

The SRO will help with Illiana's overall security plan and operations for the campus; over the summer, the school plans to re-evaluate the program to continue to keep the school safe.

Looking for heroes

I'm not a huge fan of Marvel movies. I know that right now the MCU fans reading this are furious, but I'm not ashamed of admitting it. There's a lot of reasons why: the hit-or-miss humor, the long action scenes with a huge overdose of special effects, the predictable villains. However, I won't deny that in the past decade Marvel has made many, many, many, movies, and almost all of them were hits at the box office. Their popularity has caused me to ask this question many times:



Lucas Vander

Arts and Leisure Editor

I give it away, let's dive into the history of heroes.

Heroes, of course, didn't start with the Marvel Cinematic Universe. People always have been penning stories about fictional heroes who save the day, as well as telling the stories of real heroes who lived. Probably the oldest hero stories are those of the Judges in the Bible, such as the famous story of Sampson, who got super strength from God and pushed down the pillars of the Philistine temple. There are also the Greek and Roman myths about demigods like Hercules, who was the offspring of Zeus and a mortal woman and had unnatural powers. Then we have the epic poem Beowulf, about a hero who saves King Hrothgar's kingdom from the evil monster Grendel. If we fast forward even farther, we have Robin Hood, the famous subject of many ballads and tales who stole from the rich and gave to the poor. When we look at all these heroes, there is one thing that we know for sure: humanity is looking for a hero.

This world is not perfect; everyone knows that. Due to tsin, there are many evil people who only want to cause devastation and wreak havoc with the goodness of God's creation. But who was the original being who caused this? Who tempted and lied to us to break our covenant with God? The very first villain—Satan—is the pure embodiment of evil, and his machinations caused the entire world to fall into sin and despair. This is why countless people have looked at this broken world and tried to imagine somebody who could fix a part of it, or all of it. A hero with great powers who uses violence for good, beats up the bad guy, and saves the day. Well, I've got good news and bad news for the world- a hero has already come, but he's not the type of hero that you're looking for.

In Jesus' time, many of his followers didn't understand what he was here to do. They knew that he was the promised Messiah, and he did fit their definition of what a hero should be by performing miracles and casting out demons, but they thought that he was going to drive out the Roman empire and establish a powerful Israelite empire like in the Old Testament. However, Jesus' heroic plan was not just for the Jews, and it did not involve any physical violence of any kind. His heroic plan was not to beat up Satan or the Romans, but to show his power over death by dying. He made the ultimate sacrifice for humankind, the most selfless act that anyone has ever done on this earth. He is mankind's hero.

In today's broken world, it is no surprise that people are looking for a hero. Sometimes it just feels good to shut out the real world for a while and imagine somebody who can beat up the bad guy and save the day. However, maybe what these Marvel fans are looking for is somebody who they weren't. Jesus isn't your typical Marvel hero with fancy equipment, catchy one-liners, or flashy superpowers, but he did do something that no Marvel hero has ever done- he bore the weight of all our sin to free us from our sin, and he died on the cross to conquer death. If that isn't something to marvel at, then I don't know what is.

“Why is our culture obsessed with heroes?” Well, there's a very simple answer, but before



Runners wait to begin race

Photo courtesy of Illiana Facebook

Masked bandit caught in dugout

Lydia O'Riley

Reporter

Although Illiana has had birds building nests in the baseball dugouts for the last five years, there had never been a raccoon spotting until Saturday, April 1. Assistant coach of the baseball team, Kevin Corcoran, came to work on the fields and discovered a raccoon living in one of the baseball dugouts.

Though Corcoran tried to get the raccoon out of the dugout himself, he explained “The raccoon was not friendly, that's for sure.”

Corcoran called “a local outdoorsman friend” to help assist with the raccoon, which ultimately led to the raccoon being shot and removed from the dugout.

Isaac VanderWoude, junior on the varsity baseball team, saw the raccoon and said it was the size of “a small cub.” Coach Corcoran said it was, “A normal size raccoon that you would see day to day.” A small cub and a normal raccoon may seem to have large size differences, but they are both the same size ranging from 9 to 12 inches in length.

8th graders to celebrate their future at Illiana

Tristen Bell

Reporter

Illiana invited 8th Graders to have an enjoyable time here at the school the evening of Friday, April 28.

The event as a whole is to introduce these students to Illiana while also giving them time to appreciate one another and play games. Mrs. Dutton, Director of Admissions here at Illiana, planned the event with Mrs. Van Essen before took charge of planning the rest of it.

Dutton gave an opportunity to current students to sign up to volunteer at the function. The party itself will be from 5:30-8:00 P.M. Students will participate in different games and activities like KanJam, bean bags, Slam Ball, and Bocce Ball. Barbeque is

the menu. The kids will arrive at the school, eat, play an icebreaker game so that everyone can get acquainted with one another, then break out into the yard games.

