

Learning to live in moment

Now that I'm a senior, I have a lot of things to do before I finish my last year of high school. I need to apply for colleges, submit recruitment forms, and figure out what I want to do with the rest of my life.

A lot of you other seniors probably feel the same as well. We all feel stressed out about what this year will bring with college or the workplace. Here's some advice for us seniors as we navigate through our last year of high school: live in the moment.



Kailyda Anderson

News Editor

Living in the moment can be hard because of worrying about what the future will bring with our young adult lives once we graduate. Instead of worrying so much about the future, we need to focus on the present.

Part of living in the moment includes creating memories and having fun. Take it all in because soon enough, high school will be over. I know graduation isn't until June, but it will come eventually. I always thought the sayings "high school flies by" and "these are your best years" were "cringy", but they're true. I look at my freshman self and realize that she had no idea who she was going to be as a senior. Now as a senior, I'm soaking in as much as I can before it's all over.

Here are some things we can do to live more in the moment:

1. Notice our surroundings—take a look outside and see the world God has created right in front of us. How often do we take time out of our day to actually look around and see what's going on? When was the last time we sat down, closed our eyes, took a deep breath, and just looked at everything around us?

2. Focus on one thing at a time—While it may feel more productive to multitask and work on more than one thing at a time, constantly juggling multiple tasks makes it hard to live in the present moment.

3. Be grateful for what we have now—If we are constantly focused on things we don't have, we aren't taking the time to appreciate what we do have right now at this moment.

4. Show acceptance—you need to let go of how you think things should be and accept them for what they are. You cannot control everything that happens around you; sometimes life is going to be different than you want it to be. Accepting things as they are will help you let go of the things you think are out of control.

5. Take a break from social media and technology—While we might think that constantly checking our social media accounts is helping us stay connected to the world, it is actually having a negative effect on your ability to be present. Everytime we turn our attention to the phone, we pull it away from whatever is happening right in front of us. It's important that we learn how to avoid letting technology take over our life as it can really prevent us from being mindful of what is going on around you.

Using these can help us not feel so overwhelmed. If we learn how to live in the moment a little more each day, it will benefit all of us in the end.



Photo by Jeff DeVries

Mr. Vermeulen congratulates graduate Levi Hescott between innings.

Illiana's first wiffleball fundraiser collects thousands for mission

Kaelyn Yonkman

Reporter

Illiana hosted its first ever Staff vs State Champs Wiffle Ball game on Friday, Sept. 15, to

raise money for upcoming mission trips.

Mission Director Sara Johnson, who planned the event, said, "We want so desperately to take as many kids as possible on

mission trips, and one way that we can do that effectively and can offer it to as many kids as possible is to raise money for the mission trips. This is one of four or five fundraisers that we'll have throughout the year that will help defray the cost of mission trips for students."

Illiana's own teachers competed in the game, Mr. DeBoer, Mr. DeVries, Mrs. Drost, Mrs. Dutton, Mr. Dykshorn, Mr. Fennema, Mr. Gabrielse, Mr. Kruithof, Mrs. Roeda, Mr. Slings, Mrs. VanRosendale, and Mr. Vermeulen.

Illiana's State Champs were represented by Tyler Balkema, Tyler Barker, Kevin Corcoran, Aaron Gouwens, Austin Maslanka, Nick Neri, Tim Prim, Josh Rubien, Luke Smith, and Gabe VanRoekel.

Spectators had to pay a small entrance fee, but the fundraising was just started. Johnson

had planned what she called "a Menu of Mischief." For varying fees, spectators could change the game. For example, a \$100 donation would turn the next hit into a homerun, or for \$10 a batter would have to spin five times before stepping to the plate. The event raised over \$4,000.

The "Menu of Mischief" was popular among spectators. Sophomore Delaney Kelley said, "I'd say the best part of the game was when people would spin around 5 times and then fall," the most memorable being Mrs. Drost.

Senior Alyssa Mulder said, "I thought Mr. Dutton did a great job emceeing the event. His commentary was funny."

Johnson hopes that this will be "the first of many" wiffle ball games and that it "becomes an annual tradition."

The game was originally scheduled for September 8, but it was postponed due to rain.

Illiana welcomes eight new teachers



Aubrey Colvin

What made you decide to become a teacher?

I loved gym class when I was a student, and there were people around me affirming the gifts God has given me in teaching.

What's something about your interests or your past that might surprise people who don't know you?

I sang soprano for school choir in middle school. Also, I originally went to college for culinary arts, but one of my first chefs helped me realize working in a restaurant was not what I was looking for.



Leticia Cruz

What made you decide to become a teacher?

Since I can remember I have always wanted to become a teacher. I started off as a paraprofessional in an elementary school then moved on to high school. The connection and relationships I built with my high school students in such a short time made me want to eventually be a high school teacher. After 6 years of teaching in an elementary school here I am teaching high school students!



Joshua Gabrielse

What made you decide to become a teacher?

