



Incoming freshman meet new people, enjoy activities at freshman retreat

Angelica Voyles

Reporter

Freshman Retreat, a special experience for the incoming freshmen, has been going on for two years now at Illiana. It happened on Sept. 9, and it's important for freshmen to come and meet fellow classmates and upperclassmen. It's a new way to get them out of their bubble and working together through activities designed to help them do that.

Janna VanEssen, the Director of Student Life who planned the day, said the goal is to “build community and let every student at Illiana be known.” Her goal is for incoming freshmen to meet and

interact with each other more. Addison Bakker, a freshman, felt the retreat was a “really good experience” and that she met a lot of new people. Another freshman, Jazmin Mosso also said she had “fun and met new friends.”

SHIELD group leaders, all of whom are upperclassmen, guided these freshmen through various fun events. They also enjoyed the day. Audrey Yonkman, a senior, explained the freshman retreat as a time for “team-building.” She stated her group of freshmen last year “was a mix of kids that you don’t expect to be together.” Yonkman said she had become a SHIELD group leader to be more involved with freshmen

and she really enjoyed being a leader.

Junior Heidi Gorter found the day “challenging,” and an opportunity for “stepping out of your comfort zone and growing spiritually.” She also said she loved playing a leadership role.

The freshmen did many fun activities like devotions, ax throwing, eating donuts, dying t-shirts, and going on a boat ride. VanEssen explained these stations as “fun and engaging with the purpose of connecting ICHS families.” She added that it is a step toward the school’s mission to create a passion for God and people, and by doing it through the people right here.



Photo by Grace Jania
Freshman Eli Postma fist-bumps the instructor before climbing the rock wall.

Chapel Committee brings different involvement techniques to chapels

Kayla Bosman

Reporter

The last day of school last year was the first day of work for our new chapel committee. For the past 4 years Illiana chapels consisted of app related themes such as Instagram, Spotify and Netflix, but this year's committee decided to go in a different direction this year.

Chapel sponsor Rachel Drost explained, “We wanted to do something different, just to be more creative, come up with something unique. One of our major goals for this year is to be really biblically focused. We want to challenge students to read scripture itself, to actually read the words of scripture and what it says.”

member Audrey Yonkman described this year's theme, *Us Serving Together*: “Ev-

but the beauty of that is it all comes together in the long run for one purpose, to

shared concern about chapel not being attention grabbing or humorous, but

aware, and we're trying to get more people involved and more people happy. I think that once we get to the point where we want to be, we'll be able to have more things like media integration and student body participation."

Others aren't concerned at all. Senior Donny Woo said, "Starting out people were saying it wasn't great and stuff like that, and I just disagree. You know they're just starting, and I think the involvement with the games and stuff that they've done--bringing Mr. Dykstra up versus a bunch of people--that was pretty cool. The guest speaker that they just had, I thought that was a very powerful message and I think that really kept people engaged. I feel like it's going to be a good year."



Chapel Committee pauses their 2nd period meeting for a quick group photo.

Photo by Grace Jania

everyone is different, and everyone serves differently,

serve God.”

Some students have

Ryan Smith, another chapel member, said, "We are

Golf outing fundraises \$20,000 to support sports teams

Sophia Oostema

Reporter

Illiana Christian High School hosted their annual golf outing on September 19 to raise money for the athletic department.

This year the golf outing took place at Briar Ridge

Country Club in Schererville and 153 golfers attended the event. The golfers had a busy day which consisted of eating lunch, golfing eighteen holes, and eating supper according to Bonnie Trepton, Athletic Assistant.

This golfing event

raised around \$20,000. All the funds will go towards athletic teams at Illiana Christian. The teams will spend the money on equipment purchases, new uniforms, sports referees and officials, and more.

Maddy Smith, a senior who assisted in running the

event, said, "The money will probably not impact me and the tennis team, but it is a good feeling to know that I helped raise money for our other sports teams."

Smith was in charge of running a game to allow the golfers to enter into a raffle to win \$150. Golfers

at the event received prizes to show the athletic departments appreciation and gratitude for the money received.

Trepton said, "It's a great community event and a nice way...to thank people for their support of the athletic department."

Anxiety over end times haunts nights

Over the summer, one week I had a lot of trouble sleeping. No, I wasn't in love. There wasn't an exciting trip around the corner. I hadn't just had coffee before bed.

I was worrying about the future, and probably not in the way you would expect. I had been busy going on some college campus tours during the summer, and the thought of going away to school after Illiana got me thinking about what my life would look like in the next twenty years.



Gracie Jania
Editor-in-Chief

But what if I don't make it to thirty-seven?

My mind was struck with that thought that made my stomach turn over.

Let me get one thing straight: I'm not suicidal. What I really was thinking about was the highly-anticipated event of Jesus's return.

When I was in middle school, I had a Bible teacher who covered the book of Revelation. It wasn't a big deal until we got into the nitty-gritty details of what God's wrath would look like in these final moments.

From that day forward I was obsessed and hyper-focused on the judgment part of this day. Revelation gave me nightmares for months; I would wake up in a cold sweat after dreaming of the four horsemen and the sound of blaring trumpets.

I've never fully recovered from that experience, even though it happened five years ago. When I am reminded of Judgment Day, I don't take comfort in it or even feel happy that I am going to meet Jesus, but am instead filled with fear (if you don't understand why, just go back and reread the book of Revelation).

So much life is ahead of me that I am excited to live, but at times it feels hard to appreciate the moments when I know they can be cut short at any point. I want to graduate college, travel the world, explore career opportunities, walk down the aisle, become a mom. And, I'm sorry, but I feel like Judgment Day's arrival would steal all of that from me, and I don't want to let it go.

