awards

Principal’s Leadership Award: Christine DeYoung, Grace Goodfellow
Illiana Citizenship Award: Sanyah Sampson
Illiana Service Award: Brandon Helmus
Athletes of the Year: Kylie Martin, Alex Bosman
Scholar Athletes of the Year: Natalie Scott, Marc Rozendal
Sportsmanship Awards: Olivia Wegner, Brady Vroom
Valedictorian: Christine DeYoung
Salutatorian: Isabella VanderWoude



Photo by Thijs van Belle
Committee members visit a gallery at the Chicago Cultural Center.

Fine Arts Committee visits American Writers Museum, Chicago Cultural Center

Olivia Oostema
Editor-in-Chief

On Friday, April 29, the Fine Arts Committee visited the American Writers Museum and the Chicago Cultural Center. The trip serves as an opportunity to introduce students to Chicago’s cultural and artistic opportunities and as a reward for putting together the Fine Arts Festival which lasted from April 6 until the recital on April 19. Club co-sponsor Jim Kamphuis said he enjoyed the museum’s interactive displays and exhibits and

that his visit increased his appreciation for America’s rich literary history. Camille VanLaten, a senior on the Fine Arts Committee, enjoyed seeing the Ray Bradbury exhibit. “It portrayed a lot of interesting parts of his life that I had not previously known about, like how Bradbury desired to live forever, which is part of the reason he decided to write.” Senior Brooke Noble said she liked being able to set her own pace and revisit exhibits such as the typewriters, an exhibit that showcases typewriters used by famous authors. In the past, the committee

has visited numerous centers for the arts including the Art Institute, Contemporary Photography Museum, Lyric Opera, Looking Glass Theater, Harris Theater, DePaul University’s theater facilities, and Governor’s State University’s sculpture garden. The committee planned to visit the American Writers Museum in 2020 but couldn’t due to the pandemic. To students interested in being a part of the club next year, VanLaten said, “The Fine Arts Committee is fun, engaging, and a great way to meet new people while working to help Illiana outside the classroom.”

Comments from the Class of 2022

Answer key:



PIP: Post-Illiana Plans
TY: Looking out ten years
FM: Favorite memory
CM: How I've changed most
SC: Secret Crush



Elizabeth Aje
PIP: Going to IU Bloomington and majoring in psychology
TY: Hopefully holding a stable job in Australia
FM: Going to semi-state with my cross team
SC: Jarvis Mickles

Jessica Bailes
TY: With a job I love, living in a house, and happily married
FM: Class trip or play week
CM: My personality and how I dress.
SC: Elliot VanDerGriend

Joshua Baker

Andrew Bakker
PIP: Not college
TY: Business owner
FM: Seeing a porta potty in the pond
SC: Brady's sister

Bode Balkema

Ashleigh Banks
PIP: Gap year, then college
TY: I see myself working a successful job.
FM: West Virginia mission trip
CM: I have grown stronger in my faith

Tyler Barker
PIP: Not college
TY: Living in my own house
FM: Slip n' Slide
SC: Abby Helmus

Jessica Bergfors
PIP: Ball State University with a major in journalism

FM: D.C. class trip and being the Echo sports editor
CM: Stepped out of my comfort zone, and made friends I never expected
SC: Munster boys

Logan Boersma
PIP: Attend Purdue University to study construction management
TY: Graduated college and with a good job
FM: When Mo Bamba got played at the Cookout
SC: Maisy Vroom, Abby Helmus, Mikalya Derks

Nicholas Boersma
PIP: Purdue University for communications
TY: Working in some kind of business position
FM: Adam Walters dunks in Loud Crowd games
SC: Maisy Vroom

Noah Boersma
PIP: Going to Purdue Laff for industrial design
FM: Go Day slip and slide
CM: My voice got deeper
SC: Maisy Vroom

Danielle Bonnema
PIP: Going to Liberty University in Virginia
TY: Alive and broke
FM: Bus 3 with Miss D, the best bus
SC: you :)

Alex Bosman
PIP: Go to college for physical

therapy
TY: Out of college with a great job and married.
FM: Meeting all of my great friends.
SC: Alyssa Buxton

Callie Boss
PIP: Studying nursing at Indiana University Northwest
TY: Working as a nurse and married
FM: Pep band and loud crowd games
SC: Gise Gibson

Kristin Bribiesca
PIP: I will be attending Indiana Wesleyan University for nursing.
TY: I hope to be a pediatric nurse, married and with 1 or 2 kids in a southern or east coast state.
CM: I got my braces off and I will have an implant front tooth pretty soon (rip the retainer).
SC: Myles Vroom

Benjamin Bruinsma
PIP: United States Marine Corps
CM: I've grown a lot more hair
FM: Class trip
SC: Ella Holleman

Alyssa Buczkowski
PIP: Playing volleyball for Prairie State College
TY: Hopefully married, but by the looks of it that's not looking too good
FM: Class trip
CM: Grew in my faith, got sassier and more outgoing



Jonathan Bultema
PIP: Work in the trades
TY: Having a nicer and bigger truck
FM: Mr Veldman and his story about Hooters
SC: Abby Helmus

Gavin Cowsert

Joshua Cruz

Kylee Cruz

Amanda DeBoer
PIP: I'm going to be studying nursing at PNW
TY: Having a family and working as a nurse
FM: Props for the musicals and plays
SC: Brandon DeYoung

Emma DeBoer
PIP: Vet Tech trade school
FM: Props running and sets running with friends
CM: Greater knowledge of

things I'll never need to know
SC: I love how this is a required question

Lillian Dekker

Madison Derks
PIP: I have become more outgoing and less timid
TY: Married with one kid and working as a nurse
CM: My hair has changed a lot
SC: Aaron Huisman

Colin DeVries
PIP: Purdue Northwest to study criminal justice
TY: A police officer, raising a family
FM: Going on class trip and homecoming court
SC: Abby Ritzema

Christine DeYoung
PIP: Indiana University Bloomington for human biology and pre med
TY: I will be in my residency after medical school
CM: I grew a few inches
SC: Adam DeBoer

Delaney DeYoung
PIP: I am going to PNW. I am majoring in psychology
TY: I see myself being a therapist and having a family
FM: Being on props for the play and musical!
SC: Adam DeBoer

Hayden DeYoung
PIP: Going to Cedarville University to study Civil Engineering
TY: Starting my career in an architectural firm.
FM: I loved each and every loud crowd game.
SC: Audrey Yonkman