Dutton explained that the event is a win-win, helping new students feel a part of Illiana and helping Illiana's reputation as a welcoming place to grow. She said, “It's mostly for the kids, and doesn't do much for the school now, but it will later.”

This party is the second time that the school has hosted such an event. A year ago the school sponsored a party for students who are now freshmen. Those students made time capsules so that in the future, they could come back and reminisce about old times.

Pancake Pacer draws crowd

Sophia Oostema

Reporter

Illiana Christian High School hosted the 13th annual Pancake Pacer race and breakfast to raise money for the athletic departments on Saturday, April 22.

The race was held at the Midwest Training & Ice Center. Approximately 140 runners signed up ahead of time to take part in the event. After participants finished their 5k walk or run, they came to Illiana to enjoy a pancake breakfast, which was put on by Illiana spring athletes.

Bonnie Trepton, Athletic Assistant, stated “The money raised goes into pays for new uniforms, officials, workers at the games, equipment for teams, athletic facility upgrades and maintenance and much

more.”

The entire event is run by students participating in spring sports. Every player is assigned a job, whether it be setting up the night before, encouraging the runners, cooking in the kitchen, or taking breakfast tickets at the door.

Second-time Pancake Pacer worker and spring athlete, Kate Santefort, helped by making gluten-free pancakes in the kitchen. She said that she “loves the Pancake Pacer environment and enjoys seeing all the happy faces enjoying the breakfast.”

Overall, 335 people attended the Pancake Pacer breakfast.

Darren DeBoer, Athletic Director, said that the turnout was good and that the event was generally successful.



Photo courtesy of Jeff DeVries

Students in the spring of 2014 help at “Feed my starving children” for what was then called Christian Service Day.

'Go day' continues to evolve

Kayla Bosman

Reporter

Go Day marked its 22nd reunion this year as it started in 2001, known at that time as Christian Service Day. Though the name has changed, many other aspects of Go day have remained. It has always consisted of homerooms going out to serve others. Some of the first student acts consisted of painting a mural at the Harvest Thrift Center and working at soup kitchens.

Despite those similarities, the yearly event is still ever evolving. Ms. Sara Johnson began working here six years after Christian Service Day was founded, and she took charge of planning 16 years ago, and has sought ways to continually improve it.

Johnson said, “I have shortened it to more of a half day and I have added the cookout after, and—beginning next year—I have

moved it to the fall.”

Before it was so, Principal Peter Boonstra described Go day as a “let's work them all day” event.

The addition of the cookout has had many benefits with the school and the student body. Johnson said, “Attendance is much much much better than 16 years ago when I started. It was a common day for students to skip 16 years ago, and I think our kids have placed more value on being here for a good day...I think as they're there working, kids do begin to understand that the day is about helping others.”

Boonstra described Go Day as helping young Christians reflect Jesus's morals and his teachings. He added, “I'm not saying Jesus raked leaves, but he's all about loving other people, and that's what this is all about.”

Credit from Ivy Tech gives students jumpstart on college

Emily Bantsolas
Reporter

Illiana Christian’s dual credit courses have earned students college credits, have allowed graduates to skip college courses, and has allowed ICHS to rank high among high schools in the number of such offerings in Northwest Indiana.

Ivy Tech College’s free Dual Credit program allows students to earn college credits while taking high school classes. While attending their classes each day, students are earning college credit while becoming adequately prepared for college level courses.

Illiana expanded its dual credit program with the help of Mr. Vermeulen, STEM teacher at Illiana, when he was hired five years ago. Before the move to Indiana, the school had offered several dual credit courses in association with colleges and universities other than Ivy Tech, but with the move to Indiana, Illiana was able to get involved in the Ivy Tech dual credit program, a program that is free to students.

“After I was hired, Mr. Boonstra and I got together with the Ivy Tech director because I said I would love to bring Ivy Tech to Illiana if it’s a possibility,” said Vermeulen, “and sure enough, it was.”

When Illiana first adopted Ivy Tech’s dual credit, the school offered only three courses, which were Mr. Vermeulen’s engineering classes. Now, in just five years, Illiana has grown its offerings to 22 dual credit courses, with plans to add more next fall.

Illiana’s rising number of course offerings places it second amongst Northwest Indiana high schools with the most dual credit courses, just behind Munster High School which offers 25.

These courses have allowed students to graduate from Illiana and skip classes that most college freshmen are required to take. Isabella Vander Woude, Illiana alumni who now studies at Baylor University in Texas, had 35 credit hours transferred to her university, the equivalent of a full year of college education.

VanderWoude said, “Because of those courses, I am able to take upper level classes earlier than most college freshmen, and I am planning to study abroad and graduate a year early.”

