

Vikings walk red carpet at Hollywood Prom



A group of junior girls get their groove on to the DJ's trendy beats and song remixes.

Photo courtesy of Jeff Devries

Kelsee Smit
Reporter

Illiana's prom 2023 was on Saturday, May 13 at the Banquets at St. George. This year's theme for prom was Old Hollywood.

"I was on the planning and decorating committee for prom, and it was an amazing experience getting to see all of our ideas come together. I am very thankful to have been a part of such a special night," said junior Bryn Housman

The dinner served included chicken, ham, mash potatoes, green beans, and pasta, and to drink students had a choice of Shirley Temples or water. Vanilla ice cream was dessert.

Junior Audra Davids said, "It was really well put together event

and it was so fun seeing everyone all dressed up and happy."

Photos started at 5:30, and students got to "walk the red carpet" as they entered the banquet hall. The dinner started at 6. Afterward, the prom planning committee put together a few games such as "Name that Movie Tune." The junior class competed against the seniors. Winners received mini replicas of Oscar statues. By 7:30 the parent-sponsored dance was in full swing.

Junior Abbey Helmus said, "The dance floor was a little bit crowded, but the theme was on point and the food was delicious."

Junior Jarvis Mickles said, "Crowd surfing was amazing, and I hope to do it at every other dance I go to. It was one of the best experiences ever."



Senior Trent Wiers crowd surfs during the dance.

Photo courtesy of Jeff Devries

New Spiritual Director to lead chapel committee

Kayla Bosman
Reporter

Starting next year, along with a new chapel committee, Illiana will have a new Spiritual Director, Mr. Craig Slings.

Slings, a Trinity Christian College graduate, hails from Holland, Michigan originally, though he did spend around 20 years in the Southeast Chicagoland area, serving as a worship leader and technical director. Several years ago, he moved to Central Wisconsin Christian School, where he teaches Bible and coaches track.

According to his school's website, his favorite Bible verse is Romans 15:13, which says, "May the God of hope

fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

At Illiana he will have various duties. Head of School, Mr. Lance Davids said, "One of the things we were looking for him to do is not only help us create a stronger school culture, but to strengthen our worship. He used to be a worship leader, so we're going to try and bring a little energy into all that we do. Also, we have so many different groups that do spiritual things between Praise Crowd, Impact, Student Council, and Chapel Committee. [He will] maybe find a way that we're all working together... unifying all the groups so they are all pushing in the same direction."



The woodwind section of Wind Ensemble plays last October in the fall concert. Soon students who want to learn an instrument will have a new class available to them.

Photo by Jim Kamphuis

New band class coming soon

Rachel Monroe adds course for students next year, making band class a possibility for beginners.

Illiana Christian's instrumental music program currently offers two band classes, Symphonic Band and Wind Ensemble, but starting in fall of 2023, an additional class—Instrumental Ensemble—will be offered

for people who have little or no experience playing an instrument.

"The new class is a class for total beginners or students who used to play a band instrument but took a couple years off," said Rachel

Monroe, band director at Illiana. The current bands are tailored to students who have played in a band for some time before attending Illiana.

The new class is a one semester class offered in the fall. Monroe explained, "Students in the class will learn the basics of playing and reading music in the fall and then join the Symphonic Band in the spring."

Monroe got the idea for this class when a few inexperienced students attempted to join a band.

"I figured there has to be a way to set up new students for success, even if they didn't learn how to play an instrument earlier in life," said Monroe.

People might enroll in this class next year to learn a new instrument or to achieve an art credit, but another major draw is that Instrumental Ensemble students will participate in the Nashville band tour in Spring, 2024.

"The Illiana Bands will do a recording session at the Country Music Hall of Fame, tour and see a show at the Grand Ole Opry, and much more," said Monroe.

Becoming 'City on a Hill'

Well, here we are, the end of the 2022-2023 school year. As I sit and write my very last Column for the Echo, I am tempted more than ever to talk about me. I want to talk about all the wonderful experiences I had, and what I wish I could do differently. I want to mention all the amazing friends I have been able to make, and maybe even bring up my plans for the future.



Danielle Rancifer

News Editor

Despite my more self-centered tendencies wanting to surface, I think it would be better to talk

about Illiana. I don't believe there is a single word that is able to encapsulate all that Illiana is or what it has to offer. This building and community has been a place for growth, joy, love, and family, for these last four years, but it has also been a place that has provided me with unkindness, unfairness, and discrimination.

I have been on the receiving end of most versions of this community, and been able to see how myself and others around me are affected by the actions of Illiana in so many different ways. The ability of a thoughtful teacher to make learning an enjoyable and effective experience is impactful, but it is also disheartening to see the damage a stubborn and inconsiderate teacher can have on the abilities of students to learn.

Seeing students come together in support of one another whether it be with school work, family situations, and even friend drama has been inspiring and has encouraged me to be better in the way I interact with others. But seeing students tear each other down using social media, exclusion, and derogatory language has made me aware of how much we all need to improve.

Even as I sit here and weigh out the negatives against the positives, I can say that I've had the opportunity to experience the best and worst of Illiana, and I know for a fact that the good outweighs the bad.

This school is filled with positive and effective people and programs that aim to enact change for the better in our world, and although that is so significant, the effectiveness of that effort gets lost when everyone does not make it a common goal to show the love of God through their actions. The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 13, "If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing." This verse emphasizes the importance of love in our lives as Christians, and illustrates that although the best of us can continue to work hard in a pursuit to do good and make positive change, the most effective thing we can ever do is show love to others.

Every single place on earth has its flaws, but I think our goal as a school, and as a place meant to represent Christ, should be to act as a city on a hill, and a light to the world in everything we do. I have faith that Illiana can do all of this and persevere in its efforts to reflect Christ in every single aspect, and although I won't be able to witness it first hand, I'm excited to see where the journey leads.



Photo by Dan Blom

Illiana faculty and staff members Mary Lagerwey, Tom Knapper, Jenna Dutton, Jim Kamphuis, Peter Boonstra, Brent Vermeulen, Rob Lagerwey, and Melanie Benes take part in the ceremonial groundbreaking on a sunny, warm morning, May 20.

Illiana celebrates groundbreaking for new wing

Fundraising efforts continue even as construction of new classrooms, industrial arts spaces begins

Marissa Krause

Reporter

Illiana celebrated the beginning of its phase two construction with a ceremonial groundbreaking on May 20.

Chamber Singers kicked off the celebration by leading all in attendance in singing the

hymn "Great is Thy Faithfulness." Afterward, Head of School Lance Davids spoke, and after his words, Cassie Siersema, the Director of Development, organized various constituents putting shovels into the ground. After that event, people went inside to fellowship and eat breakfast.

Davids expressed through-

out the message, "Ground breakings are about saying thank you." He then went on to thank everyone who helped make Phase 2 possible. It is estimated that construction of the new wing of the building will take 14 months to complete.

Janna VanEssen, Director of Student Life at Illiana, helped to plan the event. She said, "The purpose [in this ceremony] is to celebrate God's faithfulness to Illiana! We want to celebrate that He has entrusted our community with resources that have in turn been donated to Illiana

to further His kingdom here. We are celebrating that we can expand our building to allow us to increase our student capacity as well as programs! We aim to create a passion for God, people and the world in all of our students."

Just a day before the ceremony, Davids announced that a generous donor had extended a \$200,000 matching donation for any donations made to the building campaign through the end of May. The project needs another \$900,000 to be fully paid for.

Area Christian schools come together for Fusion



Photo by Dan Blom

Author and speaker Bob Goff signs books at a meet-and-greet session before his talk on April 29.

Sophia Oostema

Reporter

Fusion, a spiritual growth event and a celebration of Christian education, occurred on April 29 at Bethel Church in Crown Point, featuring Christian author and speaker, Bob Goff.