Loralee DeYoung
PIP: Anderson University to study language arts education
TY: Teaching high school English
FM: Practicing with the drama





department
CM: More confident and outgoing
Mia Doorn
PIP: Indiana Wesleyan University
TY: Working as a nurse
FM: Junior prom
SC: Shawn Kramer
Trevor Eenigenburg
PIP: Attending PNW and working
FM: Flipping milk cartons at lunch
TY: Working hard and owning my own business
SC: Maisy Vroom
Grace Foster
PIP: Study Nursing at Olivet Nazarene University
TY: Being a CRNA
FM: Going on all the trips (Right To Life & LA)
SC: Donny Woo
A’Narah Freeman
PIP: I plan on attending University of Illinois Chicago
FM: Sophomore year fall cook-out
CM: My braces disappeared
SC: My boyfriend



Sofia Gaich
PIP: I am attending Indiana Wesleyan University majoring in exercise science
TY: Married, maybe with two kids, and working as a Physician’s Assistant
CM: I have become more content being independent
SC: Shawn Kramer
Adam Gibson
PIP: Going to Purdue West Lafayette for engineering
FM: Being completely behaved at lunch
CM: I met a bunch of people and had lots of fun
SC: Julia West
William Gibson
PIP: Become a plumber
FM: A portapotty appearing in the pond over the weekend
CM: Illiana hasn’t changed me, I changed Illiana
SC: Maisy Vroom, Abby Helmus, Maddie Terpstra
Grace Goodfellow
PIP: To study biochemistry at Indiana Wesleyan University
TY: Wherever God will have me! I can’t wait to see



FM: Choreographing the jump rope routine in Freshman PE
SC: Gage Bambic
Graham Goodfellow
PIP: Attend Indiana Wesleyan University
FM: Seeing a porta potty appear in the pond
CM: I used to be more shy
SC: Maisy Vroom
Sydney Groenewold
PIP: I am going to Ball State to study radiography
TY: I see myself working in radiography and raising a family
CM: I have become more outgoing and less timid
SC: Greg Goodfellow
Michael Gutierrez
Anna Haemker
Gerrit Hamstra
PIP: Go back to work for the next year
FM: The dodgeball tournament
CM: I have become much stronger mentally
SC: The bye bye man
Benjamin Hecimovich
Brandon Helmus
PIP: Studying Electrical Engineering at Purdue Northwest
TY: Being an electrical engineer somewhere
CM: Better singer, and I learned I have a great gift to serve
SC: Wouldn’t you like to know ;) **Levi Hescott**



PIP: College at PNW
TY: Family and kids
FM: Wheelbarrow races freshman year
SC: Maisy Vroom
Jillian Hoeksema
PIP: PNW nursing
FM: Right to Life this year when the “fire alarm” kept going off in our room
CM: I have become more outgoing and have found my best friends
SC: Gise Gibson
Anna Holleman
PIP: Interior design college and working
TY: Married with a couple kids and a degree
FM: From focus on accomplishments to relationships with Jesus and people
SC: Jake Lenting
James Iwinski
PIP: Purdue Northwest majoring in business management
FM: Lunch with my friends
CM: I have gotten taller, older, and better at basketball
SC: None
Christian Jaco
PIP: I plan to have a gap year.
TY: Being a personal chef
FM: All the GO days we went on
CM: I’ve been able to communicate better with people
Tong (Tony) Jin

PIP: Go to university
FM: Class trip to Washington DC
CM: I made some friends here and improved my English
SC: I guess I don’t have one?
Indya Jolicoeur
PIP: Attending Jackson State University
TY: With a flourishing business
FM: My first loud crowd
CM: I’ve been very open with what I believe in and what I stand for
Brayden Keel
Marissa Klain
PIP: Indiana University Northwest
TY: Married with two kids
FM: Spilling Amanda Swets coffee all over her in homeroom.
SC: Gavin Cowsert
Andrew Kloosterman
PIP: Study Computer Engineering at PNW
TY: I’ll let you know when I get there.
FM: Senior year soccer’s post-season run
SC: Laura Bruinsma
Samuel Knight
Alayna Knoll
PIP: DMACC for elementary education
FM: Go Day 2022
CM: My hair got longer
SC: Alex Tambrini
Kaylynn Koontz

I'm getting booted from high school



Aubrey Porter
Feature Editor

I'm comfortable in this place. I park my car in the same lot every morning. The 7:45 bell rings most every Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and yes, even Friday. I sit in home-room with my favorite people and go on to my seven laid-back

periods a day that often don't feel like school. I go home carrying my backpack, light as ever, which holds my AirPods, Chromebook, a pack of gum, and

an occasional math assignment. Day after day this routine goes on, and before I knew it, the nine short months that make up my senior year are almost behind me.

I like routines. Routines establish my sense of sanity, that I know what's going to come next, and that I don't have to worry about the unknown. For someone who likes routine, my life has been going through a lot of change, demolishing every sense of routine I thought I had in my life. From finishing up my last few weeks of high school while moving out of a house I've lived in since I was born, to preparing myself to move from my new house into a college dorm, it's been a lot. However, one thing gets me away from all the chaos of the unknown, and that's school.

When I get comfortable, I don't want anything to change. I get to come here every weekday and see my friends and my favorite teachers, but soon I won't be able to walk in these doors everyday anymore. Soon, I'm getting booted from high school against my will. Those facial-recognition scanners that we had last year won't have my picture to recognize my face anymore. Four years of knowing what I am doing is quickly coming to a halt. I have no clue what my routine will be in four months. I have no clue if I will even have one.

If I had the choice, I probably would choose to stay here. I don't want to go off on my own. I want to stay with my people in my town with all my favorite places. I want to live with my family in my own house where I don't have to shower in the same bathroom with twenty other people, but life is pushing me in other directions.

Right now, my life revolves around being comfortable. If I'm not comfortable, I don't feel in control. I think the biggest part of growing up that a lot of people don't realize is the idea of going with the flow and rolling with the punches. Although I don't like the idea of my life changing, I know it is coming and all I can do is accept it and prepare for it. Soon enough though, I will be comfortable again. Soon enough in four more short years, I'll be getting kicked out of college, and now I've realized that that's quite fine with me.