Every student who graduates from Illiana will most likely earn college credit through Ivy Tech because two required classes are also offered as dual credit courses.



Photo courtesy of Illiana Facebook

Students on L.A. Misson trip take a photo together while holding the Los Angeles city flag.

Showing God’s love during L.A. misson trip

Korina Johnson
Reporter

In the last week of March, during spring break, 13 students traveled to Los Angeles on a mission trip in which they participated in a variety of service projects including working at churches, the

Dream Center, food kitchens, and more.

“We ran a block party and did painting at an urban church called Inside Out L.A.,” said Peter Boonstra, Illiana’s principal and one of the trips chaperones. “We did food distribution in underserved neighborhoods,

went door-to-door praying for folks, visited people without housing, and went to the beach. One of the most moving moments was rescuing a woman who had been living on Skid Row and bringing her to the Dream Center for housing.”

Work with the Dream

Center is a large part of the mission trip. The Dream Center is a ministry providing support for people affected from a variety of things including homelessness, addiction, hunger, and more.

“We became connected to the Dream Center through Illiana alum Jacob Thompson who works in the Short-Term Missions program,” said Boonstra.

Going on these mission trips gives students a chance to be closer to God and to have fun. “There’s the beach and the fun..., but the best reason to go is to learn a little more about living a life of service for Jesus,” said Boonstra.

Additionally, mission trips provide people with something they will never forget. “My favorite part was going to Skid Row and working with Dream Center,” said Brenna Thompson, a senior at Illiana. “It was a very eye opening experience. I feel like we are in a sense sheltered and don’t realize what others experience.”

Working hard, making a difference in West Virginia

Angelica Voyles
Reporter

West Virginia is one of the mission trips that Illiana students made over spring break. ICHS students have been going there since 2019, working every year with the same family and working with Young Life this year.

This trip consisted of working for local people who needed help. Students worked for someone that needed some yard work done and they aided at a local food bank.

One main project that students worked on was turning a former church building into a community center aimed at helping human trafficking victims. The community center is named “The Castle.” The church had been formerly pastored by an Illiana graduate, and the church congregation donated the building “free and clear” for its new use, Missions Director and trip chaperone Sara Johnson said.

Junior Savannah Sampson had said that the area was somewhat run down and that

the group’s work definitely made a difference. The most rewarding part was “helping people that needed help” however the downside for her was that they didn’t get to finish some of the work that they originally wanted to.

Sampson had said that she would “really recommend [the West Virginia trip] to other people” because you get to talk to people you never really talked to before.

Johnson said that mission trips give a “variety of opportunities” to students and also appeal to different interests that the students might have. Such trips are important because students get to experience being an open instrument for the will of God, and students grow more open to the larger plan that God has.

Faith VanWieren, a senior who has been to the West Virginia Mission Trip three times, said that it’s a great way of “building relationships with other people” and that the most important part of the experience for her is sharing the gospel with others.



Photo courtesy of Illiana Facebook

Students unload a truck filled with supplies for those in need

Groundbreaking for Phase 2 coming in May

Kelsee Smit
Reporter

Phase 2 of the Illiana Building Campaign plans to break ground on May 20, at 9 am officially. This portion of Phase 2 will create 8 more classrooms and double the size of the commons. The next portion of Phase 2 includes the vocational wing, but to include that in the next year’s construction will require rais-

ing around another \$1.9 million. The campaign committee hopes to raise the funds before groundbreaking so the classrooms, commons, and vocational wing go up together.

Mr. Lance Davids said, “To sum it up we will get a lot more classrooms, common spaces will get a whole lot bigger, family consumer sciences and vocation programs will have a whole lot more space.”

Construction will take about 14 months to complete and will be read by the Fall of 2024. The addition to Illiana will take place in the Southeast area at the front of the building.

Explaining the reason for the project, Davids said, “One, we need more space, and two when we built this building, we stepped back the vocational program, and we need to build that back up. So

it is not just a space issue, it is a programming thing too. We want to provide these programs for all our students.”

So far Illiana has raised over \$12.5 million since the start of the campaign less than one year ago, and all those funds, said Davids, help Illiana achieve its mission of developing in its students a passion for God, people, and the world.

Affordable prom planning

Cameron Evers

Feature Editor

Between dresses, suits, shoes, heels, flowers, after parties, promposals, and accessories in addition to tickets, prom can be a very expensive night. No one wants to miss out on all the fun parts of prom, but blowing hundreds of dollars on one night a year isn't ideal either. This guide will hopefully help steer your prom spending toward more frugal choices, helping to make prom more enjoyable and less financially burdensome.