This event, the result of a collaboration between Illiana, Crown Point Christian, Highland Christian, Lansing Christian, and Calvin Christian, brought together parents, teachers, and students, to encourage them and further emerge them in the Christian faith. Fusion involved singing

children's choirs, Illiana's jazz select band, and representative speakers from some of the schools, and a closing prayer led by Head of School, Lance Davids.

Luke Fennema, the German teacher at Illiana Christian, attended the Fusion event. He said, "Fusion was a great way to

bring all the feeder schools and Illiana together and it helped us unite around the common goal of educating students in the faith. Bob Goff was a great speaker and entertaining to listen to with a really good message. I loved it."

Fennema said he also enjoyed the children's choirs, which made him cry.

Bob Goff, a Christian speaker and author of books such as Love Does and Everybody Always, was the main speaker. According to Davids, Goff spoke on sharing Christian joy every day and making a difference for Jesus in the world and in the lives of those around him.

Overall, attendance was good, with about 600 tickets being sold. All proceeds from this event were donated to each of the five feeder schools' foundations.



Photo courtesy of Wikipedia
Fighter jets with the Air National Guard fly in formation. Senior Mya Loubriel plans to join the Air National Guard, after graduation, as her father did.

Senior Mya Loubriel preparing to protect, serve

Emily Bantsolas

Reporter

Mya Loubriel, senior, plans to join the military after she graduates from Illiana Christian High School. Loubriel plans to enlist in the Air National Guard, and has already started the process. She has spoken with a military recruiter

that has helped her begin the procedure of enlisting and getting enrolled into the military. Loubriel first needs to complete a background check, become medically cleared, and take the AS-VAB in order to find out what job she will be working towards during her time of service. She hopes to become a pilot.

“The job I’m really going for right now is getting a pilot position at a base in Indiana,” Loubriel said, “and obviously I have to work up to that.” After taking tests and finding out when and where she will have to report, Loubriel must go to school in San Antonio, California. There she will complete basic training and go to tech school, where she will learn the skills to complete her assigned job. Loubriel said, “Depending on what job I get, I’m going to have a certain time period for tech school.” Most tech school trainings are about two months, but others up to five. Loubriel explained that she’s been interested in joining the military since she was in middle school, and she was also influenced by her father. “My dad was in the National Guard. I think it’s really changed him for the better. I’m also thinking it’s a really good experience and a good opportunity.” After completing military service, Loubriel hopes to work with an airline to fly commercially or become a missionary pilot.

Wet weather wipes out ‘Cars’ movie night

Lydia O’Riley

Reporter

Due to rain, Student Council’s “Movie on the Lawn” was canceled on May 19. Student Council had intended to show “Cars.” Admission was to be free, and there would have been concessions available. “Cars” hasn’t been the only movie Illiana has shown, they have had previous movie nights, including the movie “Peter Pan” when the Illiana Drama Department produced a play version a few years back. Illiana has not hosted a movie night in the past few years because, according to sponsor Ms. Sara Johnson, “We always wait until the spring, and by the time we get to May, we’re too tired. We talked about it a bunch, but we just never got after it.” This year, the student council planned ahead of time and bought the movie

rights to make sure Illiana students would see “Cars”. Johnson explained that the Student Council sponsors gave the members movie choices, which they narrowed down to four. From there, they voted and “Cars” won by just one vote. Illiana had to show a movie that was “family friendly.” Johnson said the Student Council plans such events for one reason: community. She added, “That is one-hundred percent what we were trying to do. That’s why we made it free.” Johnson said that Student Council was disappointed at the weather-related cancellation. She said,, “We had heard good buzz and kids were planning on coming. We, as Student Council, were really looking forward to doing it, so, yeah, we are bummed that it couldn’t happen.” Illiana is planning on rescheduling this movie night for the next school year.

Illiana bids fond farewell to departing teachers

Mr. Bill Venhuizen

Angelica Voyles

Reporter

Mr. Bill Venhuizen, who has been teaching at Illiana for nine years, will retire this summer. He started his journey at Illiana with subbing and also coaching in 2008. He has coached cross country and track and field. When Mr. Lance Davids was Illiana’s athletic director, Mr. Darren DeBoer

used to be a full time history teacher but then had taken Davids’ athletic director position, “and then all of a sudden there is this void in Social Studies,” Venhuizen said. He happily accepted the position when it was offered to him. “That was nine years ago and it’s been going ever since,” he said with a smile on his face. However, his time at Illiana will be coming to an end after this year’s graduation. Venhuizen said,

“I have things I really want



to do that’s probably going

to occupy just as much as time as Illiana has.” He’s always wanted to write and he plans to write historical fiction once he leaves Illiana. “I’ve been thinking about this for years,” he said. He writes on the side also while teaching at Illiana. Venhuizen started to write more earnestly in the past 2-3 years. Two years ago he had written the homeroom devotions, he wrote the month of April and he started it in July the previous year and finished

them in the middle of April. “When I write, I go over. I edited some of those things about 50 times,” he said. Venhuizen looks forward to leaving and he looks forward to traveling, working on his house, getting in better shape and spending more time writing. “I by no means plan to be idle,” he said. “I think we have an exceptional faculty here,” Venhuizen said. He has met a lot of great students and will “of course miss that.”

Ms. Erinn Behn

Giannia O’Neal-Schultz

Reporter

Ms. Erinn Behn, the girls physical education teacher and soccer and basketball coach, will be leaving Illiana after eight years here. Behn said, “I have given teaching a fair shot and I just want to try something new.” Behn would like to continue to coach at Illiana next year and she wants to pursue a career in athletics full time once she leaves Illiana. Behn added, “I will miss the students and the athletes that I coach. The kids here are super special; they are not like kids from other schools.



The community of Illiana is tight-knit, encouraging and loving.” Behn considers her time coaching as a favorite memory of her time here. She said, “I just love being a mentor to athletes and being able to teach athletes the sports I love.

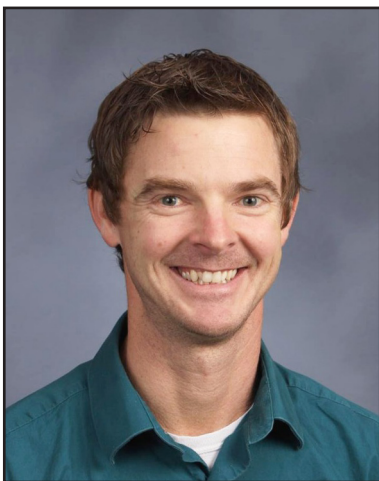
Mr. Kevin Haan

Tristen Bell

Reporter

Biology teacher Kevin Haan will be leaving Illiana after the end of this school year. “We feel like that’s where God is calling us to go,” said Haan. Haan and his family will be heading to Iowa where he will teach biology, human physics, earth science, zoology, and botany at Unity Christian High School in Orange City, Iowa. Students and teachers

have expressed their feelings about Haan leaving, most of them being unhappy about losing him but wishing him well. Isabella Engler, a sophomore, said that his leaving would be a “good step for him.” Engler added that he is a good teacher and that others would benefit from his guidance. Besides teaching science, Haan took his avid love of the outdoors to summer camps here, where he taught younger kids to fish, one of his hobbies. Haan left these words of encouragement for his students at Illiana: “Even if



you’re not a science person, enjoy it for what it is—[the study of] the intricacies and beauty of God’s creation. I would say, for sure, get outside. Go, enjoy it.”