Amanda Kooyenga

PIP: Indiana University Northwest, Nursing
TY: Working at a hospital as a L&D nurse
FM: Loud crowd & praise crowds

SC: Zander Weemhoff

Ellie Kort

PIP: Going to Purdue for teaching

FM: Sewing Kristin pants in the bathroom

TY: In a 1st grade classroom

SC: Rylan Nelson

Edward Lagestee

Jonathan Laud

PIP: PNW - accounting

FM: Sophomore Sadie's dance

CM: I have become more responsible

SC: No one

Kylie Martin

PIP: Playing volleyball at Purdue Northwest

TY: Married, maybe 2 kids, elementary teacher

FM: Singing telegrams freshman year

SC: Will Mulder

Austin Maslanka

Maxwell Meter

PIP: Going to Indiana University to study marketing

TY: A social media marketer!

FM: When I accidentally played XXTentacion in the middle of Bible class

SC: Sofia VanVossen, Cheyenne DeJong, Samantha Bultema

Nicole Mosso

PIP: College and work, enjoying my adulthood while it lasts.

TY: Working and living a Christ-like life and still drawing.

FM: Jumpscaring Mr. Sylvester. He's right, he does scream like a girl.

CM: Becoming more sarcastic than ever.

Ryne Mulder

PIP: Work

TY: Working

FM: Hanging out with friends

SC: Maysy Vroom

Seth Neumeyer

PIP: Major in Biomedical sciences at Liberty University

TY: In college debt and no job

FM: Getting A's in all my classes during quarantine

SC: Cameron Evers



Brooke Noble

PIP: Ball State

TY: The age of 28

FM: Doing really bad in the dodgeball tournament

CM: My social skills became so much better

Joseph Norman

Taylor Olthof

PIP: Attend Purdue University to study Kinesiology

TY: Married, a mom, and Pediatric Physical Therapist

CM: switched over from white vans to white air forces

SC: Zander Weemhoff and Myles Vroom

Wesley Olthof

PIP: I am going to Purdue

TY: I will be married and living in a nice house

FM: The dances

SC: Maysy Vroom

Olivia Oostema

PIP: Trinity Christian College

TY: Writing and illustrating a book, playing with my kitten

FM: Sets running shenanigans

SC: Anyone who reads my columns

Taylor Oppenhuis

PIP: Play college softball at Benedictine University, and go to law school

TY: Working for Bryan Stevenson at the Equal Justice Initiative

CM: I have dyed my hair probably 20 times

SC: Luke Smith

Jane Peterson

PIP: Valparaiso University nursing program

FM: Kyle Mulderink catching

Marissa Klain falling down the stairs

CM: Became closer to God

SC: Andrew Pigatti

Kenny Pickard

PIP: Attend Purdue Northwest and study Civil engineering

TY: I can see myself being 27.

FM: Lifting heavy things with Mr. DeVries.

SC: Laura Bruinsma

Ashton Podlin

Aubrey Porter

PIP: Studying marketing with a minor in graphic design at ONU

TY: Hopefully working and taking care of a family <3

FM: Class trip, Right to Life, LA mission trip

SC: Greg Goodfellow

Oliver Postma

PIP: Go to Purdue, study engineering, become a hobo, promptly die

TY: Most likely I'll see myself in a mirror

FM: Finishing the musical and never having to do tech again

SC: Oliver Postma

Tiffany Reichert

PIP: Going to college to play volleyball and continue my education

TY: In a house, married, maybe children

FM: Loud Crowd and Praise Crowd

CM: Grew in faith, matured, and got older

Alexander Reidelbach

Mia Resa

PIP: I will be going to Tricoci Beauty School in Tinley Park

TY: Living a good life

FM: All the loud crowd games and class trip (bus 3 represent)

SC: Go look at Marissa K's TikTok lol

Annalise Root

PIP: Florida Institute of Technology in August

TY: Profiler in the FBI

CM: I've realized what really matters most in life

SC: Johnny Depp

Hailey Ross

PIP: Go to IU Northwest

TY: Be an actor, director, producer, singer

FM: Hanging out and making art in the art room

SC: Yeah, I'm taking that to my grave, sorry :p

Marc Rozendal

PIP: Go to Calvin for mechanical engineering

TY: Working as an engineer

FM: Sports teams and class trips

CM: I became more outgoing

Joshua Rubien

PIP: Attending Olivet Nazarene University

FM: All the people I've met

CM: I've become a lot more confident in myself

SC: Jaden Poortinga

Jacob Rule

Sanyah Sampson

PIP: Get out of Illinois

FM: The numerous times I tried to fight Mr. Zandstra and Mr. DeVries

TY: Drug Lord! jkjk..... I'd love to be a wife with 3-4 kids and very successful in my career

SC: Gise Gibson

Citlali Sanchez

PIP: College at IUPUI

TY: On the field reporter for any soccer league

FM: Working with fellow chapel committee members

SC: Nadie

Josue Sanchez

PIP: Make money; work for myself

TY: Be successful and married

FM: When I broke Christian Jacaca twice in football once

SC: Maya Flipse

Parker Schutt

PIP: Go to PNW for business

TY: Owning a business and living life up with my friends

CM: I'm smarter and I feel





less like a child
SC: My roblox gf
Natalie Scott
PIP: Attend Calvin University
TY: With a good job and maybe a family
FM: Class trip
SC: Josh Wondaal
Payton Skrezyna
PIP: Playing softball at Aurora University
TY: A nurse
FM: When the softball team decorated the baseball dugout.
SC: Trevor Eenigenburg
Hannah Sliemers
PIP: Attending Calvin University to study English
TY: Doing anything that involves reading, writing, and/or acting
FM: The anticipation while waiting in the wings before a show
SC: Nice try :)
Matthew Smits
PIP: Go to Purdue University for Horticulture
TY: Married with a kid living in a house with a lot of property
FM: Riding scooters and bikes around in Washington

D.C on class trip
SC: Maisy Vroom
Dylan Staal
PIP: Get money
TY: ON TOP
FM: Mosh pit at cookout
SC: Maisy Vroom
Amanda Swets
PIP: College
TY: In a lab somewhere far from here
FM: Mr. Sylvester posing for pictures during the Easter egg hunt Freshman year
SC: Colin DeVries
David Terpstra
Allison Tillema
PIP: Graphic design and marketing at Trinity
TY: Creating art for people to surround themselves with
FM: Being involved in activities; finding friends wherever I went
CM: Taller, have an idea of what I'll do after Illiana
Morgan Trivette
Thijs van Belle
PIP: Working at Millie's Engineering and ETC, a thrift store
TY: Hopefully writing/illustrating graphic novels