Photo by HR Imaging

Brandon Helmus crowd surfs the students at last year's prom

Dressing the part

Although prom dresses and suits have a reputation for breaking the bank, they can be affordable when shopping at the right places. Many local boutiques sell designer dresses that start at \$400 and even tend to be much more expensive than that. While some people may want to splurge on their prom dresses, it is not necessary. David's Bridal offers some affordable dress options, and their sale section often includes dresses under \$100. Windsor store also sells numerous prom dresses under \$150, many of them around \$50-60. Department stores such as Macy's and Dillard's also sell a variety of affordable prom dresses.

Another option for finding affordable dresses is buying second-hand. Many girls offer to sell their used dresses through social media, Poshmark, Facebook Marketplace, or other second-hand shops.

This is a great option for finding designer dresses at a discounted rate.

Tuxedos and suits can sometimes be just as expensive as dresses, if not more. A great option for prom is renting a tuxedo or suit as opposed to buying it. Renting is only a fraction of the price and places like Dunhill Tuxedos and David's Bridal offer a variety of styles and colors. Both shops also tailor the suits to each person's body giving the suit the best fit possible.

Affordable Accessories

After the dress and suit are decided the spending doesn't stop. Shoes, purses, and jewelry are necessary, but don't have to be expensive. Macy's, Amazon, and Nordstrom Rack are great places to shop for affordable or discounted heels. Macy's and Nordstrom Rack also have great options for men's dress shoes. Jewelry and purses can also be found on Amazon, Windsor, H&M, or Target for an affordable price. Borrowing jewelry and purses is also a great option to save some money.

Praiseworthy Promposals

Another more recent tradition that can be made affordable is promposals. When going as friends or on a date, using food such as cookies, donuts, brownies, etc. can be a simple and inexpensive way to ask someone to prom. Another idea could be writing

"Prom?" on a sports ball or a poster with pictures, then presenting it to the potential date. There are plenty of creative and thoughtful ways to achieve a Pinterest-worthy promposal without spending too much money.

Senior Nico Sytsma pulled out all the stops for his homecoming proposal to his girlfriend Gracie Jania, yet he didn't have to spend a dime. Sytsma recruited his friends Christian Diehl, Vincent VanDeel, Samuel Kooistra, Jacob VanVossen, and Dale Herman to help plan this special proposal. After school, the boys taped letters to their chest spelling out "HOCO?" and hid in their cars while Gracie was led to the parking lot by her friends. When she was in sight, the boys hopped out of their car and got into order while Sytsma popped the big question, "Will you go to homecoming with me?" Jania said yes and the two embraced.

Sytsma advises people trying to plan a fun promposal to "make it something that you think outside of the box because a lot of people do the same ideas." In regards to his promposal, Sytsma has some ideas in the works and said, "I'm not going to reveal them yet, but I have two ideas and it just depends on the route I want to take."

Awesome After parties

After the dance, many students want to keep the party going but don't want to sacrifice more money to do so. Planning an after party or after dance



Photo by Sherri Hill



Photo by Windsor

Above is a dress from Windsor that costs \$119 compared to a Sherri Hill dress on the left that costs \$500. The two dresses have slight differences, but still look very similar with a drastic difference in price.

activity is an easy way to spend a lot of money, but it doesn't always have to be. Going bowling, roller skating, mini golfing, getting dessert, or going to the drive-in movie theater

are all affordable options. Hosting a movie night, game night, dessert fondue, karaoke party, a bonfire, or a sleepover are all free and fun options as well.



Photo by HR Imaging

Maddie Ritzema, Jenna Norman, Cassie Otto, Brenna Thompson, and Hailey Montalvo pose for a picture before dinner, games, and dancing at last year's prom