When I went to college I didn't know what I wanted to do. I was open to anything but teaching (since my parents were both teachers) and music (since I have no musical talent). I ended up majoring in physics, doing research over the summers. I also tutored at an elementary school because college is an inherently selfish time, and I needed to do something that wasn't about me. I decided that I liked working with students, and that I would be more useful as a teacher.



Sarah Kroese

What made you decide to become a teacher?

I loved school so much in high school and college. However, I had no idea what I wanted to major in when I went to Trinity Christian College. After a year, I started working in the Writing Center. The students I worked with showed me how much I enjoyed helping people love language as much as I do. I took a class with a wonderful professor, Dr. Boerman-Cornell, who showed me that this was my calling. I never looked back!



Ty Hillegonds

What made you decide to become a teacher?

I think it's a familial trait, because my mom and dad are both teachers. I like biology and I like teaching, and I think that teaching makes the world a better place.

What do you like to do in your free time?

I like to listen to and play music, visit museums, garden, and do stuff outside like hiking.



Jeremiah Kruithof

What made you decide to become a teacher?

I had some very good teachers when I was in high school and ever since have wanted to pay it forward. They were great role models for me and I hope I can be the same for my own students.

What do you like to do in your free time?

I like to camp, play sports, and go golfing.



Craig Slings

What made you decide to become a teacher?

It was a process over years where, through other professions I was in, I realized I enjoy being a teacher, [and] other people [spoke] into my life.

What do you like to do in your free time?

We keep pretty busy - I enjoy DIY home projects; being outside - fishing, at the beach (or pool), walks with my wife (and dog Stella), gardening; watching sports.



Kyle VanderHelm

What made you decide to become a teacher?

I love talking about history, and teaching lets me do this and get paid for it. I get to share some of what I know and care about with young people... as they grow into (hopefully) thoughtful and mature citizens of the Kingdom of God and the United States. Also my parents, who of course know me quite well, have been telling me I should teach.

High Enrollment impacts Illiana students, staff

Gabriella Costello
Reporter

Illiana Christian’s Dyer campus was originally built for a capacity of 500 students. The school exceeded that number within 6 years of its move, and this past summer the school board had to place families of some potential students into a waiting pool.

“There were no more than half a dozen families in this waiting pool,” said Principal Peter Boonstra.

Enrollment growth has been steady over the years but has accelerated recently.

“We are graduating a class of about 103 and we are bringing in a class of about 155,” said Director of Admissions, Jenna Dutton.

This year the school hired nine new staff mem-

bers either to fill in old positions or to create new ones because of the higher enrollment. Over the summer, the school also renovated a storage space into another classroom.

“The high enrollment has put a lot of pressure on teachers because their classrooms are so full,” said Dutton.

The new construction on the east side of the building, which is slated for completion by next school year, will increase student capacity to 750 students..

Until then, students will have to deal with a crowded school.

“Too many people, not enough space,” said senior Janna Van Belle.

“Lunch is crowded, chapel is crowded, class is packed,” said Brooklyn Pierce, another senior.



Photo by Jeff DeVries
With enrollment at an all time high for this campus, students find the commons a bit more crowded during break this year.



Photo by Jeff DeVries
The 2023-2024 Chapel Committee (Back) Anna Bauer, Alyssa Mulder, Alaina Ohm, Justine Olson, Kelsee Smit. (Front) Isaac Olthof, Nolan Bouwman, Gise Gibson, Zander Weemhoff, Steven Seibert.

2023-2024 Chapel Committee

Kailyda Anderson
News Editor

Illiana’s new Chapel committee consists of 10 seniors: Anna Bauer, Alyssa Mulder, Alaina Ohm, Justine Olson, Kelsee Smit, Isaac Olthof, Nolan Bouwman, Gise Gibson, Zander Weemhoff, and Steven Seibert.

The chapel theme this year is “Living Life Back-

wards.” The whole idea of living life backwards is to live life how a Christian would rather than non-Christians.

Part of living life backwards means being truthful in everything you do and always telling the truth no matter what the consequence may be. The chapel committee has worked to portray this theme early in the year.

Senior Justine Olson

said, “My favorite part about chapel is teaching God’s word to the student body, especially during school because most schools don’t do that.” She added, “My biggest goal this year for chapel is to encourage more students to get more involved in reading the Bible and diving deeper into the bigger picture of it all. Learn to live life backwards in everything you do.”

New policy keeps students in school

Students have mixed reaction to new attendance requirement to receive exam voucher

Ellie Ratliff
Reporter

Illiana’s school board has enacted a new school policy this fall allowing students to miss only six days of school on top of getting ten service hours if they want to be exempt from an exam.

In the past couple of years due to covid, absences have had no direct relation to earning an exam exception. According to Principal Peter Boonstra, “We have had several students who have had numerous absences that were not warranted.” To try to encourage better attendance, the school instituted the new policy.

Students who complete their service hours will be allowed to miss six days of school and still vouch an exam, but once a student misses any class more than six times, he or she will be required to take all exams.