I know the Bible tells us to live in the world without being of the world, but that doesn't mean I don't want to live my life to the fullest and enjoy the earth God made.

I have been trying to take comfort in my relationship with Jesus and build it up even stronger. I am using this emotion of fear to focus more on how Jesus wants me to feel instead, which is not fearful at all.

Luke 14:27 says, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid."

I don't consider myself to be an irrational overthinker, but if anything would worry me, it is the end of time, and a big part of the reason why is because I can't bring myself to even comprehend it. It is hard not to be afraid of what we don't understand. But in this verse, Jesus directly tells me not to worry because He gives us His peace.

If that isn't comforting, I don't know what is.



History teacher Jeff White explains history to students on tour of Lansing.

Photo by Grace Jania

Local History strolls Ridge Road, examines historical facades

Grace Jania
Editor-in-Chief

For Jeff White's 5th period local history class, Field Trip Fridays are a habitual thing. On Sept. 16, White took the class on a miniature tour of the town of Lansing, where students observed surrounding neighborhoods and the buildings along Ridge Road, had lunch at Tacos and Burritos Nacho Grande, and learned how to read mainstreet USA.

"I also wanted us to look at the old ridge of Lake Michigan," White said. "Sometimes even if there are modern buildings, there are some over 100 years old that are

still on mainstreet USA that may be hidden by a new façade."

He pointed out that a big part of the trip was seeing the preserved ghost sign located on the interior wall of Tacos and Burritos. The sign was an old advertisement for a beer company that no longer exists. It had been painted on an exterior wall, but now serves as an interior wall for a newer building next door.

Senior Kaitlin Boone reflected on the history behind the ghost sign, saying that it was "cool to see that it was once an advertisement before they built the building and kept the wall."

White said, "Sometimes now there is a big push in America to save these buildings or restore their old-time looks."

"I hope [the students] go around their own neighborhoods and ask questions: Why is that building there? Why does it look that way? What used to be there?" said White.

Some, like White, would consider local history to be the best class in the school. According to White, the reason behind this statement is that "we go and actually see everything we're learning about. It's hands-on; it's getting out of the classroom; it's experiencing things."

Illiana seeks re-accreditation

Kelsee Smit
Reporter

Illiana is seeking accreditation with Christian Schools International (CSI) this fall, a process that, according to Principal Peter Boonstra, will assure colleges of the school's academic rigor, help the school to improve in the future, and keep the school eligible for Indiana's voucher program.

CSI, every 5 years, looks at Illiana to hold it

accountable and make sure Illiana is doing what it is supposed to be doing as an accredited high school. Colleges then look at the accreditation when deciding if a student with an Illiana education has received an adequate education.

Mrs. Drost, Assistant Principal of Curriculum, is mainly in charge of this process and has walked the school through it once before. She has been organizing and creating goals for Illiana to work on in the up-

coming 5 years.

The preparation began a year ago when surveys were taken by last year's students, staff, and community members. Later faculty and administration met together to discuss the school's strengths and weaknesses, and to set goals.

From all this feedback, Drost started creating a school improvement plan that includes four goals that Illiana will work to achieve over the next five years. One goal for the upcoming

Board proposes campus expansion

Korina Johnson
Reporter

Illiana Christian High School is enjoying another year of increased student enrollment this fall for many reasons according to Mr. Lance Davids, the Head of School, including the choice voucher, stories of how well Illiana handled COVID, and a growing percentage of feeder school students choosing Illiana. The growing number of students is squeezing school facilities.

The increase in enrollment came as a summer surprise to the school administration. As the school year approached, Illiana's numbers drew near 500, up around thirty students from the previous year's enrollment.

"I thought there would be a decrease because some feeder schools had lower enrollment," said Mr. Peter Boonstra, principal of Illiana. "It is very gratifying to see this growth as we are very mission driven."

While increased enrollment is generally viewed as good news for the school, the growing number of students is close to exceeding the building's capacity.

"I always want kids to have a Christian education, but there's limited space," said Davids. "Classroom numbers are rising, hallways are packed, and there are limited bathrooms."

"These may be problems, but they are wonderful problems," said Boonstra.

Davids added that the school board is making short term and long-term plans to deal with the overcrowding.

years is to use data that the school receives from state testing, such as ASVAB, in a more organized way to improve teaching.

This October, Illiana will have a site visit where teachers and/or administrators from DeMotte, Timothy, and Chicago Christian will come to Illiana for three days to review the school's progress and plans and to make a recommendation to CSI on whether to extend the school's accreditation for another five years.

Illiana farms growing new crops for new markets

Marissa Krause

Reporter

Illiana’s hydroponic farm is expanding to grow new microgreens to be sold from Illiana’s own hallways by the end of September.

The farm plans on growing many microgreens that include cilantro, celery, sweet peas, and other high nutrient packed vegetables.

Students in Mr. Sylvester’s agriculture science class are to build 10 functional racks for

these greens. Racks will be located in Mr. Sylvester’s and Dr. Kuipers’ homerooms. Once completed, Sylvester said the farm hopes to grow about 20-30 trays of microgreens per week.

Sylvester stated he would like to continue selling his greens. “I would like to try to sell [cilantro] to some of the local restaurants. For the other crops we would love to work together with Mrs. Roeda’s food class and with Mrs. Schaaf in the kitchen to make fresh, high quality salad mixes for our

student body.”

As for the basil formerly grown in the science wing, it has been moved to the trailer outside with a new strain of basil that is mildew resistant. The trailer also uses gravity fed water, which gives more flow to the water, helping to make mildew less likely to get established.

Illiana farms plans to continue selling high quality basil to its business partners because basil has been, to this point, the most profitable crop.