CM: I started wearing flannels, and I have friends
SC: Gali
Ian VanBeek
PIP: I am attending Purdue West Lafayette
FM: Class trip bus rides
CM: I have become more honest and outgoing
SC: Maisy Vroom
Faith VanderLaan
PIP: Go to Indiana Wesleyan and study exercise science
TY: With a doctorate in physical therapy
FM: All of my friends
SC: My boyfriend
Isabella VanderWoude
PIP: I am attending Baylor University to study Great Texts
TY: Probably teaching at a Christian high school
FM: Performing in drama productions and making friends
SC: Alex Tambrini
Rachel VanderZee
PIP: Purdue Northwest Nursing
TY: In jail or with three kids
FM: Biology War Game and Close up Stealing Spoons
SC: Isaac Gorter and Richard
Haley VanDrunen
PIP: Cosmetology school
TY: Owning my own salon
FM: The class trip

CM: I say what I think, matured, and grew in faith
Katherine VanDrunen
PIP: Go to TCU, Roll Tide!
TY: So I'm planning on
FM: Class Trip and Interior Design with my besties
SC: Pashton Odlin, Leggie Eddistee, and Gill Wibson
Camille VanLaten
PIP: I'm going to IU Bloomington and pursuing art education
FM: Laughing till I cried over something unexpected Bella said
CM: My attitude has changed the most, I'm more mean
SC: Adam Gibson
Gabriel VanRoekel
Marisa Vazquez
PIP: Covenant College
FM: Close Up and sports
CM: Became more outgoing
SC: Josh Wondaal
Mia Voker
Brady Vroom
PIP: Run XC and Track at Calvin University, major in engineering
FM: Junior Year Go Day
CM: I got a little bit smarter and a lot faster
SC: Faith Van Wieren
Adam Walters
Sirui (Annalee) Wang
PIP: Go to California Baptist and major in biomedical
TY: Be a doctor and have a family
FM: Cheering at the homecoming basketball game
SC: Kevin Truong
Joshua Wasinski
Olivia Wegner
PIP: Attending Purdue University
FM: Slip and slide at the cookout
CM: Me and Mr. Veldman are best friends
SC: Van Corcoran
Correy Williams
PIP: Real estate school
TY: Rich and famous
FM: Go Day 2022
SC: Hannah B.
Max Winters
PIP: Go to work
FM: School cookout fights
CM: Height and humor
SC: Maisy Vroom, Abbey Helmus

Your worth and grades do not go hand in hand

Since as long as I can remember, I have always cared immensely about getting good grades and achieving certain goals when it comes to school. I always had perfect attendance in middle school, I have never gotten a C on a report card in my life, and I don't think I have ever even turned in an assignment late. Academic achievement and validation has always been something I strived for, but at what cost?



Jessica Bergfors
Sports Editor

It seems like since I was a kid, my life has been centered on school. I've always put in the work to get the highest grades possible. This isn't a bad thing, but having the pressure of getting a high GPA and perfect grades has taken a major toll on me, and I've noticed this especially this year. The hours of studying for a test. The late nights to finish an assignment and make it perfect. Freaking out because I don't have a certain grade in a class. Always wanting to impress my teachers and never disappoint them. These are just some things that have led me to countless breakdowns this year, and looking back, they were not worth my time and energy. My mom has to constantly remind me that grades do not define me, and that if I'm trying my best, that hard work will pay off, but believing her is hard when I feel like I'm disappointing myself and others when I don't achieve a certain academic goal or grade.

Comparing myself to other students has been the worst habit I've learned in high school too. As the senior awards ceremony grows closer, I can't help but feel disappointed with the expectation of not getting any awards. I don't mean for this to sound selfish, but when you have put in so much work over the years, it stings to not get much recognition for it. Sitting in certain classes and feeling absolutely dumb after getting a bad grade on a quiz or test while other people explain the material in such a sophisticated way, I can't help but feel like I don't belong in a class. It's difficult not to get caught up in an awful mindset when these pressures weigh down like a brick.

Now, don't get me wrong, I'm not saying that striving for good grades and certain achievements is a bad thing or that if you try too hard then your mental state will suffer. However, sometimes students have to remember that grades, test scores, or awards are not the "end-all, be-all". Your value is much more than what is written on your report card. Your value is much more than what you get on your ACT. Your value is much more than what college accepted you, or didn't. Just because you don't get a certain award or a certain grade does not mean that you are stupid or undeserving, and you can't let these minute things greatly affect you, or dictate your life.



Recharge Coffee Company brings high voltage drinks to electrify coffee game

Recharge Coffee opens new location within miles of Illiana Christian’s campus

Grace Jania
News Editor

Newly opened coffee shop, Recharge Coffee Company, is a trendy coffee company that opened in 2019. Their mission statement is, “Born in 2019 with a mission to fuel the communities we serve. Our team thrives on creating a personalized experience that promotes happiness for our guests to embark on their day.”

Recharge, made its debut on May 16, bringing a fresh taste of coffee, refreshers, and soon-to-be boba tea to St. John. The cafe also offers a wide variety of treats, including an assortment of donuts, bagel sandwiches, and egg bites.

I was immediately drawn in

by the trendy and modern ambiance of the cafe, which had the walls decorated with the company’s mission statement: “With a mission to fuel the communities we serve.” Hanging lights also lit up the tables and lounge areas.

I ordered a salted caramel cold brew and bacon maple long john. The iced coffee, which was recommended to me by the ordertaker, had the perfect amount of sweetness and caramel taste to keep me wanting more.

The bacon donut, on the other hand, was an interesting combination. For someone who thought they would have the acquired taste for a maple syrup-flavored donut with bacon bits on it, I did not enjoy the mix

of two very different and overpowering flavors. It was really filling, but very pretty to look at.

There was a blend of indie-pop jams playing in the background, giving the cafe a generally carefree and happy vibe. It reflected the theme of energizing drinks and treats to a T.

Overall, I didn’t think the prices were that bad if you are someone who enjoys going to Starbucks often. My medium-sized coffee and donut totalled out to be \$11.24, as most of the medium sized drinks were about \$5.50 to \$6.00.

Though the coffeehouse is brand-new and still offers a lot more snacks to try, I would give the complete experience 4/5 stars.



Donut Foundry partners with Recharge to promote their out-of-the-box baking

Cameron Evers
Reporter

Working in unison with Recharge Coffee's Donut Foundry, a trendy donut company with a shop located in downtown Kankakee. They also sell their products in the Recharge Coffee shops. They pride themselves on creating a “trendy twist on everyone’s favorite treat...donuts!”