Requiring good attendance for an exam exemption is not an entirely new idea. Before the pandemic, students could only miss two days if they wanted to be ex-

empt from an exam. As a result, students often came to school when they were sick and should have stayed home.

Boonstra said “When dealing with 550 kids, It’s all about finding the right balance.” He hopes that this will motivate students to show up and make themselves accountable and he is hopeful that these changes will have the intended effect.

English teacher Ms. Sara Johnson said, “Like a king without a kingdom is not a king, a teacher without students isn’t a teacher.” Johnson added that the heart of these changes is that the teachers value the attendance of their students and want them in this building.

There are many mixed opinions regarding this new policy. Sophomore Addison Bakker said, “I feel like it’s going to make people come to school sick because a lot of people would rather come sick than take an exam.”

Differently, Senior Maisy Vroom said, “I like it; I think it brings a lot of people back to school.”

Ryan Mulder, undercover national champion

Joy Ramsey

Reporter

Everyone at Illiana has heard of the 2023 baseball team winning the state championship, but few people know there's a national champion walking the halls every day. In June, sophomore Ryan Mulder won the 2023 PDGA Amateur Disc Golf Championship, winning the three-round tournament by a whopping seven strokes.

Mulder started playing disc golf at 9 years old and is now a national champ. He began playing the sport when his uncle, who played disc golf in college, bought him his first disc and a basket to start playing. After playing around for fun in his yard, he developed a strong passion and love for the sport.

A year later, at age 10, his uncle took him to his first tournament and the next year

he won his first tournament at age 11. For these tournaments he has traveled as far as Kansas and plans to travel to South Carolina and Georgia at the end of the calendar year.

Mulder says he really

enjoys playing, especially in tournaments, because "it gives you competition. It's better than team sports because you are relying on yourself so if you make a mistake, you know it's on yourself and you can't blame

others."

He spends multiple hours daily practicing for the sport. Since he doesn't do other sports, he ends up spending an average of two hours after school and even more on weekends practicing. Disc

golf is not typically a scholastic sport, nor does Illiana have a team, but through tournaments, events, and lots of practice, getting college scholarships for disc golf is still a possibility. Mulder is still currently deciding on whether to play in college or not.

In fact, Mulders highlights are easily found on YouTube now, including highlights from his most recent championship. One of his clips even has over 12,000 views.

Mulder also helped instruct and teach other people during the pre-tournament clinic for Illiana's disc golf tournament on Aug. 19. The tournament was started by Mulder's uncle and Ms. Terri Schaff. While helping teach the clinic, Mulder also competed in the tournament with Bible teacher Mr. Mark Dykstra, a long-time disc golf aficionado.



Sophomore Ryan Mulder throws a disk during Round 1 of the USADGC in Michigan.

Photo by Justin Anderson / PDGA

White works year-round to make class trip unforgettable

Kelsee Smit

Feature Editor

Mr. Jeff White has been teaching at Illiana for 31 years and has been planning the Illiana senior class trip to Washington DC for over 20 years. At this point, he is an expert on leading tours to the nation's capital as he has traveled to DC at least 80 times between the Right to Life March, Close-up, class trip, and personal vacations. His extensive experience has

forged connections with local tour guides in DC, guides who often don't work with high school students but who make an exception when White calls.

Illiana used to use a private travel company to organize the senior class trip, but the tours with that company cost more and did not offer nearly the same number of places to go. So Illiana arranged with White, who was already planning student trips for the Close-up and Right to Life March groups since the late 1990s.

Business teacher Rick Veldman, a frequent class trip chaperone, said,

"[White] does a great job keeping



Mr. White has fun with students in the streets of DC on a former class trip.

Photo courtesy of Illiana Spire

the costs down, because he is a wheeler and dealer with all aspects of the class trip."

White said he starts the planning process for the class trip for the upcoming year while on the trip the year before. He does this so he can lock in prices and time slots a whole year in advance for some activities. Though the planning is year round, there are some months without much planning, but there are always things that have to get changed or scheduled. For example, in the past an earthquake forced repairs that shut down the National Cathedral for one or two trips, and White had to find a replacement stop for the tour.

Veldman added, "There are a million details regarding the class trip and [White] does a remarkable

how well he's ran it over the years, the tour guides come out of retirement because of him and the kids. He takes care of it and as an administrator I don't have to worry about anything other than children."

White's planning process won't finish until the day the seniors are leaving Illiana. He said the most difficult part about planning is making all the parts line up and making the most efficient trip where students can see and do as much as possible. The most anxious part for him is wondering if everything will fall into place as perfectly as possible.

White said, "I enjoy planning [the class trip] only because I know students enjoy being a part of it."



Mr. White puts hand on the statue of George Mason that resides beside the tidal basin, not far from the Jefferson Monument.

Photo courtesy of Illiana Spire



Characters Belly, Jeremiah, and Conrad in front of the beach house.