Fine Arts competition showcases student talent

Award Winners

Drama and Speech 1st: Adia Falvey 2nd: Levi Sliemers 3rd: Annabel Kamphuis, Janna van Belle, Kayla Bosman	Vocal Solo 1st: Tess Hensley 2nd: Anna Bauer 3rd: Kevin Truong Honorable Mentions: Audrey Yonkman, Adia Falvey	Piano 1st: Heidi Gorter and Raelyn Sederstrom 2nd: Taylor Albert
Instrumental Solo 1st: Tony Ren 2nd: Levi Sliemers Honorable Mentions: Heidi Gorter, Brandon DeYoung, Elliot VanDerGriend	Vocal Ensemble: 1st: Anna Bauer and Abbey Helmus 2nd: Amelia Yonkman, Lainey Schoon, Hannah Sherman, and Kamryn Taylor 3rd: Amelia Yonkman and Audrey Yonkman	Poetry 1st: Landon Worries 2nd: Jessica Roznowski 3rd: Steven Seiber and Jenny Beedle
Instrumental Ensemble 1st: Elliot VanDerGriend, Nolan Bouwman	Short Story 1st: Lauralynn Corrales 2nd: Adia Falvey 3rd: Danielle Rancifer	Essay 1st: Danielle Rancifer 2nd: Gracie Jania 3rd: Cameron Evers
Abstract Photography 1st: Kayla Bosman 2nd: Jessica Roznowski	Portrait Photography 1st: Morgan Smith 2nd: Ellie Kamphuis 3rd: Vinny VanDeel	
Architecture Photography 1st: Lily Krekes 2nd: Jessica Roznowski 3rd: Kayla Bosman	Still Life Photography 1st: Daniel Persenaire 2nd: Abbie Ritzema	
Nature Photography Best in Show: Morgan Smith 1st: Leah Carton 2nd: Delaney Kelly 3rd: Ryan Sederstrom	Black and White Drawing Best in Show: Arden DeGraff 1st: Adia Falvey 2nd: Karlee Klee 3rd: Jessica Roznowski	
Sculpture 1st: Kayla Bosman 2nd: Kayla Bosman 3rd: Maddy Smith	Ceramics 1st: Kevin Truong 2nd: Abbie Ritzema 3rd: Kevin Truong	Color Drawing 1st: Priya Sen 2nd: Katie Mejan 3rd: Arden DeGraff
Painting 1st: Jessica Roznowski 2nd: Kevin Truong 3rd: Priya Sen	Printmaking 1st: Priya Sen 2nd: Kyrin Baker	3rd: Jessica Roznowski



Tony Ren won first place in the solo instrumental category with his performance of “Attention” by Charlie Puth.



Abbey Helmus and Anna Bauer won first place in the vocal ensemble category with their performance of “When I Say Amen.”



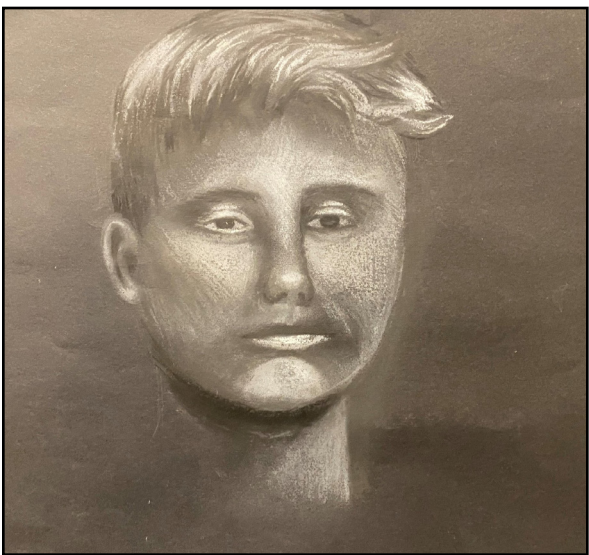
Priya Sen won third place in the painting category with her piece “Mannequin.”



Heidi Gorter tied for first place in the piano category with her performance of “Opening Theme From the First Movement of the Piano Concerto” by Edvard Grieg.



Adia Falvey won first place in the drama competition with her performance of “When I Die.”



Arden DeGraff won best in show in the visual art category with her drawing “Forced Entry #2.”



Morgan Smith won best of show in the photography category with “A Drop or a Drip.”



Kevin Truong won third place in the ceramics category with his piece “Artifact from the Past.”

Softball teams juggle “floating” players

Kailyda Anderson

Sports Editor

The Illiana girls’ softball team has officially returned and is ready for this upcoming season. In winter, they conditioned, along with practicing hitting, drilling, and throwing. A crucial thing they focused on was having a good mindset during their games and practices. Their current record is 6-2.

The floaters for the team this year include junior Amanda Rozendal, junior Alyssa Mulder, sophomore Abbie Ritzema, sophomore Lauren Sherwood, junior Bayleigh Vanderzee, and freshman Cayden Peterson. Some might wonder how it feels to drift between both teams and wonder what team they’re playing for that day.

Rozendal responded with, “At first I was upset, but considering the num-

bers, I was glad to have the opportunity to experience both teams for another year.”

Vanderzee added, “From taking a year off my sophomore year, it opened a great opportunity for me to regain my skills back and be playing with two different groups of girls.”

Another crucial thing that the teammates do is read devotions daily--whether it’s a game or a practice--take prayer requests every day and pray as a team.

“Praying together as a team brings us closer and helps us create a stronger bond,” stated junior Cheyenne DeJong. Along with team bonding, the girls always bring each other up.

“Having a good mindset with good communication and good bonding is what makes the team stronger,” added their coach.

It looks like the team is off to a great start, and hopefully will continue to grow through the season.