They serve classic donuts such as glazed, strawberry iced, vanilla, old-

fashioned cake donuts, and more. To fit Recharge’s out-of-the-box drinks, they also serve specialty donuts such as Oreo cookie, s’mores, peanut butter pretzels, milk & cereal, etc. Donut Foundry also creates seasonal donuts to the menu such as pumpkin spice in the fall, lucky charms and shamrock in honor of St. Patrick’s day, and specialty red velvet donuts for Valentine's day. The menu is constantly rotating, leaving customers watching out for new flavors.



Photo courtesy of Donut Foundry
Donut Foundry packages their Oreo and strawberry sprinkle donuts

MENU BREAKDOWN



Cameron Evers
Reporter

Spring Menu:

Recharge Coffee Company offers a seasonal menu throughout the year, with rotating drinks. Thier spring menu consists of a three-drink trio. The first in the lineup is the new blooming berries oat milk macchiato which is a white chocolate and blackberry flavored coffee mixed with a shot of espresso and oat milk. The next on the list is the “Life’s a Party” frappe which is a classic frappe with whipped cream and sprinkles. Finally, the last drink is the watermelon Jolly Rancher smash mixer which is a Red Bull mixer with a watermel-

on flavor topped with Jolly Rancher gummies.

Coffee:

Their coffee menu includes the classics such as iced coffee, cold brew, frappes, and espresso drinks. They also include craft drink flavors such as vanilla berry, mint chip, lavender latte, s’mores, etc. The price of a medium coffee drink ranges from \$3-6.

Tea:

They also offer a variety of teas such as hot, iced, or shaken with a medium-size ranging from \$3-5. They offer black tea, herbal tea, and green tea with the option of fruity flavors.

Refreshers:

Their refresher line consists of their specialty “crafted hydrating base” which is then mixed with a fruity flavor. Some of their refreshers seem to mimic Starbucks drinks such as the pink drink and their strawberry flavor, but they still have their own unique line with flavors such as wild dragon (raspberry and drag-

on fruit), peach passion, a blackberry flavor. A medium refresher costs \$4.50.

Red Bull Mixers:

Even more uniquely, they created a line of Red Bull mixers. The mixers consist of a Red Bull energy drink mixed with a fruity or sugary drink flavor. Some of the drinks on this menu are the watermelon kiwi, grape goddess, strawberry creme, mango pineapple, peach ring, and the swamp (a mix of lime and green apple). The mixers only come in one size, and every flavor costs \$6.50.

Food:

They serve a breakfast menu with a few pastries included. They serve multiple variations of egg bites and oatmeal. They also make a bagel breakfast sandwich and a breakfast flatbread. Finally, they serve chocolate chip cookies, cake bombs, and specialty donuts from the company Donut Foundry. Their food is on the higher price end with items ranging from \$4.50-\$7.95.

Musically gifted students of Illiana

Kevin Truong, singing sensation

Hailey Ross
Arts Editor

Junior Kevin Truong loves to sing.

“I sing in my room, at school, in the shower, and at concerts,” Truong said.

Truong loves to perform, and a trait he’s come by at least in part from childhood experiences. “I used to have a hobby of going to family karaoke with my family and friends in Vietnam,” Truong said. “I was never really being criticized by my family so I had a great time singing.”

Truong has taken that love of music and singing to school musicals and choir concerts. Truong’s favorite genres to sing are old pop songs or modern musicals. “I’ve been

really known for musicals. But I think at this point, I’m more into old pop like ‘Vienna’ by Billy Joel, ‘Rocketman’ by Elton John or modern musicals like ‘Dear Evan Hansen’ or ‘SIX.’”

Truong gets inspiration from others but he continues to work to develop his own sound. “I really look up to Ben Platt and Renee Rapp; they are great vocalists and actors. But I do really want to make my own brand,” said Truong

Truong, who used to watch “Glee” and fell in love with theater with his first show at Illiana, “Frog and Toad” influenced me to keep pursuing his acting and singing. While undecided about whether he will try to go into professional theater, Truong said he is looking into liberal arts colleges that have good musical theater programs.



Photo courtesy of Hailey Ross

Junior Kevin Truong sings a song from “Hamilton” for his English classmates.



Raelyn Sederstrom prepares for a recital.



Photo by Mrs.Sederstrom

Raelyn Sederstrom and her teacher



Photo by Mrs.Sederstrom

Raelyn Sederstrom plays for a recital.



Photo by Mrs.Sederstrom

Raelyn Sederstrom and her siblings

Raelyn Sederstrom, piano prodigy

Hailey Ross
Arts Editor

From competing in Fine Arts to tickling the ivories for the jazz band, freshman Raelyn Sederstrom love making music on the piano.

“My love for music started when I was born,” Sederstrom said.

“I always loved to sing around the house, and I especially loved listening to music. I truly fell in love with music when I started piano lessons in first grade.”

Sederstrom plays piano with the jazz band, where she enjoys playing a variety of music, though one kind of music particularly stands out for her.

“I love playing anything Disney. I especially love getting to play Disney music in jazz band. It is so cool to hear how all the instruments come together to make a beautiful song come to life,”said Sederstrom.

Sederstrom encourages young players to keep studying. She said, “I would tell

other piano players to keep going. No matter where you are in your music journey, giving up could become one of your biggest regrets. Never give up. If I would have given up piano, I don’t think I would be where I am today.”

Sederstrom is uncertain of her future career, but she plans to

keep music part of her life no matter what. She said, “I would love to be able to play for other people. Whether I’m in a church, nursing home, retirement home, or just in my home, I will want to play. I haven’t considered playing professionally in the future, but if God leads me down that path then I will follow.”

Senior athletes make their final decision as year ends

Jessica Bergfors

Sports Editor

With May 1st being the national decision day for many colleges nationwide, student athletes have committed to schools and made their final decisions. Illiana students continue to sign to colleges to further their academic and athlete career, but what does signing actually mean?

Senior Payton Skrezyna, who has committed to Aurora University for softball, described signing as “promising that you will be dedicated and loyal to the sport and school.” Contrary to popular assumption, signing does not necessarily indicate the athlete is receiving an athletic scholarship.

Skrezyna explained that when committing to a college for sports, athletes must receive a signing let-

ter from the college coach. The specific contract athletes must sign is the NCAA Division I, II, or III Student-Athlete Celebratory Signing Form. The division number will change depending on what division the athlete is signing to. This contract lists all the responsibilities that athletes are agreeing to fulfill throughout their college years.