Closing comments from the class of 2023

Answer key:



FIM: Favorite Illiana memory
FP: Future plans
SC: Secret crush



Taylor Albert
FIM: Hanging out with my friends every day
FP: I plan to go to Grace College
SC: Colten Sederstrom, Logan VanProoyen
Andrew Baker
Kyrin Baker
Addison Bandstra
FIM: Bus ride on the way to class trip (bus 1, baby)
FP: I plan to study accounting at Indiana University
SC: Luke Jania, Tim Prim
Peyton Barnes
FIM: Go Days
FP: Missionary
SC: Unknown
Jennifer Beedle
FIM: Pep band games :)
FP: Gap year
SC:
Kyla Bennett
FIM: Dismissal time at 2:50
FP: I plan to attend DePaul University, majoring in Film and Media
SC: Myself, duhhh
Kaitlin Boone
FIM: The D.C. trip
FP: Go into entrepreneurship/hairstressing

SC: Greg Goodfellow
Kayla Bosman
FIM: Performing at Fine Arts Festival, being in the art room
FP: Going to Trinity for art and theater stuff, then working on tv/movie sets
SC: Greg Good-Fellow
Matthew Bultema
FIM: Winning baseball State
FP: Work
SC:
Ryan Bultema
FIM: Class trip
FP: Carpentry
SC: Sofia VanVossen
Caden Buxton
FIM: Beating Kouts in the sectional finals last year
FP: I am playing soccer at Olivet Nazarene University
SC: Addy Dykshorn
Kevin Corcoran
FIM: Winning State championship
FP: Go to college for business
SC: Cheyenne DeJong
Daniel DeBoer
FIM: Winning sectionals and conference in soccer
FP: Go to trade school or just go straight to work
SC: Sofia VanVossen

Arden DeGraff
FIM: My child development baby getting a head trauma at Loud Crowd
FP: I'm going to Hope College for biology
SC: Luke Jania, Michael Zylstra, Will Mulder, Daniel Dykstra, Chase Lindemulder
Cody DeJong
FIM: Winning State in baseball
FP: Studying Biology at Purdue
SC: Sophie Plank
Kate DeVries
FIM: Bus 1 had more fun!
FP: Getting my certification to become a doula
SC: Ian Postma
Arie DeYoung
FIM: The Washington D.C. class trip
FP: Going to university for history and becoming a professor
SC:
Christian Diehl
FIM: Class trip
FP: Plans on working
SC: Sofia VanVossen
Kaitlin Dykstra
FIM: Tripping Faith during basketball season while tp-ing and face planting



FP: Attending PNW to major in Civil engineering, then maybe transferring to another college for architecture
SC: Tanner Post
Nicholas Dykstra
FIM: Bus ride to D.C.
FP: PNW for mechanical engineering to be a project manager
SC: Cheyenne DeJong
Cameron Evers
FIM: Learning the pep rally dance
FP: Studying interior design at Liberty University
SC: Luke Jania

Alex Friesema
FIM: D.C. trip
FP: College, majoring in aeronautical engineering
SC: Sofia VanVossen
Audrey Girolimon
FIM: Veldman on class trip
FP: Attending Butler University for Speech & Hearing Sciences, Spanish, D-1 Cheerleading
SC: Drew Bultema
Savannah Glover
FIM: Cheering freshman and sophomore year
FP: Attending Anderson University to become a Child Life Specialist
SC: Spencer Redding
Gregory Goodfellow
FIM: Student Council
FP: Calvin University, majoring in Computer Engineering
SC: Ella Kooistra
Zachary Hart
FIM: Class trip
FP: Going to college at PNW for Electrical Engineering
SC: Sofia VanVossen
Dale Herman
FIM: Class trip
FP: Going to college, majoring in accounting/finance
SC: Samantha Bultema, Sofia VanVossen, Alyssa Buxton
Allison Holleman
FIM: Going to Culver's with Mrs. Roeda's interior design class
FP: Going to PNW and working my way through for my nursing degree
SC: Colin DeVries
Ella Holleman
FIM: Playing knockout at Mrs. Drost's house on Go Day
FP: Attending PNW to work





with kids in the future
SC: Jace Ooms
Travis Hoogstra
Matthew Huizenga
Kaylee Ipema
FIM: Class trip in D.C.
FP: Olivet Nazarene University for Elementary education
SC: Colten
Caleb Ivie
Gracie Jania
FIM: Exploring D.C. on scooters with my friends
FP: Attending Valparaiso University, majoring in Business Analytics
SC: Grant Rappold, Spencer Bandstra
Kyle Jonkman
FIM: Class trip

FP: 150 Operator or landscaping
SC: Jaylee Hanks
Ashley Kaczmarzewski
FIM: Senior year homecoming basketball game
FP: Paul Mitchell (cosmetology school)
SC: Nick DeBlock
Elise Kamphuis
FIM: Singing “Piano Man” at the cast party
FP: Go to Trinity; maybe go to Canada later
SC: Colten Sederstrom
Kaiden Katsilieris
Noah Kieft
FIM: Beating Chicago Christian in basketball
FP: Welding at Iron + Easel



SC: Ellie Ratliff
Christopher Kinkade
Rylee Klee
FIM: Cheering at this year’s Christmas game
FP: Cosmetologist
SC: Noah Sons
Emmery Kloosterman
FIM: Class trip
FP: Go to college and be rich
SC: Daniel Dykstra, Will Mulder, Michael Zylstra, Luke Jania, Eli DeGraff
Samuel Kooistra
FIM: The entire school saying that a student got a DUI
FP: Getting my Pharm. D or getting a dog and living off the grid in Montana
SC: Maddy VanBeek
Isabella Krstevski
Adam Leep
Ava Lindemulder
FIM: Kuips’ physics class
FP: Studying Business at Calvin University
SC: Eli DeGraff
Sabrina Lopez
FIM: Being part of the 2023 court and doing the dance
FP: Attending Calvin University, majoring in Sociology and minoring in Ministry, playing tennis
SC: Armaan Sen, Josh Carter, Chase Lindemulder
Mya Loubriel

Haley Mannino
FIM: Miss Top let us walk around on the school roof
FP: University of Florida, majoring in Applied Physiology and Kinesiology - Pre PA, minoring in Spanish
SC: If I told you I’d have to kill you
Serenity Medina
Katie Meján
FIM: Senior soccer szn, D.C. bus ride and hotel
FP: Support my dreams of becoming a stay-at-home daughter. Venmo: @kmeján
SC: Spencer Bandstra, Josh Wondaal
Hailey Montalvo
FIM: Loud Crowd games, freshman year cookout
FP: I plan on becoming a para-professional
SC: Luka Slavich
Karina Mulder
FIM: Basketball games against Chicago Christian and beating them
FP: Attending Trinity for Business Finance and possibly Spanish
SC: Levi Kreykes, Michael Zylstra
Aliza Nelson
FIM: Winter running club!
FP: Attending Wheaton College, majoring in Psychology

in hopes of becoming a Clinical Mental Health Therapist
SC: Caden Evers
Rylan Nelson
FIM: Burnout in the parking lot
FP: Work for my dad
SC: Lauren Holleman
Jenna Norman
Frederick Olthof
FIM: Running at the State event in track at Indiana University
FP: Attending Purdue University, studying Business Management and Construction Management
SC: Cheyenne DeJong
Cassandra Otto
FIM: Loud Crowd games, freshman year cookout
FP: Ultrasound at IUN
SC: Luka Slavich
Charles Paige
FIM: Singing in choir
FP: Becoming a therapist
SC: Justine Olson
Andrew Pigatti
FIM: Pre calc with Caden Buxton and Garrett Hamstra
FP: Playing volleyball at Calvin University
SC: Alyssa Buxton
Josie Plank
FIM: Mrs. Roeda’s Child Development class
FP: Studying Health Sciences at Butler University
SC: Chase Lindemulder



Reevaluating priorities

As I complete my daily checklist—cleaning my room, finishing homework, going to the gym, feeding my dog, and doing devotions—I still feel like there is more to get done. Finishing my college requirements, finding time for my family, and still enjoying my last few days as a high schooler looms over my head. After completing my last season of soccer and basketball, I was ready to kick back and relax, yet my life somehow never slowed down. I thought I would have all the time in the world to enjoy and savor the last few months of high school, but looking back, my days are just as busy as before, and I never feel satisfied with my productivity because the tasks never seem to end.