Boys golf team aims for conference victory

Coach Vermeulen boasts a skilled team, highlights older athletes’s leadership skills

Kyla Bennett

Sports Editor

The boys’ golf team began practice in March, and the boys have their eyes set on the goal to advance to state regionals and beyond. Their coaches are Brent Vermeulen and Patrick Lenahan.

Coach Vermeulen mentioned, “This is probably the most skilled team for the past five years, and the excellent leadership is what stands out”.

The team will be losing one player after this year: senior Donny Woo. Woo has been an Illiana golf athlete since his freshman year, and his game has improved tremendously over his career here.

“I really enjoyed competing with my team. I’ve had so much fun and built great friendships,” said Woo. “I appreciate my coaches because they’re always positive and are constantly motivating us to do our best.”

The team had one match and one tournament so far at Briar Leaf Country Club, and the boys are already 2-0

in the conference.

“Our team has two goals this season,” said Vermeulen. “One is

to go undefeated in conference and win the conference tournament, and the other is to advance to play at regionals. I love being able to impact young men who have a love and passion for golf.”

The team’s overall record stands at 1-0 currently.



Photo by Jeff DeVries

The catcher for Wheeler High School is too late as the Vikings score another run in their rout.

Baseball team uses positive media to prepare for success

Kailyda Anderson

Sports Editor

Starting off a new season strong, Illiana’s baseball team has ensured a powerful comeback. To prepare for a solid season, the boys, along with their coaches, have done many things to get them ready for their games. Senior Dylan Polak said, “We show up 15-20 minutes early before practices and games.” They make sure to do the same techniques at every practice and game so that they build up their strength. They also work very hard during practices and incorporate team bonding.

Along with their training, the coaches have included faith and God to encourage them throughout the season. They have been listening to a podcast called Mental Performance Daily with Brian Cain. Senior Cody DeJong said, “We watch Derek Jeter

videos along with talking about God and how to connect baseball to our faith.”

Even manager, junior Abby DeBlock, plays a huge role in this season. Her responsibilities as a team manager are to run the social media accounts, take videos of the players

for colleges, chart important information during practices and tryouts, and put people in charge of announcements. “My overall goal as a manager is to get them noticed by more than just the Illiana community. What we have is really awesome. It’s more than

just the talent of the team, it’s how the team interacts with each other. Showing people the good chemistry they have brings them in to watch what they do and accomplish.”

There is still one question that remains: is there pressure to win again after last year’s championship? After talking to Dylan and Cody, it is understood that last year’s win has been forgotten, and they are striving to be the best they can be this season, whether they win again or not. They have been training hard, putting their faith in God, and are only paying attention to what the future holds.

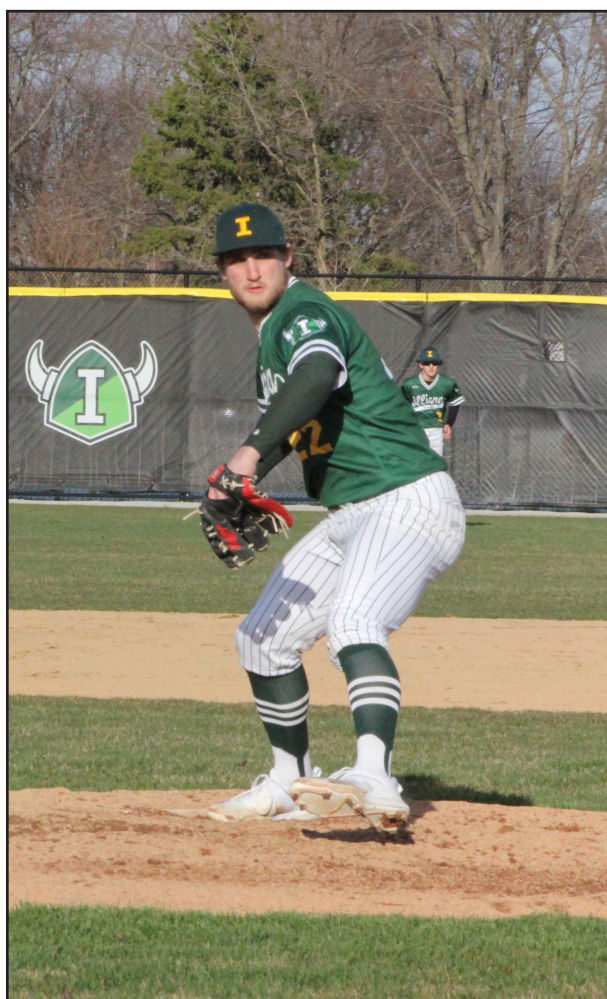


Photo by Jeff DeVries

Senior Cody DeJong pitches during the first game of the season against Wheeler.