For Skrezyna, the college softball coach came to one of her softball games and became interested in her skills. He then later reached out through a letter, saying that he wanted her to play at Aurora. Skrezyna emailed the coach after, and the two set up a date to meet and tour the school. She said that every athlete’s experience is different when it comes to scouting and signing; people can also invite coaches to their games or reach out first to coaches.

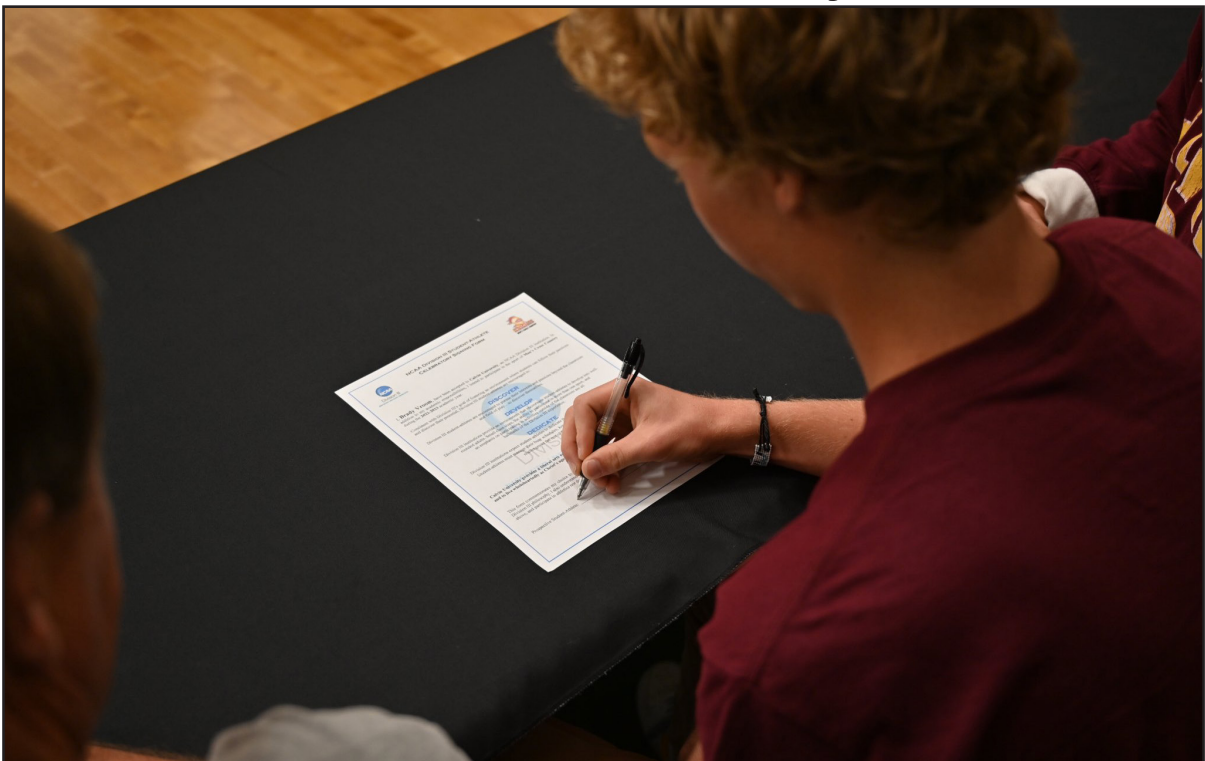


Photo courtesy of Illiana Facebook

Senior Brady Vroom signs the dotted line for his comittment to Calvin University for cross country and track.

Seniors who have comitted and signed:

Kylie Martin: Purdue Northwest, Volleyball
Payton Skrezyna: Aurora University, Softball
Taylor Oppenhuis: Benedictine University, Softball

Amanda DeBoer: Purdue Northwest, Softball
Alyssa Buczowski: Prairie State, Volleyball
Tiffany Reichert: Prairie State, Volleyball
Andrew Kloosterman: Purdue Northwest, Soccer



Photo courtesy of Taylor Olthof

Senior Taylor Olthof gets in position to hit the softball at a home game.

Softball leads impressive season with overall record of 18-2

Cameron Evers

Reporter

The Illiana Christian Girls softball teams have been playing well this spring season. The varsity currently holds an impressive record of 18-2 and junior varsity also holds a winning record of 9-3.

The varsity team works hard on the offensive side and plays aggressively to create scoring opportunities. Their pitching and defense have also been steady and have been boosting the team to success.

Nicole Wondaal, the head

varsity coach, said, “We are continuing to focus on controlling the controllables and sticking to our plan. Every day presents opportunities to be better at this and I’m very proud of the way our athletes strive to be better every day.” The team has great chemistry and Wondaal said, “Illiana softball is different because we truly become a family.”

The junior varsity team has found its success through their hard work ethic and determination. The girls have had impressive pitching and their hitting is just as good. Stephanie Renner, the head

junior varsity coach, said, “Our strengths have been never giving up and battling back.... All of our girls have stepped up in big-time game situations.” Renner also credits her team’s “great team chemistry and energy” to its winning record.

Apart from the statistics and hard work on the field, Wondaal said she appreciates that the team can “compete to honor God and to use the gifts he gave us to the best of our abilities. We care about each other, pray for each other every day, and we play for him.”

Tennis ends great season, first doubles team goes undefeated

Olivia Oostema

Editor-in-Chief

Girls varsity tennis ended its season with a conference record of 8-0 and a season record of 12-2.

The team took first at the KV Invite for the second consecutive year as well as first against eight teams at the South County Invite hosted by Hanover Central.

The first doubles team, composed of senior Morgan Trivette and junior Maddy Smith, ended the regular season undefeated. Said Smith, “It feels amazing to be undefeated.... My partner and I worked hard during the off season to be able to perform well.”

“The entire lineup is strong,” said Coach Rob Lagerwey. “[Teammates] support and encourage each other. ... They’re becoming more aggressive in their play and winning points rather than waiting for the opponent to make a mistake.”

Smith said her favorite part of the season was beating Lake Central. She added, “Last year it was close, and it felt good to beat them.”

According to Lagerwey, the team has been very enjoyable to coach because “they have such a positive attitude, work together well, and are also good tennis players.”

Smith said the team has improved since last year and “came back better than ever” this season.



Photo courtesy of Illiana Facebook

The tennis team poses with coach Robert Lagerwey at their Kankakee tournament, where they took home the first place trophy.