Cameron Evers

Feature Editor

With my busy schedule, finding time to finish ten service hours seems impossible. I have heard the chapel committee talk about “us serving together” since August, yet without the incentive of the exam voucher, doing ten hours of service per semester isn’t something I think I would complete, and twenty hours represents about .2% of the hours in a year, which says a lot about my priorities.

While this may seem like a complaint column about my dramatic to-do list, it isn’t. I had the honor to serve at Faith Church’s Reflectors dance in April. Reflectors is a special needs ministry offered at my church and they host a dance for students and adults with special needs to come and experience. From a DJ, karaoke machine, catered food, mini golf, photo booth, red carpet experience, and themed volunteer outfits, the event was huge. After reaching out to a few friends, Sabri Lopez agreed to volunteer with me because we needed a few service hours. Her schedule is just as busy, if not busier, than mine, but she still came with me, and we had a blast. The guests at the dance had an awesome time, and so did I. This made me wonder, why isn’t serving others a priority to me?

Mental Health America found that, “Research indicates that those who consistently help other people experience less depression, greater calm, fewer pains, and better health. They may even live longer.” Not only does serving others benefit them, but it also can benefit us mentally, physically, and spiritually. However, we as Christians are called to serve without selfish intent, just as Jesus did. In 1 Peter 4:10, Peter says, “Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms.” Even though we are called to serve, it can be a hard thing to do, but in the end, it is very rewarding.

The truth is that time will never slow down. I don’t think I will ever feel my checklist is complete, but learning to value the importance of the tasks at hand will help put things into perspective. Serving others should be something I aim to complete daily, whether big or small. Jesus fed crowds of thousands of hungry people and healed sick people with just a touch, but he also washed his disciples’ feet.

Being the hands and feet of Jesus will always trump our earthly responsibilities. If we are too busy to serve, we are just too busy period.



Mason Post

FIM: Basketball games

FP: Going to PNW for Civil Engineering

SC: Sofia VanVossen

Danielle Rancifer

FIM: All of the Loud Crowds

and being with friends after

FP: I plan to attend LSU and major in Journalism

SC: Isaac Sherwood

Spencer Redding

FIM: Go Day this year

FP: Going to college for Mechanical Engineering Technology

SC: Savannah G

Tony Ren

FIM: Learned. Enjoyed. Danced. Played. Laughed. Wept. Greeted. Farewelled. Next.

FP: Visit China, study in Europe (Germany), study magic and music, study multiple languages, sleep well.

SC: Olivia, Arden, Abby, Aneka, Joy, Taylor, et al. There hath been some beautiful uniquenesses in everyone, which I found, proving the attractiveness therein, thereby making all likable and pleasing to be a “secret crush.”

Madelyn Ritzema

FIM: Bus 1

FP: Undecided

SC: Spencer Bandstra

Ethan Roach

FIM: English 9 with Daniel DeBoer

FP: Working for Hillcrest Homes/VanDerNoord Electric LLC

SC: Danni Dodge

Caleb Rozendal

FIM: Running sets backstage during The Lion King Jr.

FP: Study engineering and play volleyball at Calvin

SC: Amelia Yonkman

Jessica Roznowski

Megan Ruffolo

FIM: I loved doing all of the drama productions, especially The Lion King

FP: Going to Paul Mitchell in Merrillville for cosmetology, then I will do an online makeup course

SC: Logan VanProoyen

Christina Rynberk

FIM: Senior class trip

FP: Going to PNW

SC: Chase Lindemulder

Jahdai Sanchez

Ryan Sederstrom



FIM: Mission trips to West Virginia

FP: Attend Trine University for electrical engineering

SC: Taylor Albert

Priya Sen

Madelyn Smith

FIM: Going on the mission trip to West Virginia

FP: Going to Palm Beach Atlantic University, studying Finance

SC: You know who you are

Ryan Smith

FIM: Sadie Hawkins, freshman year

FP: Astro/Aero engineering at Purdue University

SC: Essy AEC

Nicolas Sytsma

FIM: Turnley’s whimsical adventures

FP: Real Estate license, double majoring in Business and Accounting at PNW

SC: Sofia VanVossen

Hayden TeGrotenhuis

Brenna Thompson

FIM: LA mission trips

FP: Attend Leadership School at the Dream Center

SC: Luka Slavich

Kevin Truong

FIM: Singing at school events





FP: Majoring in voice at Chicago College of Performing Arts
SC: Kendall Van Prooyen
Mia Van Prooyen
FIM: Being in sets painting/running
FP: Going to Calvin to study civil engineering
SC: Colten Sederstrom, Armaan Sen
Nephreteri Faith Van Wieren
FIM: West Virginia mission trip
FP: Going on a mission trip to the DR for a year and learning Spanish
SC: :)
Grant VanBaren
FIM: Putting a porta-potty in the Illiana pond
FP: Work at Rosewood Landscaping Inc.
SC: Julia West
Vincent VanDeel
FIM: Turnley’s whimsical adventures
FP: UIUC for Architecture
SC: Sofia VanVossen
Trevor VanderMeer
Ezekial VanEssen
FIM: Winning against Hanover and Timothy in basketball
FP: Playing basketball at Calvin University
SC: Caleb Kieft’s girlfriend
Luke VanEssen
FIM: Beating Chicago Christian and Hanover this year in basketball
FP: Attending Calvin and playing basketball
SC: Ellie Ratliff
Faith VanRyn
FIM: The cookout my freshman year
FP: Attending Butler University to study to become a Physician Assistant
SC: Nick Neri, Luke Passo, Ryan Eenigenburg, Caleb Kieft
Autumn VanSchouwen
FIM: Go Days have always been fun for me and my home-room
FP: I will be attending IUN for Sonography
SC: Tommy Ooms
Jacob VanVossen
FIM: Class trip
FP: Joining the Union
SC: Addy Dykshorn
Eduardo Vazquez

Alexandra Vis
FIM: Junior year homecoming
FP: Construction Management at Purdue University
SC: Ryan Eenigenburg, William Bloom
Amanda Vis
FIM: The bus rides on class trip (go bus 1)
FP: Attending PNW
SC: Caleb Kieft
Joshua Vis
FIM: Winning State championship
FP: Get a Finance degree from Valpo
SC: Sam Bultema
Angelica Voyles
FIM: The last day before school
FP: Attending NWACC in Arkansas for nursing
SC: Freshman year– Fritz
Abigail West
FIM: Sobbing during Kuips’ honors chem test sophomore year
FP: Attend Hope College and major in Kinesiology
SC: Eli DeGraff, Will Mulder,



Michael Zylstra, Luke Jania, Daniel Dykstra
Trent Wiers
FIM: Chad Harden trading a Callie Boss lighter for chicken leg
FP: I am going to IU
SC: Grace Jania
Alec Wiersema
Donald Woo

FIM: Getting yelled at by Kuips in Honors Physics with Vinny
FP: Work as an assistant golf pro at Innsbrook Country Club
SC: Megan Paluch
Caleb Woodley
Audrey Yonkman
FIM: Class trip

FP: Study Music at Trinity Christian School
SC: Jacob Rozendal
Anneka Zylstra
FIM: Class trip with Veldman
FP: Attend Purdue University for Interior Design
SC: Eli DeGraff, Will Mulder, Luke Jania, Daniel Dykstra