Photo courtesy of Amazon

TSITP season one review

Kailyda Anderson

News Editor

Rating: PG-13

The show first aired on June 17, 2022, with weekly episodes.

Throughout the first season of “The Summer I Turned Pretty” (TSITP), we see a lot happen. The Conklins return to the Cousins beach for their annual summer vacation, the kids end up at a bonfire and get in trouble, Belly and Cameron date for a little until she realizes she’s still in love with Conrad, Taylor and Belly get into a fight because Taylor kissed Steven, Belly does the Debutante Ball, Jeremiah escorts her until he finds out what’s wrong with his mom, Conrad jumps in and dances with Belly, Jeremiah and Conrad get into

a fist fight, Belly kisses Jeremiah, and then finally ends up kissing Conrad in the last episode on the beach.

Although season two was good, season one definitely has the upper hand. There was so much character development for Belly, lots of twists and turns, and better love interests. Belly figured out who she wanted to be with and knew she always wanted to be with Conrad, and there was no heartbreak besides finding out that Susannah had cancer.

The plot twist at the end with Conrad and Belly kissing on the beach ended the season perfectly. It left the audience questioning, wondering what would happen next with Belly and the boys. After a little over a year later, season two aired on July 14, 2023.

TV series improves on books

Giannia O’Neal-Schultz

Arts and Leisure Editor

“The Summer I Turned Pretty” is a book trilogy written by Jenny Han and later adapted into a TV series with two seasons produced and a third season confirmed. The television adaptation has many differences from the original book series.

The biggest change in the TV series was there was no debutante ball in the first book. The ball strengthens the storyline because it shows the main character Belly is becoming a debutante because Susannah asked her to and Belly wanted to do something different that summer.

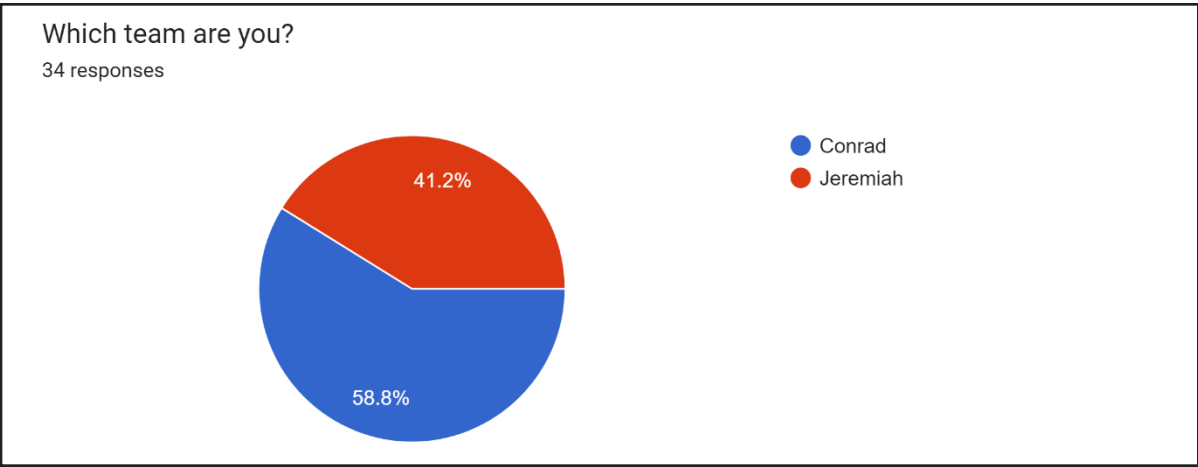
Another change involves the introduction of a new character to add some romantic tension. There was no Shayla in the book, and Steven didn’t have a love interest in the book series. Shayla’s addition to the story was important for the TV series because it introduces that Steven is forced to navigate a romantic choice between Shayla and Taylor, whom he eventu-

ally chooses. The decision deepens our understanding of his character.

The adaptation also features a shift in point of view. The first book is told from Belly’s point of view, but the TV series is told from many characters’ point of views. This is important for the TV series because it goes into depth and gives dimensions to the characters to understand what they are feeling and why.

In the book series Taylor is only shown in Belly’s flashbacks, because it is inferred that Belly and Taylor were best friends, but they have fallen out. This is different from the TV series because Belly and Taylor fall out after she catches Steven and Taylor being romantic together at Belly’s birthday party, but then later on in the TV series they rekindle their friendship.

All in all, the adaptation seems to make the story richer by giving more attention to a wider cast of characters. The original books focus pretty tightly on Belly and her inner life, but the TV series opens the lives of many to us.



Team Conrad or Jeremiah?

Giannia O’Neal-Schultz

Arts and Leisure Editor

Arts and leisure editor, Giannia, sent out a survey to TSITP fans. The survey included questions regard-

ing the show, and then a poll asking which “team” people were on. It appears that more people are team Conrad than Jeremiah.

Many people prefer the first season to the second,

and look forward to seeing what will happen in season three.