Photo by Danielle Rancifer
Agriculture class students joining Mr. Sylvester to put racks together for plants.

Annual challenge to ride event raises money for school

Giannia O’Neal-Schultz

Reporter

Illiana’s annual Challenge to Ride (a 100-mile bike ride) and Disc Golf Tournament occurred on August 20, 2022. These events help the school by getting the students out into the community and by raising funds for student services, this year the events raised

\$20,000. The disc golf tournament was located at the Illiana campus, and the bike route ran from the Illiana campus to DeMotte, Momence, and then back to the school.

This year was the 6th annual event. Cassie Siersema, the school’s Director of Development and the Challenge to Ride’s organizer, said, “This event is great

for those in our community that would like to give back to Illiana but also to participate in a whole community event.”

Siersema added that she did not plan alone. Anthony Drost, husband of social studies teacher Rachel Drost, is an avid biker who plans the bike routes, Siersema’s husband Andy, and gym teachers Erinn

Behn and Tom Roozeboom planned the disc golf tournament. Bible teacher Mark Dykstra offered clinics for those who were new to the sport and Terri Schaaf, the school’s lunch and event coordinator, helped plan and execute the family lunch after both events.

The biggest challenge of the event was not the miles but the weather which was

rainy and partly cloudy. Many people signed up, but the weather prevented some from showing up.

“The weather wasn’t great for outside events, but the participants of the events seemed to be unphased. Everyone had a great time regardless, at least that’s what they all said!” said Siersema.



Photo by Dan Blom
Junior Varsity Girls Volleyball snaps a picture with new school mascot, Victor the Viking, before the game.

Victor gets vivacious at volleyball game

New school mascot makes its debut at volleyball home game

Danielle Rancifer

News Editor

Illiana Christian is starting off the 2022-2023 school year with one big surprise. For the first time ever, since

Illiana has been established, it has a mascot known as Victor the Viking. Victor appeared at a girls varsity volleyball game, the first loud crowd of the year.

When asked what

prompted this desire for a mascot, Athletic director Darren Deboer said, “I thought it would be fun for the students and our community members at athletic and school events.”

All students have the opportunity to become Victor the Viking if they chose to do so.

Deboer also talks about

what he hopes Victor will accomplish throughout the school year, saying, “I hope we have students that will enjoy playing the mascot and bring another element of fun to our sporting events.”

As of now Victor is scheduled to appear at twelve Illiana events, with the possibility of more to come.

New Illiana podcast club premieres

Emily Bantsolas

Reporter

A podcast about Illiana will be coming to school this fall. Thanks to a new club idea from senior Kevin Corcoran, Illiana has a new way of promoting itself through a podcast.

The podcast will be available for listening on Illiana social media accounts, on the school’s YouTube channel, and on the school’s website.

Dan Blom, Marketing Director and Club Sponsor, hopes that the first episode will be released after fall break. He also hopes that the club will be able to release two episodes per month.

“The main focus is going to be alerting people about the things within our school that they may not know about,” Blom says, “I think anybody who goes to Illiana will have a keen interest in it.”

Corcoran thought of the idea for a podcast club when he was brainstorming with friends about a new club for Illiana. He has hopes that the podcast can function like the Echo, but for students who prefer to listen rather than read.

When asked if the club will be offered to students next semester, Blom replied, “We’ll see. It was a student idea, and if it’s successful, I see no reason why not to.”

Illiana transfer students tell all

Cameron Evers

Feature Editor

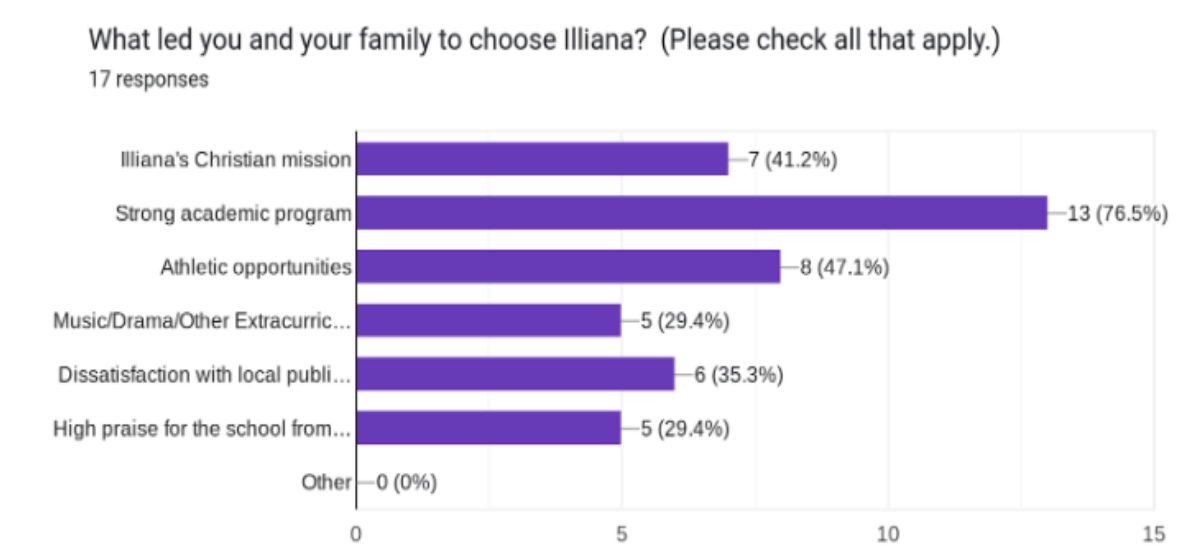
Illiana has 29 new transfer students this fall, and according to an Echo poll to which 17 of the transfer students responded, these students are enjoying their Illiana experience. A whopping 76.5%, answered that their Illiana experience was “great,” and the other 23.5% responded with “good.”