Viking sports briefs



Golf finishes first place in conference tournament

Lucas VanderWoude

Reporter

Illiana's boys golf team has finished first place in the conference tournament and hopes to advance to regionals with their sectional performance on Friday, June 3. The golf team was led to a victory in the conference tournament with these top scorers: Donny Woo, with an 84, Ben Bruinsma and Zach Davids, both with an 87, Van Corcoran, with an 89, and Wesley Olthof, with a 90.

The team can make it to regionals if they place in the top three in sectionals. Individual golfers on the team can also advance if they play well. "Zach Davids and Ben Bruinsma have been our most consistent low-scoring players," said Woo. "Our team has improved their scoring this year, and I feel more confident and focused." "We are all clicking at the right time and seem to have played our best when it counts, said Mr. Vermuelen, who coaches the JV golf team. "Let's hope that keeps up."



Photo by Jack Rudenga

Senior Wesley Olthof prepares to swing and drive the ball at a golf match.

Volleyball finishes ranking #18 in the state

Citlali Sanchez

Reporter

The varsity boys volleyball team ended its regular season with a record of 17-15 and were ranked #18 in the state. The team ended its post season on Saturday, May 14.

"We are looking forward to a good match with a team that we should matchup pretty well with our semifinal match," said Coach Adam Clark. "We played them once before, but had to change our lineup right before the match started because of an injury, and we are ready for a rematch."

Although the team's defense has improved, their strongest aspect is their offense which is led by a group of seniors. As senior Graham Goodfellow said, "We are a good all-around team."

The JV boys volleyball team ended its season with a record of 16-6, but lost an additional four games in the tournament on May 14 to bring the final record to 16-10.

Coach VanderZee said, "The team's strongest asset is its desire for competing. We had several matches this season where we came from behind and ended up winning the match. They improved tremendously offensively over the season. At the start of the season we were running a standard slower offense but by the end of the season we had a much quicker offense running quick plays with our middle hitters Shawn Kramer and Josh Bultema. We also started running a back row offense with some back row attacks."

Baseball instills Tom Hopkins' quote to lead them to victory this season

Grace Jania

News Editor

The boys' varsity baseball team wrapped up its regular season with a final record of 14 wins to 7 losses. "[The boys] have shown their ability to fight and to learn from the feedback of their failures," said Coach Jeff VanderWoude. "They have taken this feedback and have implemented the changes they felt they needed to their processes extremely well."

VanderWoude reflected, saying he thought their win against Hanover was their turning point in the season. "I think that game was finally everything we had been working through and changing coming to fruition," VanderWoude said. The boys' coach also remarked that one of the boys' goals throughout the season was to shift their attitudes and responses to situations that are out of their control. He said the team worked on "be-

ing able to establish a routine for each player and team so they know what they need to do to be ready to compete to the best of their ability, and a routine for them to help bring them back to present moment focus when things seem like they are spiraling out of control." Senior Austin Maslanka, a new student this year who came from Lake Central, said what he would miss most was the bond between player and coaches. "Coming from [LC] last year

to Illiana this year, I was so mentally drained with baseball, but playing this year kind of restored my confidence," Maslanka said. The coaches worked to instill in the team an idea expressed by legendary salesman Tom Hopkins: "You are not judged by the number of times that you fail, you are judged by the number of times you succeed; and the number of times you succeed is directly related to the number of times you fail and keep on trying."

Girls, boys track show Christ in 'love, grit, and purpose' this season



Photo by Jeffrey DeVries

Senior Katherine Van Drunen launches the shot put during a home invite.

Jessica Bergfors

Sports Editor

The boys track season has been a time of building friendships, forming new habits, and overall improving immensely, said Coach Luke Fennema. Junior Fritz Olthof and senior Brady Vroom, who both compete in distance and mid-distance relays, have been the point leaders this season. "It is always exciting to see the physical, mental, and spiritual growth that happens during the season," Fennema said. Fennema continued to say that despite a lot of cold and rainy weather, it was a fun season and the team was able to accomplish some special things. "I am excited to see where they go in the postseason and hope they will continue to work on reflecting Christ in

love, grit, and purpose," Fennema said. The girls track team is 7-1 in conference meets and have placed high in their invitationals. Coach Deb Top said that they have had a lot of improvements from returning athletes and many new athletes show much talent and promise for the future. Junior Alex Vis and sophomore Audra Davids have been the point leaders this season. Vis contributes in distance and mid-distance relays, and Davids is their top sprinter and long jumper. Freshmen Ella Olthof, Alexa Mercuri, and Hannah Bruinsma are all advancing to regionals. "We want them to grow in their personal relationship with God, in their friendships on the team, and in how they handle difficulty, pressure, and success," Top said.

Male Athlete of the Month

The male athlete of the month title goes to senior baseball player Josh Rubien. This season Josh has taken criticism, had a positive attitude, worked to improve, been a voice of leadership, and so much more. "He has done everything that we have asked and expected, and has done so to the very best of his ability," baseball coach Jeff VanderWoude said. Being a hard-worker as well as a good listener, Josh sets a great example of what servant leadership is all about. "His ability to put the team before himself and to do this while keeping a great attitude and work ethic are going to be extremely missed next year," VanderWoude added.



Female Athlete of the Month

Senior Liz Aje, member of the track and field team, is this month's female athlete. She is a strong athlete who consistently scores points for the team in the high jump and sprint relays. According to Coach Fennema she is a leader who brings her best effort and is always encouraging her teammates. Coach Top said, "I can trust her to do a job right, not skip steps, and be honest with her in her assessment of a drill or a workout." From spending extra time in the weight room, providing advice, and encouraging the younger members, she "does the little things right and in doing so sets an example for the entire team," Fennema said. "She has a very positive presence and helps create an atmosphere of enthusiasm."



Editorial

Recognizing Illiana's unsung heros

To our janitors,

Walking into Illiana's building, one cannot help but notice a few things right away—sparkling clean floors, smudge-free glass windows leading to a beautiful courtyard, the bustle of parents moving in and out of the kitchen to serve Chick-Fil-A to 400 students. But all of these marvels don't just happen on their own. We would like to take a moment to celebrate the unsung heroes.

Surely the floors aren't always clean as a whistle, which goes to show that after hundreds of rambunctious kids leave their messes everywhere they go, someone is responsible for cleaning them up. Teenagers are messy and sometimes oblivious to the disasters they leave behind when it comes to food. Before school, a coffee cup tips and spills. During break, crumbs and wrappers litter the floors everywhere. At lunch, sauce packets smear the tables. Yet by the end of sixth period, the mess disappears. What sort of strange magic is this?

It is, of course, our janitors. The janitors are constantly cleaning up the messes we make, and we don't give them the credit they deserve. This building has a lot of floors to keep clean and a huge outdoor area to keep up.