Most people’s favorite scene is when Belly and Conrad are on the beach, or any scene involving Taylor and Steven.

Jenny Han impacts teenage culture

Kailyda Anderson

News Editor

When the show aired on Amazon Prime, many people were interested in seeing what author and producer, Jenny Han, had created.

Han, an American author, wrote the “The Summer I turned Pretty” books before they were turned into a TV show. She also wrote the “To All the Boys I’ve Loved Before” series, which was later turned into three movies, and produced another TV series,

“XOXO, Kitty,” a spin off from “To All the Boys I’ve Loved Before.”

The latest show has gained its own life on social media, especially Tik Tok. Fans make edits of the characters and clips of the show to post, usually getting a lot of likes, comments, and views. Once season one ended, the biggest question wanting to be answered was, who was Belly going to pick, Conrad or Jeremiah?

This became popular pretty fast, as viewers declared themselves team Conrad or team Jeremiah for various

reasons. The show brought people together, and even gave yet more publicity to Taylor Swift, who’s music is used throughout the show.

Season two brought just as many questions as season one did, but those who read the books know who Belly will end up with. There are also clues in the show that indicate who she will pick. Rumors tell that Jenny Han might plan to change the ending, but there is no certainty of that at the moment. The cast plans to start season three as soon as they are able to.

Season Two both exciting, disappointing

Lydia O’Riley

Sports Editor

In Season 2 of “The Summer I Turned Pretty” Belly, Steven, the Fisher boys, and Taylor go back to the beach house. Belly is not with Conrad anymore, Jeremiah is not her best friend, and Susannah is dead. The beach house has been put up for sale by the boys’ aunt, Julia, and her daughter Skye. Belly and Jeremiah amend their friendship over a long drive to Cousins Beach from Brown University. Over the course of a week the kids are able to save the beach house with the help of Laurel, Steven

and Belly’s mom. Taylor and Steven end up admitting their feelings for each other and start dating. Belly and Conrad cannot find common ground on what happened to their relationship, which leads Belly back to Jeremiah. Belly and Jeremiah rekindle their relationship and Conrad stays at Cousins Beach in their beach house.

Season 1 and season 2 were similar because of Belly’s love triangle with Jeremiah and Conrad. However, the main plots of both seasons were very different, making the choice of which one is better a difficult one. Season 2 had a lot of highs and lows between Belly, Jeremiah, and Conrad.

The audience was left with a glimmer of hope for the future of Jeremiah and Belly.

Each of the characters were portrayed well by the cast of “The Summer I turned Pretty”. Jenny Han even added two new characters, Aunt Julia and Skye. They seemed unnecessary to the plot because the show would have been just as fine with the dad selling the beach house instead.

“The Summer I Turned Pretty” is rated 16+. Season 3 has been confirmed, but filming will not resume until the writers strike in Hollywood is over.

Boys baseball: back to back state champs



Varsity baseball players run onto the field and dogpile to celebrate their second state finals win.

Photo courtesy of Illiana Facebook

Cheyenne DeJong

Reporter

The Illiana Vikings baseball team defeated Covenant Christian to secure another IHSA Class 2A state championship at Victory Field on June 16, 2023. With a

score of 3-0, both teams battled to the end.

Compared to the first state championship game, some players found the second time around more relaxing and enjoyable. “The field felt normal from being there last year and it felt like we were sup-

posed to be there again. We knew we were going to do it again,” said shortstop Isaac VanderWoude, a senior.

“We didn’t look at it as pressure but rather pleasure. Our mindset was the same because it will always be the same for each game.

We compete one pitch at a time over and over again until the game is over. We found that if we have focus, purpose, and grit (FPG), and use these things to the best of our ability, then no matter the outcome, our season will be successful,” said Coach Jeff VanderWoude.

Senior Aaron Gouwens, the team’s catcher and another returning champion, said, “We knew we had one more game left and we couldn’t sell ourselves short.”

While the season ended with another state title, it was not smooth sailing all the way. At one point earlier in the season, the team suffered through a stretch of losses and ties. But when state tournament play rolled around, Gouwens and VanderWoude said the boys were able to turn a switch.

“We found our problem and we fixed it. It worked out in the long run, because it led to our championship,” said Gouwens.

Tanner Post, a freshman right fielder at the time, said he felt a little more pressure playing in his first state championship game, but he settled in and did his part along with his teammates.

“That was the most fun baseball team I’ve ever been a part of,” Post said. “We took the pressure off our shoulders and went about our business. We did what we had to do in practice so the games would slow down.”

Overnight tournaments present different kinds of challenge

Abigail DeBlock

Reporter

In early September, boys and girls soccer took on overnight tournaments, both traveling to locales south of Illiana Christian High School. The experience of such tournaments can present special challenges to coaches and athletes as they prepare for games outside of their normal school rhythm.