Sophomore, Madissyn Sheehy explained, “The students [at Illiana] are way nicer and more willing to be friends with you. The religion base is something new that I have never had at school.... I am very honored to be at this school.”

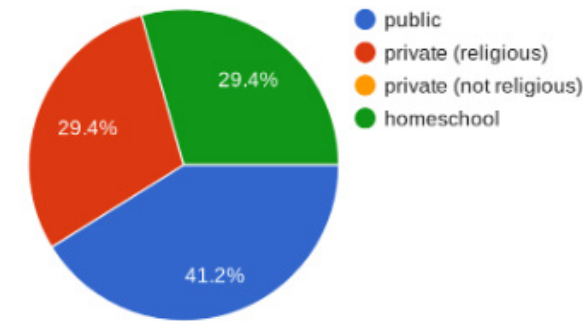
These students come from a variety of backgrounds. Five students previously attended a religious private school, seven at-

tended a public school, and five were home schooled. Just as the backgrounds vary among these students, so do their reasons for being drawn to Illiana, though the poll did reveal that the single largest draw was Illiana’s strong academic program (76.5% of respondents). Other major draws included athletic opportunities (47.1% of respondents) and the school’s Christian mission (41.2% of respondents).

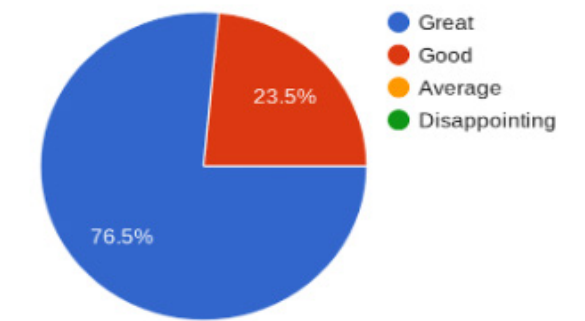
While they came from different backgrounds and came for different reasons, almost universally they became aware of Illiana from talking with family and friends. One student became aware of Illiana by driving past the campus, and another student heard about it from their previous feeder school.



Was your previous school public or private?



How has your experience been at Illiana so far?



Graphs from ECHO poll conducted September 7

Transfer students find sense of community at Illiana

Cameron Evers

Feature Editor

Three Illiana Christian transfer students were asked questions about the differences between Illiana and their previous high schools, one student coming from a large public school, one student from a small private school, and one student who was homeschooled.

What is your name and grade?

Carson: “Carson Ulrich and I’m a junior.”

Addison: “Addison Lanting and I’m a sophomore.”

Zachary: “I am Zachary

Vervlied and I am a sophomore.”

What school did you go to before Illiana, and how many students were enrolled?

Carson: “[I went to] Merrillville High School and about 2,000 people go there.”

Addison: “I went to PR, which is right across the street, and there were about 200 kids in total from k-12. I had 27 kids in my class.”

Zachary: “I was homeschooled, and it was just me and my sister.”

What have been the biggest differences between Illiana and your previous school?

Carson: “It feels more like a community here. I’d say at

Merrillville, Christians were more put to the side and Christianity was a shutdown topic whereas here you can openly talk about it.”

Addison: “[Illiana] forces you to get out of your shell and make friends...PR had a lot of dress code rules...and Illiana seems to have less rules.”

Zachary: “Being able to socialize with other kids and having more teachers has been a big difference.”

Why did you transfer to Illiana?

Carson: “To be around more people that have the same beliefs as me.”

Addison: “I wanted to surround myself with better

people.”

Zachary: “Being homeschooled got to be a lot and I didn’t really have a way to socialize. [At Illiana] I can learn more about God.”

Was it your choice to transfer or your family’s?

Carson: “I was kind of done with Merrillville, but I didn’t tell my parents that, so it was their choice.”

Addison: “It was me and my sister who wanted to go to Illiana. We both wanted to come here and then we had to convince our parents.”

Zachary: “It was my choice.”

What’s the hardest part about being a transfer student?

Carson: “For me it’s been sports because at Merrillville we used to wrestle year-round so I’m trying to find what to do here.”

Addison: “Fitting in. It helps that everyone is so willing, but it’s been hard trying to find my people.”

Zachary: “The homework has been the hardest part. I didn’t have homework before.”

What has your favorite part of Illiana been?

Carson: “Meeting new people and having conversations about God.”

Addison: “I like that lunch is separated and not crowded. I also like having hot lunch every day.”

Zachary: “Just being able to make new friends!”



Photo by Cameron Evers
Madissyn Sheehy stops by her locker before heading off to class.

Starting fresh: Madissyn Sheehy

Kyla Bennett

Sports Editor

Madissyn Sheehy, a transfer student from Hanover Central High School, joined the student body of Illiana Christian High School in her sophomore year this fall.

Madissyn heard about Illiana from a family friend, Gabriella Albanese, who is an Illiana alumni from the class of ‘21. Sheehy started high school at Hanover Central as a freshman but chose to be homeschooled later in the year for a better environment and education. Before

becoming an Illiana student, Madissyn didn’t have the best experience at Hanover Central. She stated that Hanover ran on a block schedule, which she felt wasn’t the best way for her to learn. She also stated that the students were wild and there wasn’t much guidance at Hanover.

“When I came to Illiana,” said Sheehy, “I had so much anxiety about starting a new school, but I was surprised how everyone was so welcoming.”