Viking sports briefs



Boys track wins first conference meets

Cameron Evers
Feature Editor

The boys track team is off to a great start and has won its first two conference meets and performed well at larger invitationals. The team is coached by Deb Top and Luke Fennema and consists of 31 athletes, many of whom are first-time team members. Fennema said, “We have

gotten a lot more sprint power [this year] which helps balance out our whole team because the last few years we were heavier on the distance side.... We also have some good field event people, so we are a bit more of a complete team this year.” The team hopes to improve its conference finishes and take first place.

Fennema said the team is also striving to achieve new personal records and perform well in postseason, but their number one goal is to glorify God with their talents and live out this season's theme verse found in Philippians 3:14, “I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.”



A group of the boys on the track team participate in warm-ups before running.

Photo courtesy of Illiana's Instagram

Volleyballers boast 15-6 record

With hard work and team chemistry, boys charge forward with victories

Kyla Bennett
Sports Editor

Illiana's boys' volleyball team has been working hard on the court so far, with a current record of 15-6. Their coach, Adam Clark, is always encouraging the team to keep them motivated. Senior Travis Hoogstra,

who has been on the team for all four years, mentioned that “the team is so strong because Coach Clark has great knowledge about the game and is always motivating us to become better athletes.” A typical day at practice consists of stretching, throwing footballs to warm up, practicing serving, spiking, and scrimmages.

“Our team's chemistry is so strong. We all work so well together,” said Brandon Clark, junior at Illiana and son of Coach Clark. Saturday, April 22, the players had one of their most important away games in Indianapolis. This event helped determine their state ranking. “I’m looking forward to all the fun we’re going to have this season, like staying at Coach’s brother’s house and pulling pranks on whoever falls asleep,” said senior Caleb Rozendal.

Girls track team welcomes new players, makes goal to break PRs

Danielle Rancifer
News Editor

Illiana's track and field team has had an active start to its season. The team has

participated in three meets as of April 14, 2023. The girls' track has some returning players and some new additions, both upper and underclassmen. For example, senior Au-

drey Girolimon decided to participate in track for the first time her senior year. Girolimon said, “I told my homeroom teacher, Mr. Fennema, I would join track my senior year, so I



Photo by Jeff DeVries

Senior varsity player Sabri Lopez serves the tennis ball during a home game.

Girls tennis team plays undefeated season

Kyla Bennett
Sports Editor

Illiana's girls' tennis team has been giving their all on the court so far, with a current record of 4-0. Their coach, Rob Lagerwey, who is also Illiana's math teacher, is continually encouraging the athletes to strive to be better. “I love that Coach Lagerwey is very understanding and respectful,” said senior Sabri Lopez, who has been playing tennis at ICHS since her freshman year. A typical day at practice for the

players consists of warm ups, drills, and fake matches against each other. The team's most recent match was Wednesday, April 26, against Calumet New Tech High School. Their rivals are Andean, Kankakee Valley, and Munster High School. “Though Illiana is a very small school, we stand out because we usually beat the larger schools in our matches,” said Lopez. “Our team doesn't just have a few good players; we're all excellent players,” said senior Josie Plank, a member of the girls' tennis team for four years.



Photo by Jeff DeVries

Senior varsity player Ava Lindemulder warms up her short game on Illiana's courts.

stuck to my word. It was definitely worth it because I enjoy track so much, and I feel like it challenges me while still being enjoyable.” Coach Deb Top said, “I

want us to have a winning season. I would love to win conference and our home invite, but above all I look for personal records because I want to see people improving.”

Editorial

Our ‘thank you’ note to Illiana staff, crews

Mr. Davids said it best in an email to the Illiana community: “The burden that has been on our hearts this last week is the deep desire we have to keep our students and staff safe. While there is no way to 100% prevent a tragedy, I think there is more we can do.”

Davids’s email was written in response to the sad news about the shooting at the Christian school in Nashville, TN, the latest of so, so many school shootings. These desperate times called for desperate measures, and it’s pretty cool to say that Illiana’s administration took immediate action to further protect the Vikings, students and faculty alike.

Now that Illiana has recently welcomed school resource officer David DeBoer to walk its halls, we are taking those precautionary steps Mr. Davids talked about and applying them to Illiana life and culture.

Thank you, Mr. Davids, for making the safety of Illiana students and faculty a top priority; and thank you, Mr. DeBoer, for being here to offer protection to everyone at Illiana.

Though new additions like this can sometimes make it hard to adjust, it would be incredibly hard to adjust to life

at Illiana without some of the staff crews that take care of the school every day. We’re looking at you, janitorial staff and cafeteria staff!

At the beginning of the school year, us on the Echo editorial staff wrote a little love letter to the student body,

ity for your messes. The janitors are busy people, and they have other things they need to be doing, too.

Thank you, janitorial staff! We appreciate your smiling faces, willingness to help keep our beautiful building clean, and love for our school.

that we recognize that lunch couldn’t function the way it does without you, organizing the lines and passing out the food.