In order to prepare for the weekend tournaments, both teams strategically trained and practiced to compete. Senior Audra Davids personally prepared by “getting a lot of sleep the night before leaving, getting snacks for the bus ride, and practicing as a team the morning that they left.” The boys took advantage of days in June to prepare for the hot weekend, stated senior Nolan Flipse. Sophomore Noah Sons added that the team “spent the week [prior to the tournament] practicing and watching film.”

The boys soccer team traveled to Bloomington High School North on Sept. 1, staying overnight in Bloomington, and arrived home late afternoon on Sept. 2. When they weren’t playing, the team added to their experi-

ence by “listening to music, hanging out with each other, playing FIFA on an X-BOX, and walking around the hotel,” said Flipse.

The girls soccer team departed for Bethany Christian School on Sept. 8 for its tournament on Sept. 9. Assistant coach, Mrs. Letica Cruz, said she helped her team prepare by “encouraging the team and building their excitement by having chalk talks.” Chalk talks are pep talks that are given in various ways, including things such as devotions, prayer, team film review, and inspirational videos from sports-focused movies. Cruz appreciated the experience because it “gave an opportunity for players to know each other better and grow in relationship.” The girls filled their free time by swimming at the hotel, said Davids.

Though the trips were a positive experience, the tournament results themselves were a disappointment. Over three losses, the boys had a score deficit of 13-4. The girls resulted in a score deficit of 5-1, losing two games. Flipse noted the boys played “exceptionally well” and Davids added her team “worked very hard” despite the unfavorable outcomes.



Photo by Jill Rozendall

Sophomore Josh Carter takes the ball while playing against Highland High School on Aug. 28.

Boys soccer perseveres despite setbacks

Lucas VanderWoude

Editor-in-Chief

The boys soccer team has had a strong start to its season so far, with the varsity team record being 8-3-1, and the junior varsity team going undefeated with 9 wins.

This strong start is especially impressive since the varsity team is playing without one of its key starters, Josh Turkstra, a senior who tore his ACL while playing in a scrimmage game against Plym-

outh High School on July 22. He underwent surgery on August 16 and is hoping to start dribbling the ball again by October. However, he will be unavailable to play the entire season.

“Not being able to play in my senior year of high school is certainly one of the hardest things I have had to go through,” said Turkstra. “Soccer is a huge part of my life and my passion, and not being able to play alongside my best friends for one final time is still impossible for me to

get over.”

However, the team is adapting and growing despite this major setback. “Our strength is in diversity and depth,” said varsity coach Todd Bevan. “We have a widely talented squad of players all willing to put in the work and play any role they’re needed in.”

The absence of Turkstra has caused the other senior leaders on the team to step up. “We’re setting an example for others on the team by being good Christian leaders,” said senior Nolan Flipse.



Viking sports briefs



Increase in runners leaves team confident for state

Kelsee Smit
Feature Editor

This year, the boys cross country team has one of the biggest teams they have had in years, with 23 runners. Coach Luke Fennema said, “They got off to a bit of a sluggish start but broke out at the Michigan meet (Sept. 9) and won it, even if it didn’t look like they were going to on paper.” Senior Jarvis Mickles was the in-

dividual champion, senior Nolan Bouwman (4th), junior Josh Wondaal (7th), and junior Cody Aardsma (9th).
The boys also took first in the AA division at the New Prairie Cross Country Invite on Sept. 15. Mickles finished 3rd, Bouwman 6th, and Wondaal 11th.
Fennema said, “They are led up front by Jarvis, he is a top 5 in every race, Nolan is not far behind as our solid number 2,

and behind those 2 are Josh and Cody.”
Bouwman, said he hasn’t had a group of boys cross runners this well in all his years. He said, “This year we have a strong top 7... I think it’s going to be our best shot in all my 4 years to go to state. For that reason, Jarvis and I aren’t going on the class trip. We want to stay committed to the team and get the best shot we can to go to state.”



Photo by Jeff DeVries
Senior Jarvis Mickles runs at the Lake Central Invite

Girls cross country works toward physical, spiritual goals

Giannia O’Neal-Schultz
Arts and Leisure Editor

This season of girls cross country has made a lot of progress.
Head coach Luke Fennema said, “Everyone on the team has really good attitudes and is willing to work hard. We also have gained a few freshmen who have been able to make an immediate contribution.”
In the meets the team has finished 3rd, 4th, 2nd and 5th.

Fennema said, “Our number one goal is always to glorify God in the way we run. We want our athletes to grow physically, mentally, and spiritually as they discover their specific role on our team.”
A big goal for this season is to have the team qualify more postseason meets. Coach Fennema said, “We would love to have our team qualify for Regionals and at least Avery and Ella, if not the whole team, qualify for state.”



Photo by Jeff DeVries
Senior Avery Olthof runs in the Lake Central Invite on Aug. 26.



Photo by Jeff DeVries
Sophomore Sienna Eenigenburg takes the ball toward the goal.