Sheehy is involved in many sports like soccer, volleyball, tennis, golf, bowling,

cheer, dance, and track. She has heard great things about Illiana’s sports, which was another reason she was motivated to attend ICHS. So far, she has made new friends and formed great bonds with her teachers.

Despite sometimes being bullied at her old school and dealing with the emotional pain that entailed, Sheehy keeps pushing to be a better person at her new school.

“I’m looking forward to starting a new chapter, getting a better education, and learning more about God’s word,” said Sheehy.

Going kooky over cookies

New dessert chain stirs fan base to go to extraordinary lengths for cookies

Danielle Rancifer
News Editor

The new Crumbl Cookie in Dyer has stirred cookie mania among the citizens of Northwest Indiana. The new cookie shop, whose chain is based in Utah, opened July 1, and has gotten enormous amounts of attention from local residents. Before opening up in Dyer, the closest locations were in Orland Park and Chicago. Crumbl cookie has gained its fame for its cookie rotation, which brings in new five types of cookies every week such as red velvet, confetti, Oreo, lemonade, or mint brownie. Chocolate chip is the only cookie available at

all times. Crumbl is open Monday through Thursday from 8 am-10pm and Friday and Saturday from 8am-12am. The oversized cookies are about a half inch bigger in diameter than a 12 inch softball, (4.5 inches), and are on the expensive end of the spectrum (around \$5 per cookie, \$14 for a four pack, and \$22 for a six pack). Senior Ashley Kaczmarzewski, a fan of Crumbl, said, “[I think I go] at least once a week. I think my favorites have been the Oreo, the confetti, and, of course, Chocolate chip.” While the cookie shop now has a wait time of around an hour on busy nights, and regularly sells out of cookies, some think



Photo by Danielle Rancifer

A line forms outside Crumbl Cookies in Dyer. Such lines have been a common sight since the store’s opening in July.

the popularity may not last long, and people will soon fall out of infatuation. Freshman Ellie Radcliff says, “You can only have [cookies] so much. The changing flavors helps, but at some point you lose interest. At the beginning there was so much interest surrounding it, but now I feel like that’s all gone.” Senior Josie Plank, a frequent Crumbl customer, says, “I think [the infatuation] will last. It’s more than just getting cookies; it’s an activity to enjoy with your friends. You get to wait in line, talk, and have fun. It’s something to do. I don’t think it’ll die down.”

Illiana’s student art collection grows thanks to generous support from Boonstra family donation



Kevin Truong’s “Surrender” hangs in the English Commons.

Tristen Bell
Reporter

Illiana’s art collection now includes a new portrait by senior Kevin Truong titled “Surrender” hanging in the English commons thanks to a fund started by the mother of Principal Peter Boonstra. Truong, an international student from Vietnam who lived with Boonstra last year, estimated that it took him three months to complete the portrait. He said it was really an exercise to work on improving his painting skills. Once it was completed, he said it felt like he accomplished more than just a painting, something more like overcoming a challenge. The portrait won Best in Show in last year’s Fine Arts Festival, and the school purchased it a short time later. Truong’s painting is based on a poster of the actress Glenn Close for the musical

Sunset Boulevard, which was based on the 1950’s movie. He was immediately drawn to her when he saw clips of the musical. “I think that the poster is a really captivating image of her,” said Truong. Truong said that he chose to paint the photo because one of his strengths is black and white acrylic painting. “Certainly Kevin’s technical proficiency tops the list of what makes this such a good painting,” said Jim Kamphuis, Illiana’s art teacher. “The fact that the subject is also looking straight at you, the viewer, makes the image quite striking.” Truong’s painting joins another art piece that has been displayed in the halls of Illiana for the last year, a portrait called “Sum of Its Parts.” This piece, created by Gabriel Albanese during spring of 2020, hangs near the top of

the staircase in the common. “Sum of Its Parts”: was the first art piece the school purchased with a fund established by Boonstra’s mother, a artist and teacher who also worked at Illiana for a short time. She wished to elevate arts education and appreciation at the school by buying excellent student art to hang around the building. Art teacher Jim Kamphuis created the frame for Gabriel’s painting because it is such a large piece. Boonstra’s mother, Natalie Boonstra, donated thousands of dollars to the art collection fund, and with that money, Illiana has been able to purchase all of these students’ artworks while also encouraging other students who are into drawing to express themselves. “All of the student artwork in this building certainly reminds me of my mother because of the role she played,” said Boonstra.

New club focuses on fashion, sparks ideas in students

An Illiana senior takes advantage of creative options for clubs

Lucas VanderWoude
Arts Editor

Senior Kyla Bennett has decided to leave a mark her last year at Illiana by starting the brand-new Lights, Cam-

era, Fashion! club. This year, students had the option to join one of the original clubs that teachers had been sponsoring the years before, or to reach out

to a teacher without a club and ask that teacher to sponsor their idea. When Bennett heard this, she decided to ask Mrs. Slikers to sponsor her idea. “I wanted to be a leader my last year of high school,” said Bennett, “and one of the things that I’m really passion-

ate about is fashion. Nothing specific really inspired me to do it; it was just spontaneous.” “I really like the club so far,” said Sam Franco, a sophomore in the club. “The people are really chill, and we get to talk about things that we normally don’t talk

about in school, like fashion choices.” The club’s message to students is based on Psalm 139:14: “I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made...” Club members try new things fashion-wise, donate to charity, and design their own shirts and jeans.

Baseball team reflects on state championship win

Lucas VanderWoude

Arts Editor

Last summer, the Illiana boys' baseball team won the championship game in their division's state finals, thus becoming the first ever Illiana team to win a state championship.

"It makes me feel happy, proud, & humbled," said Jeff Vander Woude, the Varsity boys' baseball coach. "Happy & proud of the young men, the coaches, and our school. Humbled that God chose to use all of us for this moment."