Sleep Science: Why sleep is important and its bodily effects

Sophia Oostema

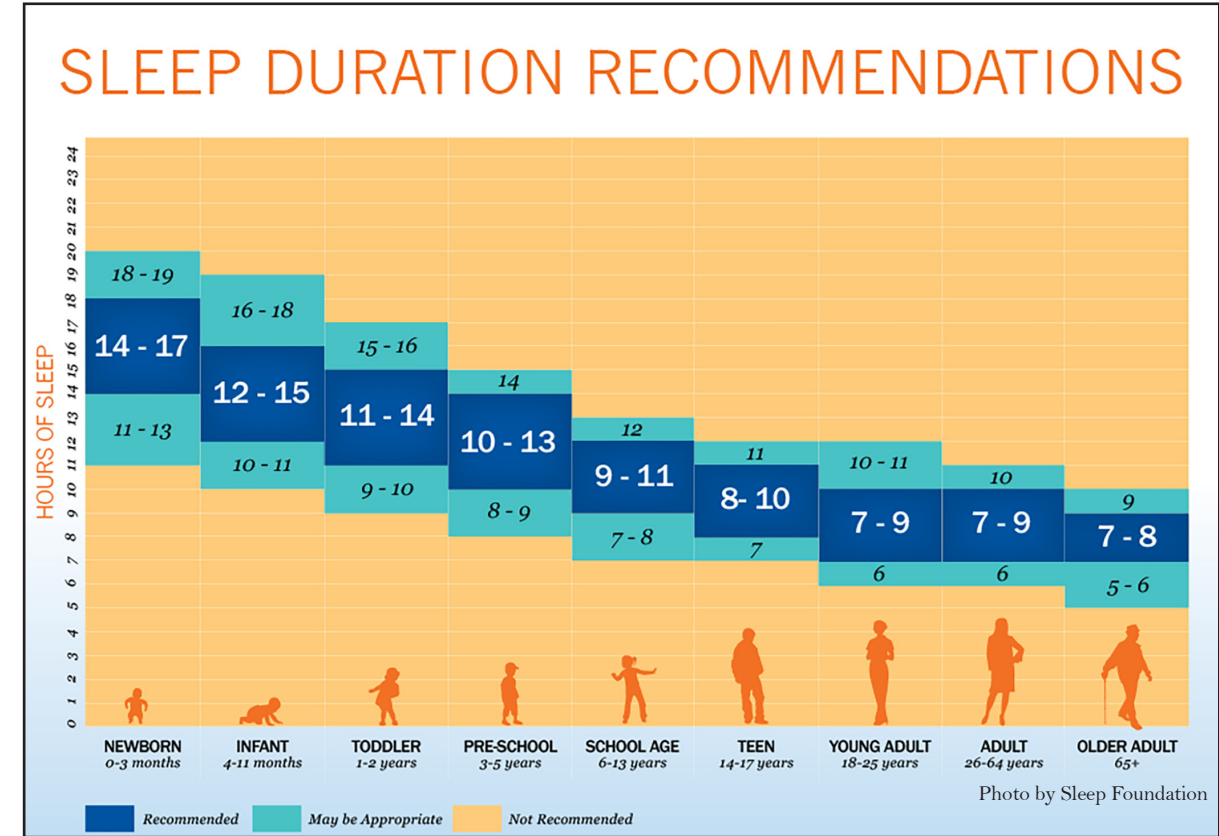
Reporter

Sleep. Everyone needs it. The right amount of sleep is necessary for the body to function at its best performance. Lack of sleep is very common in today’s world of constant work, sports, jobs, school, and distractions. 85% of teenagers, according to Children’s MD, get less than the recommended amount of sleep. Overall, teenagers should get around 8-10 hours of sleep every night, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, but that is rarely the case (CDC). There are countless reasons why students do not get enough sleep at night.

Homework load is a major player in lack of sleep for students. Teenagers in all classes, but especially those in honors classes, must take extra care when doing their homework. Some students strive to do their best and get good

grades at the expense of their sleep. Teenagers may lose sleep if they are involved in extracurriculars, such as sports, theater, choirs, and more. Some sports teams have morning practices starting as early as 5 am. Students must wake up early to participate in practice, so that they are ready for their next game. Teams also have after school practices or games, some of which start as late as 7:30 pm. Theater has practices that go until 10 pm some nights prior to the musical or play. Choirs have concerts that end around 8:30-9:00 pm. This takes over the lives of students, which gives them less time to sleep.

Phone use is a distraction from sleep as well. Teens repeatedly get pulled into video games and social media. Whether it be snapping pictures to their friends on Snapchat or scrolling through countless videos on TikTok, phones are a huge distraction and a time-waster a majority of the time. A majority of students own phones, which can



be helpful devices, but lose many hours of the day after being sucked into technological rabbit holes. Blue light from phones also impacts sleep. Phones, computers, laptops, televisions, and more are all sources of blue light. “Exposure to blue light (and white light, which contains blue light) during the sensitive period can make it difficult for you to fall asleep and stay asleep” (CDC). The importance of removing these devices from children

before bedtime is extremely important. Exposure to blue light could be a reason for lack of sleep. Blue light is harmful, especially before bed time. This is why it is best to sleep with a phone or television outside of your bedroom. Getting less sleep than recommended can have negative effects on teens both physically and mentally. The CDC stated that “Children and adolescents who do not get enough sleep have a higher risk

of obesity, diabetes, injuries, poor mental health, and problems with attention and behavior” (CDC). The importance of getting enough sleep is huge. Sleeping 8-10 hours for teens is nearly as important as having a healthy diet and getting exercise: meaning it is very important for growth and development in youths. Sleep is more important than many think.

5 sleep tips for optimal sleep

- 1. Get your phone out of your room.**
Not only can the bluelight from a phone impact sleep negatively, but it can also serve as a distraction for those trying to go to bed. Some stay up texting friends or just watching videos and shows on their phones. Without this distraction, there is a better chance of sleeping more.
- 2. Work ahead on homework and do not procrastinate.**
By working ahead, you can rest more. Without the stress and distraction of homework, one can easily rest easy knowing that they have accomplished the work that needed to be done.
- 3. Take an occasional melatonin.**
While taking a melatonin every night will gain an individual a tolerance to it, taking one on occasion won't. This will make someone feel sleepy and help them sleep through the night.
- 4. Get some exercise.**
Science has proven that getting exercise helps the body fall asleep faster. The quality of sleep also increases after doing physical activity.
- 5. Go into a dark, calm, cold room.**
Science has shown that being in a cold room makes body temperature go down, which increases the quality of sleep gained by an individual.

Illiana students lack sleep

Echo survey shows majority of students come to school feeling ill effects

Sophia Oostema

Reporter

74% of Illiana students (who answered a survey) get less than 8 hours of sleep every night. Some students get as few as 3 hours of sleep per night, which is nothing near the amount needed for growth, development, and health. 91% of students stated that they felt some type of negative symptoms after getting less sleep. These symptoms include lacking focus, feeling sick, having

no motivation, being easily overstimulated, being more aggravated, getting headaches, and having worse performances on tests and homework assignments. This impacts students physically, mentally, and educationally. In a survey, sophomore Kate Santefort said that when she didn’t get enough sleep she had, “no motivation and no focus” as well as feeling “sore and tired.” Another student, Brenna Thompson, senior, stated in the survey that her negative symptoms were, “not being

able to concentrate, being crabby, feeling sick, and often-times easily overstimulated.” Some students stated that because they lacked the right amount of sleep, they fell asleep during a class. About 42% of students claimed to have fallen asleep in class as well. This puts a damper on their education, as they miss important lessons and lectures. When asked if phone use affected sleep, a majority of students didn’t think it did, although blue light is harmful to getting sleep at night. The best advice to give to students is put the phone down and try to get a good night’s sleep.