Teamwork leads to success for girls soccer

Giannia O’Neal-Schultz
Arts and Leisure Editor

The varsity girls soccer team has shown a lot of improvement and teamwork this season.

Head coach Vanesa Huizenga said, “They have been working hard on their footwork and their passing on the field. They have gotten a lot stronger in these skills and are able to work the ball up and down the field a lot smoother. Their communication on the field has also improved greatly this season.”
Their record this season is 4-5-1. Some of the goals this soccer season are to maintain a positive team environment and have good character as players. Huizenga said, “The girls are working hard on being leaders who are also servants, being players with grit, and being intentional on and off the field with their actions and relationships with one another.”

Boys tennis advances in tournaments, goals

Kailyda Anderson
News Editor

The boys tennis team has improved significantly from last year, sporting a team record of 7-7 as of Sept. 19. The team captured first place in conference. and won doubles tournaments against Highland,

Portage, and Hobart. One overall goal the team had was to beat Hanover, which they did.
Gise Gibson, a senior on the team, said, “Some of my overall goals this season are to glorify God, pray for every match, encourage others, be consistent with my first serve, and win 70% of my match-

Girls golf makes Illiana history

Lydia O’Riley
Sports Editor

Girls varsity golf made Illiana history on Sept. 5 by winning the conference. Kati Dobrijevich and Jonna Balkema made 1st team all-conference and Tess Hensely made 2nd team all-conference. Dobrijevich took 1st place overall at the conference tournament with a score of 90.
Varsity coach Suzanne Jonkman said that the girls created five team values this season, “Play with honesty and integrity, be humble, be inclusive and respectful of one another, be an encourager, and be positive and strive to do our best.” Jonkman explained that the girls took the values to heart and showed them on and off the course.
The team couldn’t have won the conference without teamwork and unity. Junior Tess Hensley said, “By the time I joined, everyone was sort of separated a little bit, but by the end of the season we were a real family and it was awesome.”
The girls’ season ended on Sept. 15 with a 6th place finish in the state sectional tournament. Their final record was 5-4.

Viking volleyballers show ‘GRIT’ as they march to 5-1 conference record

Lydia O’Riley
Sports Editor

The Illiana girls varsity volleyball team has a record of 11-7 as well as 15 players, 12 of whom are returning players from the past season.

The team’s focus is captured in the acronym G.R.I.T.: G-glorify God, R-respect others, I-integrity, and T-teamwork. “If we can stay focused on G.R.I.T. I think we can accomplish a lot,” said varsity coach, Richelle Vanderzee.

Avery Martin, team captain, said to achieve G.R.I.T. and a good team dynamic, the girls’ have worked on making their bonds stronger during the pre-season and communicate with each other when things go wrong.

One of the major challenges the team has faced this season was Andrian, and the Vikings fell in a close contest. The team will have to face them in the post season to advance from sectionals.
Playing against difficult teams,

doesn’t change the girls’ perspective on their main goals, though. Martin added, “This game isn’t life or death. Things move on after this game. We should be thanking God for the talent that we have whether we win or lose.”

Male Athlete of the Month

Senior, Nolan Flipse is September’s male athlete of the month. Over 10 games, Flipse has scored 9 goals and has had 6 assists. Flipse is the team’s center attacking mid.
Varsity coach Todd Bevan said, “He has a Christlike attitude. He’s positive on the field but also shows a strong work ethic and serves his team.”



Female Athlete of the Month

The female athlete of September is the entire girls varsity golf team. They competed in the GSSC Conference tournament on Sept. 5 and won the first conference title in Illiana’s girls golf history.
Kati Dobrijevich and Jonna Balkema made 1st team all-conference. Tess Hensely made 2nd team all-conference.



Editorial

Sometimes, more is better

Examining the benefits of Illiana’s increasing enrollment

As all we Illiana students have noticed, Illiana is filling up. We are more than 50 students beyond capacity, and the hallways and common areas are more crowded than ever before. We know that this can be frustrating when you are trying to get to class on time or trying to walk through the commons at break or you need to use the restroom between classes, and we editors feel some of this frustration as well. However, we think that the advantages of a larger enrollment heavily outweigh the disadvantages. So, let us lay them out for you.

The first advantage of a larger enrollment is obvious; more people means more social interaction and with that better odds of everybody finding at least one person with whom they get along well. A greater number of people also brings a greater diversity of voices and perspectives, potentially enriching our understanding of various topics by helping us to see things we might otherwise have missed. At the very least, meeting different people from different backgrounds is great practice for many different situations, jobs, churches, and college being just a few of them. As Illiana’s size increases, there will be more

people to meet, more relationships to have, and more opportunities for students to grow.

A second advantage of a larger enrollment is the school’s being able to offer a greater variety of classes and activities. While it is true that there is a wide variety of

ity or club where students can use the skills that they have and meet like-minded people. In this way, more students can strengthen the sense of community at Illiana.