"It made the win seem more special," said Josh Vis, a senior at Illiana and member of the Varsity team. "It makes me feel really good that we'll be in Illiana history forever."

Reflecting on the team's success, Vander Woude said, "The main strength of our team was our team chemistry. The family bond that was formed and the selflessness that the young men showed. They played for each other and trusted in

one another. They were able to put the team and their teammates before themselves. They did not care who got the credit."

Because this was the first state championship that Illiana has ever won, some people might be wondering if it might put pressure on future baseball teams. Vander Woude sees it differently.

"I think pressure is something that people put on themselves or each other

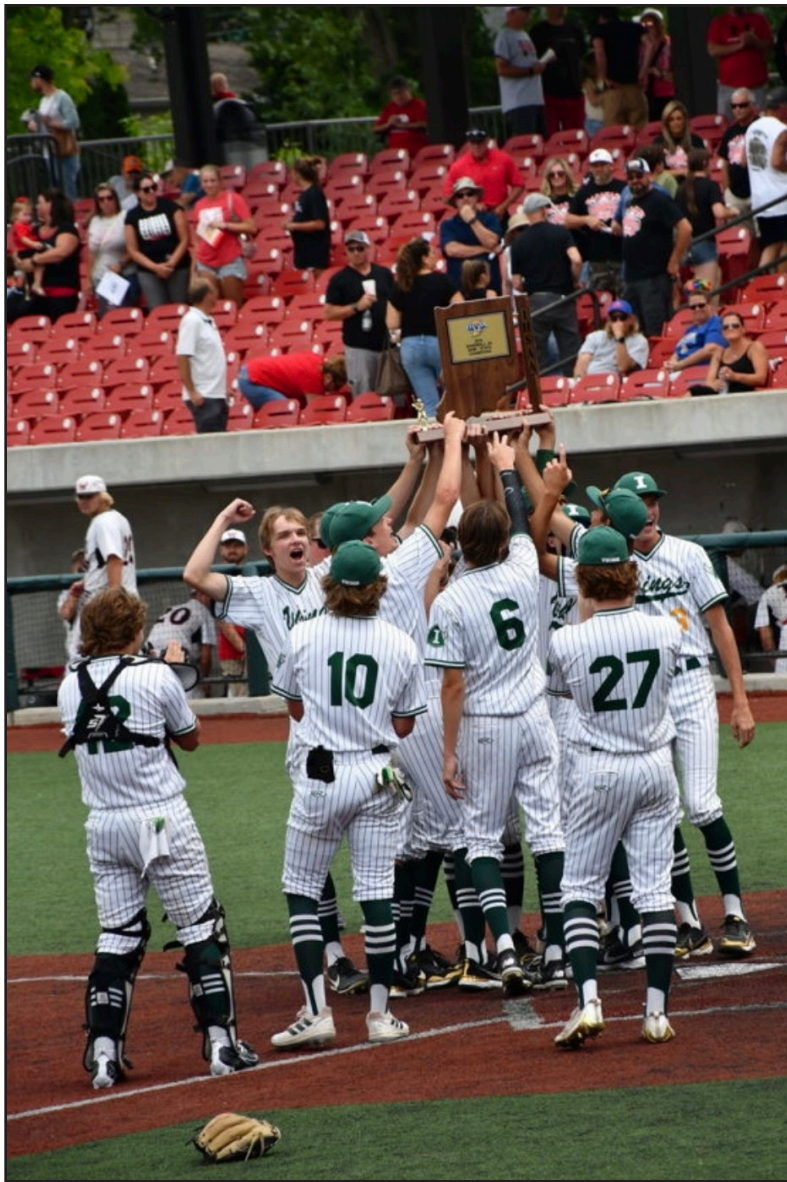


Photo courtesy of Grace Jania

The boys celebrate around their trophy after their championship victory.

and is not something that is not controllable," he said. "Our message to our players and our team will never change with this coaching staff. We strive to win a State Championship every single year, but we focus on our process of being the best player, teammate, & coach that we can be. If we do those things and put our energy on things that we can control, then we will not only grow as

baseball players but as men. If that happens, then the season will be a success."

Players on the team agreed with their coach. "We are learning to live one day at a time, and we are going to play our game. If we lose, we know we did everything to put us in the best position," said Kevin Corcoran, a senior who pitched the championship game last June.

Vander Woude said that the best part of winning the championship was "to have the ability to see the pure joy on the faces of our players, coaches, and school community." He also gave a challenge to everybody watching and involved: "We can do anything that we put our mind to. It will not be easy. It will take a lot of time, dedication, and work. There will be highs and lows, but if you can push yourself through it, believe that God has you and is right there with you, and believe in yourself, then a lot of great things can happen."

Boys cross finds team success with focus on personal improvement

Kyla Bennett

Sports Editor

The boys' cross country team has improved over the past few years, and this year they say that they might even have a chance at winning state!

The team captured 2nd place in the Christian School Invite in Michigan and 1st place at the New Prairie Invite.

Coach Ramos approaches training his runners individually, working to get each of them to improve his own running skills at his own ability.

Junior Nolan Bouwman said, "I really trust Coach Ramos because he gives great critique but doesn't try to beat on us too hard."

The team's most consistent medalists include senior Fritz Olthof and juniors Nolan Bouwman and Jarvis Mickles.



Photo courtesy of Jeff DeVries

Alex Cruz, Sienna Eenigenburg, and Sabri Lopez celebrate a goal which gave the team a 5-0 lead against Bethany Christian on

Girls soccer team cruises through conference, sets sights on sectional win

Danielle Rancifer

News Editor

The varsity girls soccer team, coached by Ms. Erin Behn, is playing impressive soccer this season, sporting

a 7-2-3 record as of Sept. 23, and a 2-1 record in Conference. The team is coming off a shutout win over Griffith.