And, of course, we haven't even touched on the bathrooms. We on the editorial staff have never had to deal with the calamity of using the boys' bathrooms, but we have seen the girls' bathrooms at their worst. Girls aren't always clean, and sometimes the bathrooms look like they've been through one

requires waking up early to get ready in order to catch the bus, but imagine how much more effort must be put in to drive the buses! The early hours of driving sounds hard enough, and making multiple stops throughout the nearby towns before and after school doesn't sound fun.

But the bus drivers also cart

at high speeds, which sounds pretty stressful.

So, thank you for everything you do, bus drivers! Your constant help doesn't go unnoticed.

To our lunch ladies,

Last but definitely not least, the lunch ladies are something Illiana can't function without. When we're hungry we can get cranky, so when the food is prepared at lunchtime and ready to serve every day, it is much appreciated. Plus, the variety of hot lunches served gives all students the opportunity to pick and choose what they like.

The lunch ladies have a busy job, preparing the food, distributing it using their pre-ordered lunch lists, and cleaning up the kitchen afterwards. This doesn't leave a lot of time for socializing, but when they can, the ladies are always so sweet and friendly.

Serving lunch can be difficult since there are so many students that build up the line, with some taking too many snacks or not enough, or with kids buying their lunches in line. But the lunch ladies always remain calm under pressure, distributing the food efficiently, and remaining bubbly and bright through all the chaos.

Thank you to our lunch ladies! We appreciate you.

Your constant help doesn't go unnoticed.

heck of a storm. We hate to imagine what the boys' restroom might look like at its worst. Yet every day, the restrooms get cleaned and restored to pristine condition.

Thank you to our janitorial staff! We appreciate you and all you do.

To our bus drivers,

Another set of people who deserve our notice and our thanks are our bus drivers. Most of us make the drive to Illiana on our own, but some take the bus every day to campus. This

loads of people to their destination field trips, which can sometimes be good distances away. In the past, some of these field trips have been located as far as downtown Chicago and Indianapolis. Driving a huge, lanky bus through congested areas and traffic isn't a very easy task.

These drivers also assisted in picking up some of the mission trip groups from the airports after returning home this past spring break. This required them to take expressways while driving the Illiana mini buses

The trouble with 'happily ever after'

And they all graduated happily ever after."

[cue applause]

I can still feel the excitement of my final days of eighth grade and the following summer: the rush of a school year ending, of graduation parties commencing, of goodbyes being said. There were campfires blazing and fireworks shot off every night. Days were filled with swimming and sidewalk chalk and sunscreen and sprinklers; with bubbles and bathing suits and badminton. And the exhilaration of early summer and the ease of mid-summer led into August—the beginning of my high school years.

I was so excited for high school. In fact, I enshrined it in my mind as a place where everything I disliked about grade school would magically disappear. Walking through Illiana's old building during a Junior High Night, I felt that once I was in high school, I would have 'made it.' I'd have tons of friends, succeed in every extracurricular, overcome challenges quickly and easily, possess deep insight, and know what I wanted from life. I'd seen theater productions, concerts, Loud Crowd and Praise Crowd; I'd participated in tennis camp, band and choir fest. I thought every day would have the music, art, and community of these events. I imagined high school would be like an 80s high school rom com of sorts with an endearing yet awkward protagonist (me).

Turns out, high school is not like that at all. At least it wasn't for me.

After I got over the thrill of being in a new place each day, it wasn't long until my enthusiasm fizzled out like a squealing firework, and I realized Illiana wasn't a utopia; it wasn't a place where everything would piece together. Despite the change of setting, I was (and am) still a very private person; I still daydreamed through classes; still didn't have the best clothes; and still procrastinated writing columns. Put bluntly, I was still 'me.'

Entering high school wasn't 'happily ever after.' Graduating won't be 'happily ever after.' What I'm grasping at is that there will never be a point at which we've 'made it' to happiness or peace from which we can rest easy. There's not a point at which all our problems disappear with the flick of a wand. Our post-high school plans are only the beginning of where we will go, and the journey won't be easy.

As people talk of endings, I'm beginning to live life in the present, cultivating habits for the future. Instead of searching for 'happily ever after,' I'm going to make the most of where I am, knowing where I'm headed.



Olivia Oostema
Editor-in-Chief

the
Echo)))

Editor-in-chief

Olivia Oostema

News

Grace Jania

Feature

Aubrey Porter

Arts

Hailey Ross

Sports

Jessica Bergfors

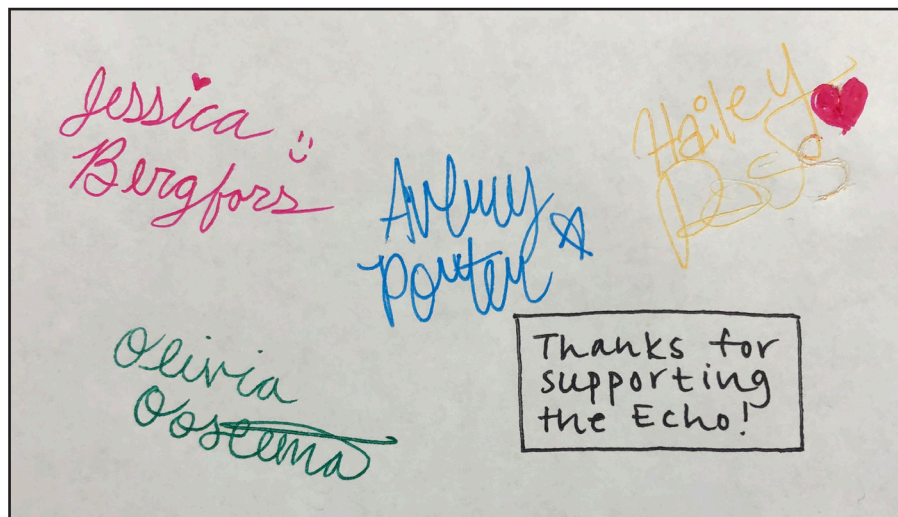
Advisor

Jeff DeVries

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

Letters to the editor can be submitted to the advisor or sent to the school. All letters must be signed and must not exceed 250 words. They will be printed provided there is enough room and content is not offensive to the general public.

Senior editors sign out)))



As we move on from our time as editors to pursue new things, we're confident many more students will step up and continue the Echo's legacy of strong, student-led journalism. Thank you to all of our readers for their support!

- the senior Echo editor staff 2022

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