A third advantage of a larger enrollment is that the school will be able to offer more

a sport, but maybe aren’t in the top percentile of students who are trying out.... You want to have competition, but you also want to have opportunities for those who want to enjoy the sport and who are just getting started.” Higher enrollment can help the school hit both of those targets.

Beside these three advantages, Illiana’s enrollment growth offers one final and important advantage: Illiana will be offering a Christ-centered education to more people.

“The more people that get a Christian education at Illiana, the better,” said Illiana’s principal Peter Boonstra. “It’s beneficial to get an education here... and it has always been our intent and purpose and mission to make sure that we can provide this education to as many kids as possible.”

So whenever you find yourself getting annoyed at a group of new students who are blocking the hallway, remember that those people are an indicator of the school fulfilling its mission, and that each new student who is getting a Christian education from Illiana brings benefits to us all.

As Illiana’s size increases, there will be more people to meet, more relationships to have. and more opportunities for students to grow.

classes at Illiana now, there is always room for more as long as Illiana can provide enough students for a class to make it economically feasible. Two hundred more students could fill seats in numerous new classes, anything from French to Metal Technology to Art History. More classes mean a better chance that a student will find the right subject or vocational activity, and that exposure can open new vistas for that student’s future. Also, more clubs and extracurricular activities increase the likelihood of finding an activ-

athletic activities, and the skill level of Illiana’s teams will be higher. When more students are at Illiana, that means that more people will be interested in getting involved in Illiana’s sports program. This could result in both the addition of new teams (such as lacrosse or football) and/or the addition of new levels (i.e. freshman, junior varsity, and varsity) to the current athletic program. According to Athletic Director Darren DeBoer, “You need to make sure that you add enough opportunity for students that want to participate in

Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth: Why God is enough

When is enough enough?

Every time I am at Olive Garden I get spaghetti. Then when I get my dish the waiter brings out a cheese grater and will start putting it onto my spaghetti while saying “tell me when,” indicating that I should signal when I think there is enough cheese for me to be satisfied with my meal. At times I’m tempted never to tell the waiter to stop and see how long he will go. But who is to say how much cheese is enough cheese?



Kelsee Smit
Feature Editor

Now I know this example is kind of silly, but it can apply to many things and really makes me think. How much love is enough love, how much trust is enough trust, or how many Texas roadhouse rolls are enough? A quick Google search for the record number of Roadhouse rolls consumed shows that some teenagers in 2021 ate 132 rolls in one sitting. Now that may be too much.

Over the summer I read the memoir “Angela’s Ashes” for English. In this book the author Frank McCourt talks about his childhood growing up very poor in America and Ireland. He grew up with so little that some days he and his family didn’t even have anything to eat. Frank’s family did not have enough money to live comfortably. To Frank a fraction of what I have could have dramatically changed his life. And what would a starving, five-year-old Frank McCourt have made of a group of teenagers eating three to four weeks’ worth of rolls in one sitting?

Yet we all worry about having more. We are never satisfied with what we have, not even the richest among us, and maybe that’s because we think money and things will bring us happiness and meaning. But it doesn’t. Meaning and satisfaction lie elsewhere, which explains why Frank would find ways to be happy even under the circumstances he was living in.

I am blessed with so much compared to others; compared to Frank I have more than he dreamed about. Yet I still look at those who have more than me and wish for what they have. When is enough really enough? Why does what I have not fulfill me?

The Bible says in Hebrews 13:5, “Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, ‘Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.’” In the end, we find meaning and contentment in only one place, and it’s not in stuff.

During the Jewish Passover service, people gather around the table to sing the song called “Dai-ainu,” meaning, “it was enough for us,” or sufficient. The song gives Jews a way to thank God for all he has done, and as the song proceeds, the lyrics list those many blessings. But as the song continues, it peels off layers of those blessings of God, imagining that God had not given them but that God himself was still with them. By the song’s end, the only blessing the people have is the presence of God in their lives, but they sing, “it is enough for us.”

From now on, when I question when enough is enough, I will look to “Dai-ainu,” God is enough.

the Echo

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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.

September Echo Word Search

I	P	W	T	F	N	A	T	P	D	E	H
I	M	T	I	P	Z	I	V	P	E	T	E
Z	R	X	A	F	V	N	O	J	D	I	J
Z	C	Y	G	O	F	L	R	M	W	H	V
D	J	S	D	L	I	L	W	X	O	W	D
A	A	H	I	C	U	F	E	O	R	P	H
H	Z	R	Y	D	L	C	M	J	C	S	N
P	J	T	N	R	I	B	O	Y	I	O	J
Q	R	O	V	O	W	A	O	N	I	P	G
L	E	P	A	H	C	W	A	P	C	G	X
G	A	A	N	N	Y	P	M	L	D	D	S
T	A	Z	E	X	S	A	Q	Y	H	P	T
X	Z	C	W	F	H	C	D	C	S	P	X
T	V	B	I	C	U	F	B	S	R	O	F

Champion
GO

Chapel
New

Conrad
Policy

Crowded
Spanish

Disc
White

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