Cameron Evers, and Taylor Albert, senior co-

captains of the team, join fellow seniors Katie Mejan and Sabri Lopez to lead the team.

Albert said, "I try to do more personal things; after a game I try to text play-

ers who are being hard on themselves, and I just try to focus on some things that are under the surface."

Coach Behn also spoke about this year's team dynamics, and how the team is so special, mostly because of "how well they bond with each other" and how sometimes she literally, "cant keep them away from each other."

Albert echoed her sentiment: "This year, as a team we are so close...I feel like it really is like a family."

Behn shared long and short term hopes she has for the future of the girls soccer program, saying, "I would love to see us win sectionals this year. We have a tough sectional.... We have never won a game in sectional. We've always been booted first round, so I would really love to at least one win, and it would be amazing to make it to the sectional final, and I hope we finish one or two in our conference this year...I would love to just see the growing of the program, and improvement year by year." The Vikings will wrap up the regular season on Sept. 30 with a game against Victory Christian Academy. Sectional play begins on Monday, Oct. 3.



Viking sports briefs



Girls golf finishes season strong with 3rd place in conference

Grace Jania
Editor-in-Chief

The girls' varsity golf team finished its season with a record of 13-9 and a conference record of 11-4. Coach Suzanne Jonkman reflected on the girls' performances this season, noting that they personally challenged themselves to "help make every swing count."

Senior Kaitlin Dykstra, with the lowest putting average on the team this season, said, "Our score each match kept getting lower and lower, so that was good." "Golf can be a difficult and frustrating game," Jonkman said. "Our girls had an even keel mindset; serious, but realistic. The girls looked for positives after a match and congratulated each other."

Young tennis players take leadership roles

Grace Jania
Editor-in-Chief

The boys' varsity tennis team is currently sporting a record of 6-4. Coach Karen Blaauw remarked that a lack of senior players has affected the team's performance but added that "our juniors have re-

ally stepped up to the plate, and as the season has progressed, they have taken on leadership and are setting a nice tone for the team." Junior Hunter DeYoung, captain of the varsity team, said that he is looking forward to seeing the team improve in form, technique, and gameplay.

Volleyball team hangs near .500 record

Kailyda Anderson
Sports Editor

The girls' volleyball team has a record of 10 wins and 11 losses, including an exciting win against Hanover Central and a disappointing loss in three sets to longtime rival Chicago Christian in Palos Heights. Senior Anneka Zylstra said the girls have made strides this

fall, emphasizing their recent win against Hanover as evidence. They played a total of five sets. Zylstra said the team really pulled together that night. "Our team bonding outside of volleyball involves lots of food, energy bouncing off each other, and knowing we can rely on one another off and on the court," Zylstra said.



Photo by Jill Rozendal
Junior Zander Weemhoff brings up the ball during a 6-0 win at home against Lowell High School on Sept. 8.

Boys soccer team leans on strong defense

Cameron Evers
Feature Editor

The Illiana boys soccer season is underway with varsity having thirteen games under their belt and JV having 11. The varsity team has a record of 7-4-2 and JV of 7-2-2. After losing seven seniors from last year, the varsity team took on a new formation, a 5-3-2, hoping to give the team a strong defensive line.

Varsity captain, senior Caden Buxton, said, "I am excited to see how far we can go. We have been improving a lot." JV captain Henry Lenehan says the team takes on a strong defensive role which has led them to success. Lenehan said what makes Illiana soccer different: "We start every game by getting in a huddle and praying together. We are always there to encourage one another."

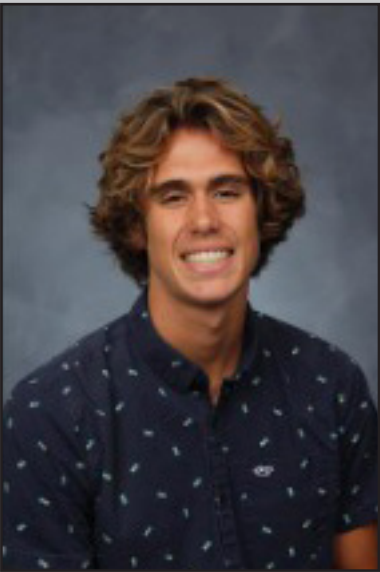
Girls cross country enjoys 3rd place finish at New Prairie Invite

Kyla Bennett
Sports Editor

The girls' cross country has been on a roll so far, including a 5th place finish at the Christian School Invite in Michigan and a 3rd place finish at the New Prairie Invite. Each day of practice they meet in Coach Fennema's room. They then drive to a place like a nature preserve to train. Mondays are long runs. Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays are short runs. Wednesdays are workout days. Senior Alex Vis said the team's most important meet was the Lake Central Invite because "it gave us a look to see who our competition was." The team's most consistent medalists are seniors Faith VanRyn and Alex Vis, junior Avery Olthof, and sophomore Ella Olthof. The team is planning senior day for the Regional meet at Lemon Lake County Park on Oct. 15.

Male Athlete of the Month

Fritz Olthof, senior, has been an amazing team member on the cross-country team that has led him to receive the label of Athlete of the Month. Olthof has consistently placed in the top ten runners, and he won the Hobart Invite. "He has emerged as our leader this cross-country season and has led us through almost every track meet", said Coach Ramos, the Boys' Cross Country team's head coach.