MMWR | Zzzzzz.... SLEEPY KIDS
MOST STUDENTS NEED MORE SLEEP

6 OUT OF 10
MIDDLE SCHOOLERS
DON'T GET ENOUGH SLEEP

7 OUT OF 10
HIGH SCHOOLERS
DON'T GET ENOUGH SLEEP

KIDS 6–12 YEARS NEED 9 TO 12 HOURS

TEENS 13–18 YEARS NEED 8 TO 10 HOURS

MIDDLE SCHOOLERS: 2015 DATA FROM 9 STATES
HIGH SCHOOLERS: 2015 NATIONWIDE DATA
Wheaton et al. MMWR, Jan 2018 (goo.gl/ddpQ75)

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

My pessimism turned to optimism due to my trust in God

Ever since I started genuinely trusting God, my life has become so much better. There are so many Christian pessimists at this school, and it makes me wonder how. Before I was a Christian, I was a pessimist. I would compare my life to others here and focus on both things I lacked



Kayla Bosman
Reporter

and shortcomings in other people. To cope with living in such a broken world, instead of turning to God, I turned to bad lifestyle choices. As a result, I lost my faith and any sense of a positive perspective. Because I spent most of my high school experience hating high school, I never got to fully enjoy this place, and I think a lot of people make the same mistake. Because they have a bad day, they refuse to do anything extra that might make them feel better like going to a baseball game. I went to a baseball game for the first time a few days ago, and it was way more fun than I would have expected—good music, great players using their amazing skills, and even banger popcorn. I talk to so many students who can’t wait till the end of the year, but I am here to say, enjoy your time here. If I would have spent more time after school helping make the plays and musicals, something I love doing, instead of lying on the couch “recovering” from a single day, I would have been healthier and happier.

Listen, I understand that terrible stuff happens, and mental health issues cannot be resolved by attending an Illiana event. Some days some people just need to leave this place, and that’s okay. However, if you trust in God that your experiences, even the bad ones, are for a reason, the realization changes everything. I know many people who blame their unattractive characteristics on past trauma. If you take every experience or trauma and turn it into a learning experience, you take away the power that trauma has over you. I started this process to help me grow as a person. Whenever something bad happens to me, I try to see a glimpse of God’s perspective and his plan on how that situation is beneficial.

As a result, I am an optimist. I trust that God will make things better. I don’t see how a follower of Jesus can be a pessimist. God is too busy working even bad things into good.

A good example of this is one of the biggest struggles of my life: my absent father. For so long I let being fatherless be an excuse for my unattractive personality traits. Now I see how even here God was at work. From this trauma stem my humor and art, the two qualities of myself I would never trade for anything. Without my father’s absence, I wouldn’t be who I am, and I’m finally starting to like myself. I now see God’s work at play through me. By trusting him I don’t have to worry about terrible experiences or worldly issues. Anyone can attain earthly desires like popularity or a boyfriend but only some people understand and feel God’s love. I am happy to know that I am one of them.

Illiana has been one way God worked on me. As a senior looking back, I wish I had appreciated this place more.

“Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3” is fitting bookend to trilogy



Photo courtesy of imdb.com

Grace Jania
Editor-in-Chief

“Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3” hit theaters on Friday, May 5, featuring some fan-favorite characters, like Star-Lord, Groot, Rocket Raccoon and Gamora (yes, you read that right).

The movie, directed by James Gunn with music composed by John Murphy, followed the guardians in their journey to find a way to heal Rocket after he was inflicted with a serious battle wound. As the journey unwinds, they also discover pieces of his traumatic past.

While “GOTG” is part of the Marvel cinematic universe, the guardians always stood apart from the Avengers franchise.

In the trilogy, I appreciated the small portions of romance sprinkled in between some likable characters, which is my formula for a great movie. I’ve also really

liked the nuance of the vintage track lists for each film, and though this movie’s track list wasn’t as dated, it was still good.

The run-time was two and a half hours. Though the film had a slow start, the action shots, one-liners and cut scenes to Rocket’s past (I love a good origin story) made up for it. One of my favorite parts in the movie was a battle scene filmed all in one take, with the guardians jumping, ducking and rolling, all while throwing punches and wielding their weapons. The cinematography deserves some appreciation for that shot alone.

For the series that started with the first “Guardians of the Galaxy,” this was a fitting book-end to a space trilogy about family and friendship.

I give this movie 3 ½ out of 5 stars.

Fine Arts Committee visits Munster Fine and Performing Arts Center, performs recital for Village Woods residents

Grace Jania
Editor-in-Chief

On Friday, May 5, members of the Fine Arts Committee and sponsors Jim Kamphuis and Jeff DeVries took a field trip, splitting their time between the Munster Center for Fine and Performing Arts and Village Woods Assisted and Retirement Living.

At the Munster Center the committee got to look at the Tri-County Art Show in the main gallery, complete with an array of unique paintings done by high schoolers from Northwest Indiana and Cook County, Illinois. The group also toured the rehearsal room for the Northwest Indiana Symphony and took a backstage tour of

the theater space.

Later in the day, the committee put on a mini-recital, running only about thirty minutes, for the elderly folks at Village Woods. Some of the Fine Arts winners and other participants performed, and the committee brought visual arts and photography pieces to display.

Senior Taylor Al-

bert, who opened the recital with her piano performance of “Doctor Gradus ad Parnassum,” explained that she “really liked being able to bring something fun to the residents and brighten their day a little bit.”

“It was music, theater, and visual art all in one place,” said Kamphuis, who arranged the field trip.



Photo by Jim Kamphuis
The Fine Arts Committee poses for a picture in front of the Munster Center for Visual and Performing Arts.



Photo by Jim Kamphuis
Sophomore Levi Sliekers performs “Rinderella” for the residents of Village Woods.

Don't waste time wishing to be someone else

My teenage years were full of “I want to grow up” and “Why don’t I feel pretty enough?”. I feel as if young girls and boys are always trying to fit in or they feel as if they aren’t good enough because they don’t look like social media influencers or models. I would be lying if I said I wasn’t looking at social media influencers and wishing I was pretty like they were.



Angelica Voyles

Reporter

Ever since I was 10 years old, I started to wish I was older because I was always just so mature for my age and no one really related to me. Everyone was so immature and I felt like I was always an “old soul.” I kept wishing I was older and wasted many of those years wishing instead of enjoying being a kid. The thing was that I was so shy towards everyone that I ever knew, and I didn’t want to be put in a place that made me awkward.

That all changed when I started my first job at 15 years old. The only thing was that I was the youngest one there for a while. Everyone around me was in college. Which made me wish even more that I was older so I could relate and talk about “college things”. Again, I was trying to fit in. However, this job had pushed me out of my comfort zone which was great for me because I wasn’t shy anymore.

Once the shyness was gone, I started to get more worried about my appearance. I started to look at other people and wish I had looks like them. Social media really did get inside my head without me even realizing it. I started to look at influencers, not because I admired them from their content but rather because I wished I was them. That finally stopped when I turned seventeen.

Seventeen isn’t a lucky number. It was just the age when I started to really think. Instead of wishing I was someone else, I asked myself, why can’t I just love me? God made me. He shaped my lips, my face, my eyes, my nose, my ears, my fingers. He has shaped me into someone who he considers perfect, and I should look at myself as such.

Here is some advice for each of you who are insecure and wishing you were older: God has blessed you in so many ways and you are made by His hands. Just take a moment and realize that. You don’t have to be comparing yourself to others. Also, take a minute to realize that once you grow up, you WILL be wishing you were a little kid again. Don’t grow up just yet. Go out with your friends, spend time with your parents, paint your nails, and watch those silly TV shows. Just be a kid, and enjoy being you.