Thank you, lunch ladies and gentlemen! We really appreciate your volunteer work and willingness to work the lunch lines.

Finally, we would like to address the IT guys in the media center, Mr. Dykshorn and Mr. Ipema. If you are a student at Illiana, you’ve probably gone to the media center at least once in your high school career to ask the IT guys to help with your problematic chrome-book.

Those things can be hard to figure out, but not for Mr. Dykshorn and Mr. Ipema. They have helped countless students with issues, including the special Echo computers! We don’t know where you got your smarts, but we’re all very grateful for your help in pressing times of need when our chromebooks freeze, threatening to lose all our unsaved data, or when we just can’t figure out how to use our printer codes.

Thank you, IT guys! We couldn’t figure out our computers without your help; thanks for being patient and teaching us.

“... it would be incredibly hard to adjust to life at Illiana without some of the staff crews that take care of the school every day.”

promoting lunch etiquette and what ideal behavior at lunch looks like. For the most part, it looks like the Vikings are starting to get better with cleaning up after themselves, but that doesn’t mean there isn’t room for improvement. So please, on behalf of our beloved janitorial staff, please clean up after yourself, whether you make a mess with your food in the Commons at lunch or even in classrooms! Take responsibility

This brings us to the wonderful ladies (and guys! We haven’t forgotten about you!) who help work with Mrs. Schaaf to assemble and distribute our hot lunches. By the time most of us get to the front of the line, we can be a little hangry, so volunteers aren’t always greeted with the best attitudes from us and our fellow students. We apologize if we are occasionally short with you, and we want you to know

Reality of high school versus movie portrayal

I have believed in a lot of fairy tales in my life—from Santa Claus to the Tooth Fairy, and pretty much everything in between. Despite all of that misplaced belief, nothing has been able to fool me more convincingly than movies about high school.

Growing up I basically lived off of high school rom-coms, especially those that came from Disney Channel. These movies had me fully convinced that these four years would be filled with fun classes, an obnoxious number of songs, beautiful romance, and what seemed like a never-ending passing period when I would never have to rush to class.

While Illiana has provided me with some good memories over the years from making new friends to learning new and exciting things, I can say with certainty that it has failed to reach the high standard I had set (except for Friday night loud crowds which do seem to fall straight out of a movie in the best way possible).

Out of all the aspects of the high school experience that don’t necessarily match the expectations I had when I first got here, I think the one that has been the most disappointing is romance. Of course it would be ridiculous for me to expect high school boys to measure up the actions of paid actors who have a carefully crafted script to read from, but that doesn’t stop a girl from hoping.

The world of romance seems to be much duller here than it is in the movies. There are no epic ways to ask people to go to prom filled with singing, dancing, and dozens of flowers, nor have I witnessed random confessions of love during school assemblies. Now that I think about it, people don’t even have that great moment of announcing they’re a couple at school: they just post a BeReal, and suddenly they’re together.

The only movie that seems to accurately depict romance is “Grease,” where there’s a girl who falls head over heels for someone who she thinks is a great guy during the summer, and as soon as they hit those school hallways, he becomes an insecure jerk who acts as if their relationship never happened. The only difference is that in real life the guy never comes to his senses, and the girl eventually just gives up on and moves on. (In my personal opinion, Sandy deserved better anyways).

Although it seems as if my only goal in writing this column is to highlight what I think I missed out on (and my semi-embarrassing love life), contemplating these differences also helps me realize all the amazing things Illiana has given me that I didn’t grow up watching either. This school has encouraged me to grow in my faith, helped me become a better person, listener, leader, and Christian. I don’t ever remember seeing teachers that care this much about their students in those movies, and they certainly didn’t have food as good as we do at Illiana.

These last four years have not been a walk in the park, and I have to admit there are some moments where I wish someone would hand me a script and tell me exactly what to do and say. Despite all of this, though, I have grown from the challenges and disappointments and become the best version of myself through the imperfect life I have had to live. Overall, I wouldn’t trade these four years for anything (besides Zac Efron in the early 2000s, of course).



Danielle Rancifer

News Editor

the
Echo)))

Editor-in-chief

Grace Jania

News

Danielle Rancifer

Feature

Cameron Evers

Arts

Lucas Vander Woude

Sports

Kyla Bennett
Kailyda Anderson

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.

Echo-location winners)))



Photo courtesy of Illiana Facebook

Gabriella Costello and Hayden Dust pose for a photo with two Stormtroopers.

The winners of the Spring Break *Echo* competition are Gabriella Costello and Hayden Dust for creatively bringing the *Echo* to Disney’s Star Wars Galaxy Edge attraction. Congratulations, Gabriella and Hayden!

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