Female Athlete of the Month

Kaitlin Dykstra, a senior, has been an outstanding player for the girls golf team. Kaitlin has played golf for the 2 seasons that Illiana has offered the sport. "She is our most consistent player on the course in terms of playing and attitude," said Coach Suzanne Jonkman. "She is also a natural team leader and has been committed to the golf program." Kaitlin made 2nd team All-Conference, and she holds the record for least number of putts in a tournament.



Editorial

Let's improve lunch, abide by golden rule

Well, a new school year is upon us. We have a little over 500 students crammed into this building, so we hear you, nervous freshmen and transfer students. We were the same way when we were freshmen, and there were way fewer people back then. Let's talk about one of the most nerve-wracking things a new student can face-- lunchtime. We could give you advice about how to find people to sit with at lunch, but that's boring. Let's focus on something more interesting: lunch etiquette.

Some of you might be thinking, "Ok, that's not fair, he just pulled a fancy word on me." Well, you're in luck, because we are those nice people who will define it for you. Etiquette is defined by Google as "the customary code of polite behavior in society or among members of a particular profession or group." Well, everyone in this school knows that people at lunch could use a little brush up on etiquette, so let's begin.

We won't start off too harshly, because we know that lunchtime is the longest one of the two breaks that Illiana students get in the day. We get it, you just want to have a fun and relaxing lunch with your friends and don't care if you leave food on the table. Which

leads me to Illiana students' first breach of lunch etiquette: food on the table. It's fine if you bring messy food or spill something on the table, as long as you clean it up. It really doesn't take that much time, and before you completely disregard this one and skip down the page, think about a time when you sat at a

“It’s fine if you bring messy food, or spill something on the table, as long as you clean it up.”

table or desk, and it was completely covered in food and/or drink somebody had spilled. Did you feel angry? Well, here's where we get super cheesy and quote the Golden Rule, except we won't because you all know it. Just help each other out and clean up after yourself, ok? It'll leave less work for the janitors and cause less rage among fellow students.

Okay, time for the second common breach of lunch etiquette--leaving the lunchroom before the bell has rung. We know that you heard this from

Mr. Boonstra, but we're going to tell you again- you do not need any more than 5 minutes to get to your class. Anybody could probably walk around the entire school in 5 minutes. Don't take us up on that, but you know what we mean. This school, compared to other high schools, is small. The 5-minute passing periods

and the classrooms were designed to get everyone to class on time, so if you do feel rushed to get to class, then either you are walking very slowly or you wasted too much time talking to your friends or buying something from Common Grounds. You should enjoy as much time out of your breaks as you can, not shorten them to go to class early. Some of you freshmen might not consider your break time very valuable but take it from juniors and seniors: you will need your break time.

Furthermore, even if you

don't leave the lunchroom, getting up from your table and milling around for the last five minutes is very rude to the people trying to finish their lunch. How would you feel if you were trying to eat and talk with your friends and there was a huge group of students surrounding your table, looming over your shoulder, and blocking your view? You would likely be annoyed and feel awkward. Well, this is where we come full circle (a nod to Mr. White) and refer to the Golden Rule again.

Well, that about wraps it up. Just to be clear: We're not calling anyone out specifically. We're trying to make everyone have a better lunchtime experience. Also, if you see someone breaching one or both of the two etiquette rules we mentioned above, don't yell at them or call them out in front of everyone. Just calmly remind them, "Hey, I don't think we're supposed to leave the lunchroom yet," or "Would you mind cleaning up your mess?" or something like that.

Just remember we're all in this together. If we all use proper etiquette, we all can make the lunchroom a better environment; not just for our janitors, but for everyone.

Balancing sleep schedule, social life

Do you think you get enough sleep? Many teens suffer from sleep deprivation due to late night homework, sports, jobs, and other obligations. Both the National Sleep Foundation and the American Academy of Sleep Medicine recommend that teens get at least 8-10 hours of sleep per night. Getting enough sleep per night is important for maintaining physical health, emotional well-being, and school performance.



Kailyda Anderson
Co-Sports Editor

Everyone deserves to have a good amount of sleep per night, but many distractions cause us to go to bed late. Sleep statistics show that teens right now are only getting 5-7 hours of sleep per night, causing them to be drowsy in the morning, tired throughout the day, and lethargic in the face of various tasks. Not getting enough sleep can also cause a person to be moody, impacting the relationships with others around him or her. Another factor in not getting enough sleep is our phones. With social media, it's easy to stay up late at night Snapchatting, scrolling through Instagram, or watching Tik Tok, Youtube, or Netflix. These distractions are a factor in not being able to get necessary sleep.

Personally, I sometimes only get about 5-7 hours of sleep. I have to balance school, work, and dance all in a matter of less than 24 hours. Sometimes in order to get at least six hours of sleep, I have to put off my homework until the last minute to work on it in the morning before school starts. Sometimes it can be stressful and tiring to come to school with little sleep. I stay up late scrolling through Tik Tok and lose track of time. It's hard finding balance to do all of the things I want to do in a day. And with getting little sleep, it's hard to wake up in the morning. I'm always rushing out the door to try to get to school on time. I'm sure many people can relate to this, which is why it's crucial to get more sleep.

Some things we can do to try to get more sleep is make a schedule of what our day is going to look like. That is what I have found to be most helpful with getting enough sleep at night. Having a schedule allows me to discipline myself from doing anything else in the day that takes up my sleep time. Something else that also helps me is putting screen time on my phone. As soon as the time scheduled for me to go to bed comes up, my phone turns off and locks itself until morning.

These are just a few suggestions on how to try to get more sleep, but you can do whatever works best for you. Sleeping is just as important as drinking and eating, and your body needs it. So set your alarm for the morning, and try to go to bed as early as you can tonight.

the Echo

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