Junior Maya Wondaal puts leather on a line drive to end the inning in a home game against Hebron on May 10.

Photo by Kayla Bosman

Vikings softball proudly takes first place

Cameron Evers

Feature Editor

The Illiana Christian girls’ varsity softball season has been off to a successful start. The varsity team took first place in the Greater South Shore Conference and as of May 12 holds a record of 14-6 and the JV team holds a

record of 6-3. As of May 12, varsity pitcher, McKayla Derks, is currently ranked 3rd in the IHSAA and 20th nationwide for her .32 ERA (earned run average). Second baseman Lydia VanderWoude holds 11th place in the IHSAA for stolen bases and catcher Libby Kryekes holds a 6th place ranking in Indiana’s 2A class for

her fielding percentage.

Head varsity coach, Nicole Wondaal, credits the team's defense for its success as well as the team’s mentality. Wondaal said, “We coaches are so proud of our program’s team-first mentality. We have players filling multiple roles, varying every day, We don’t hear whining

or complaining. Our defense is what keeps us in games, and we are continuing to fine-tune that part of our game.” The team also is looking forward to postseason. The team is pursuing a state championship. Wondaal hopes to achieve that goal by working hard to be better with every opportunity the team gets.

Students participate in club sports

Sports players at Illiana engage in sports outside of school, explaining the differences, pros and cons.

Marissa Krause

Reporter

Many students dream big when it comes to their sports. According to scholarshipstats.com out of the around 57% of students who participate in high school sports less than 1% actually make it to the big leagues, about 7% play a varsity sport in college, and less than 2% go to play in a D1 school. Some students spend up to thousands of dollars on clubs and clinics to help improve their skills physically and mentally to better prepare themselves for a future in their sport. Others get their experience from just high school experience.

According to Ncsasports.org, “Almost 90% of student-athletes who compete at the college level previously compet-

ed for a club team during the recruiting process.” As you can see the percentage of student-athletes are high. This allows athletes to be seen from a variety of different coaches from different schools, face more competition, and learn from more experienced coaches then it would have been in just highschool.

A junior, Isaac Vanderwoude has been playing baseball for 14 years. He spent 10 of those years playing outside of school. 3 years playing on Illiana’s baseball team. “My dad grew up in it and I’ve always been around the game.” Although Vanderwoude has been used to the club environment, he better enjoys the school season. “I feel like there’s a lot more team chemistry with having a high-school sport then there is

a club sport because you are with your highschool team everyday.”

A sophomore, Joy Ramsey has been playing volleyball for 7 years. 2 years on Illiana’s volleyball team. This year is her first year playing club. “Clubs are less stressful because you don’t know them, so you don’t see them everyday when you mess up the next day. Like you have time to refresh. But school is everyday but I do like [school sports] better, I just think it’s more stressful. In clubs it’s more judgemental, and sometimes people judge you, cause you dont do that team bonding you see here at school.”

When asked about the difference of club and school sports Ramsey said, “clubs like harder on you so you learn and ad-

vance more. Communication I learned a lot more in school but physical skills I learned in club.” “to be able to play year round and to get better improvement on skills.” “Yes, you build friendships and get more experience.”

Ramsey ultimately likes school sports more, although she suggest if wanting to go to college for the sport club is a great way to get seen. “Its one of the reasons i decided to do club, to get more recognition from coaches and schools.”

About 73% of those who surveyed in Illiana had participated in a sport. When debating on participating in a sport look at the overall goals as a student athlete, see how it will effect with school and other important events, and the cost of expenses.



Viking sports briefs



Photo by Jeff DeVries
Junior shortstop Isaac VanderWoude, who leads the team in home runs, scoops up a grounder in the team's home opener.

Baseball team rolls to conference championship

Cameron Evers
Feature Editor

The Illiana Christian varsity baseball team took first place in the Greater South Shore Conference and as of May 18 holds a record of 18-7. The JV boy's baseball team also holds a winning record of 13-5.

Through practices, games, and baseball classroom sessions, head coach Jeff Vandweroude said the team has been working hard while keeping their eyes on the postseason. Vanderwoude said one of the team's season goals is repeating their state championship by achieving small goals along the way: "[Our] season

goals are to trust the process and to play our game. Having a great mind-set on our focus, purpose, and grit."

As of May 18, Pitcher, Kevin Corcoran, ranks 8th in Indiana for his 85 thrown strikeouts. In the IHSAA division 2A, shortstop Isaac Vanderwoude ranks 8th for his 5 home runs and second baseman Tyler Balkema ranks 15th for his batting average.

The team has talented athletes, but they try to keep the team mentality first. Coach VanderWoude said another season goal is "trusting and believing in one another and knowing that each person just needs to do their job and do what the team needs."

Tennis team 'best top to bottom' in Lagerwey's coaching career

Kyla Bennett
Sports Editor

Illiana's tennis team is continuing to improve this season. The tennis season began in March. Post season play began on May 17 with a 5-0 win over Kankakee Valley.

"The students who come out for tennis are some of the most amazing people at Illiana," said Coach Rob Lagerwey. "I have learned so much about Christian character from them."

Their most important matches are coming up with Lake Central and Munster.

Lagerwey added, "This team may be the best I have had from top to bottom with all ten players playing well."

Practices have focused on teaching the girls how to play in very windy conditions and how to be aggressive.

"We hope to beat some of the larger schools and do well at sectionals," said senior Sabri Lopez, who has played varsity tennis for four years. Because there are no classes in state tournament tennis in Indiana, the girlshad to play much bigger schools to advance.

They lost to Crown Point in their final match, thereby bowing out of state competition.

Track teams end on high note

Lucas VanderWoude
Arts Editor

Boys Track Update:

The boys track team is nearing the end of a great season, finishing second overall in the conference with only one loss to Hanover Central. They will compete at sectionals on May 18, entering only two athletes per event.

Luke Fennema, the boys track coach, thinks that a strength of the boys track team this year is the balance of athletes that they have. "We have earned points throughout the season from sprinters, hurdlers, distance runners, and field event athletes," he said.

Fennema is very pleased with how his team has lived out their theme verse, Philippians 4:16, this year. "They have endured a lot of physical training

in order to become better athletes, and the discomfort they put themselves through in practice has paid off with better performances at meets," he said. "They have encouraged each other throughout the season through good and bad times. And I have seen them do their best, both in practices and in meets, to glorify God with their efforts."

Danielle Rancifer
News Editor

Girls Track Update

Girls track has had a successful and exciting season so far. The girls team competed in sectionals Tuesday, May 16, with multiple girls advancing to regionals.

Alex Vis and Ella Olthof for distance, Faith VanRyn for distance, Gabriella Costello for pole vault, Hannah Bruinsma for discus, and a girls 800 meter relay distance team.

Although the girls are strong on the track, they also have some amazing qualities as a team.

Sprinter coach Deb Top spoke about the team by saying, "The chemistry between everywhere is really what makes the team so great. They continue to encourage one another, and that really makes a difference."

Luke Fennema, distance coach says, "This has been such a great season because we have girls who are excited to work hard, everyday they come to practice and you can tell they want to be there, they all have such great attitudes."

Boys volleyball wraps up season

Kailyda Anderson
Sports Editor

The boys' volleyball team finished their season with a record of 23-7, and a conference and sectional championship.

Junior player Brandon Clark reflected on the season, saying, "At the beginning, I guess we didn't work together super well but overall

our game improved as we worked together and our chemistry improved."

Graduating senior Ryan Bultema said that his favorite part of the season was "probably the Indy trips and hanging out with the players on the team, and winning sectionals, as well."

During these trips, the boys stayed at the house of Coach Adam Clark's

brother, Brad Clark.

Bultema said he thought the team improved well in "growing a closer connection to each other and working together as a team."

"It will be kind of tough [next year] because we're losing a few good people, but some of the people from JV that are coming up to varsity will be a good improvement to our team," said Clark.

Golf team prepares for sectionals

Danielle Rancifer
News Editor

The Illiana boy's golf team has had a successful season with a current record of 13-2. The team is currently preparing for sectionals, where they will face Andrean, Lake central, Crown Point, and others.

Senior Donny Woo who has been a part of the golf team all four years says, "This team is definitely the best I have been a part of. We

have all worked hard, and done our best throughout the season, and overall, it's really amazing."

Coach Brent Vermulen speaks about some players by saying, "Isaac Sherwood coming to the team from golf has been a fantastic addition, and also the team seems to have gravitated towards Donny Woo as a leader which has been fantastic."

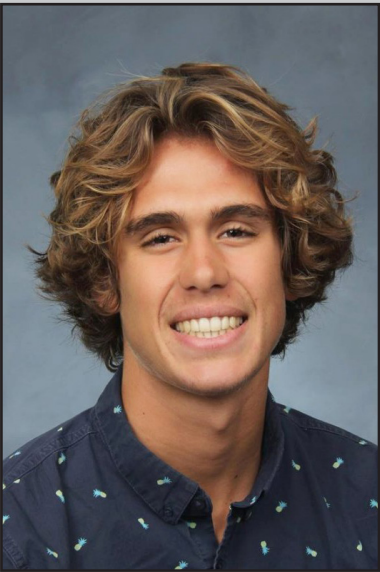


Photo by Jack Rudenga
Junior Zander Weemhoff tees off in a match against Bishop Noll in April.

Male Athlete of the Month

Fritz Olthf, senior at Illiana and member of the boys' track team, is the male athlete of the month. He is the leadoff and anchor runner for the 4x800m relay which recently won the conference championship.

Coach Fennema said, "He always performs well in the individual events, which is the 800 and 1600. Fritz was recently 2nd at conference in the 800. He always runs on the 4x400m relay, which has experienced a lot of success this year, including setting a new facility record here at Illiana. Fritz is a hard worker and encourages his teammates as well."



Female Athlete of the Month

Senior Sabrina Lopez has helped lead the girls to a strong season.

Lopez will continue her tennis journey in college, as she has committed to Calvin University as a girls tennis player.

Long time varsity coach, Rob Lagerwey, described Lopez as "a leader to the team both on the court and in a spiritual manner."

Lopez said, "I've grown up hearing athletes saying that when they're on the court they don't think about anything and I always thought that was super hard to believe, but when I play tennis, the match is the only thing on my mind. I'm thankful that I have a passion for the gift that I have."

Editorial

Pieces of advice for departing seniors as they approach future after Illiana

Well, it's that time of year again. We are saying goodbye to yet another class. Obviously this is a very bittersweet moment for the class of 2023, because they are leaving their high school that they have gotten to know so well over the past four years, but are also getting ready to take on the world as adults, whether in college, trade school, or elsewhere. We are also saying goodbye to some seniors on the Echo staff, whose columns you have probably already read. (If you haven't, go read them. They're great!) All this being said, the Echo staff isn't going to let these seniors go without a little bit of advice. So here goes:

1. Don't forget what you learned
No, we're not expecting you to remember everything that you have learned in all of your four years at Illiana. This piece of advice is more broad; obviously you have learned more than

the quadratic formula and when the bombing of Pearl Harbor happened (December 7, 1941, just in case you were wondering). You've learned more about yourself as a person, you've hopefully grown

“Don't forget the experiences you had in high school when you move on to the next stage in your life; remember what you learned from them.”

in your walk with God, and you've experienced what it's like to do school online for a quarter. You learned to work as part of a team, whether it was a sports team, a musical group, or a drama production. Don't forget the experiences you had in high school when you move on to the next stage in your life; remember what you learned from them.

2. Form good habits

This shouldn't come as a surprise to most of you, but when you leave Illiana, you will be starting the adult stage of your life, with no parents checking on you all the time. This can be excit-

ing at first, but the fun of it evaporates when you neglect responsibility and end up cramming for that one test or rushing to meet that one deadline. Good habits, when formed early in your life, can stay with you for the rest of your life, so make sure that you start your adult life with good ones, like putting work before play, setting aside time for prayer and read-

ing the Bible, attending church, serving others regularly. You'll thank yourself later.

3. Don't be afraid to be different

Whether you're going into the military, a public university, a trade school, or somewhere else, don't be afraid to show the world what a Christian adult should look like. As Paul puts it in Philippians 2:14-15: "Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world..." While it is true that this world is broken and twisted, Illiana alumni are called to be lights in the darkness of this world and to hold onto the word of God. So, Illiana alumni, are you going to hide your lamp under a bushel? Or are you going to let it shine?

My farewell-love letter to Illiana

Just like that, I finished high school. I can't believe it's over.
At the beginning of this year, I felt ready to graduate and move on to the next chapter of my life, probably somewhere far away, maybe in Alabama or Florida. Now I wish I had just a little more time left here.

I'm picturing myself going to Valparaiso University in a few short months. I wouldn't have imagined my future to look like this at all.

So much of my time at Illiana was spent learning things that I didn't think I would have to experience in order to understand. Getting this final opportunity to share some of my thoughts before graduating made me realize that I want to leave behind some of these lessons for others to learn from too.

Number 1: I put so much pressure on myself early on into my high school career: to find a best friend, to fall in love, to get top tier grades and to be liked by everyone (just a few reasonable, achievable expectations). Long story short, it was impossible, and it was really hard for me to accept that. I didn't find my very best friend here, I didn't get straight A's, and I know for a fact that I've lost close relationships with some of my classmates that I can't get back. Eventually I fell in love, but not until my senior year! The dreams, romantic stereotypes, and movie tropes I wanted to live as an underclassman didn't happen until later. I had to be patient, but it was all worth it looking back. Now I get to experience all this and more with the best guy I know, and it's one of the best feelings. Thank you, Nico.

Number 2: I got to be so involved in the school because of all the opportunities teachers gave me. Over the past couple of years, I've been to Washington, D.C. three times; Indiana's and Illinois's state capitals; Los Angeles; Colorado. I signed up for all of these feeling extremely underprepared.

Still, I didn't let myself get talked out of taking these opportunities. I made friends that I probably wouldn't have gotten to know under different circumstances, and I got to experience life away from the familiarity of St. John, Indiana. Illiana provided me with these opportunities to branch out and explore a side of myself I'd never seen. I was forced to get out of my comfort zone, and I haven't regretted it since.

Going along with this theme of opportunities, I can't not mention the Echo. I love that I can be a small part of what it takes to create something amazing every month with amazing people. Being on the newspaper staff was something I looked forward to before I even got to Illiana, and I can't begin to express how thankful I am for every memory it brought. Thank you, Mr. DeVries, for your encouragement and trust in me to lead the team.

Number 3: The first two years of high school I worked insanely hard at maintaining the best grades I could. Junior year I fell off the tracks a little; the workload was a lot heavier compared to my previous years, and I was getting burnt out with homework, extracurriculars, and relationships taking up so much time. I've spent my senior year trying to find balance. It's been a constant battle but can definitely be done. Thank you, to all my friends, for the countless times you've made me crack up and for the amazing memories we've made.

To wrap this up, I want to say thank you to Illiana. Looking back on these last four years of my life has made me realize just how great a privilege it's been to go here. All these memories and opportunities couldn't have been possible without the people who make Illiana so special. I'm so proud to be called a Viking. Thank you, Illiana.



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the

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

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

2023 Echo staff, signing off



Thank you to all our readers from this year's Echo editorial staff.

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