



‘Sound of Music’ a huge success despite slight hiccups, sells out all four shows, raises \$160,000 for auditorium

Ellie Ratliff

Reporter

Never before in Illiana history has a run of performances been completely sold out until this year’s spring musical, “The Sound of Music.”

With senior Justine Olson and senior Elliot VanDerGriend leading the way playing Maria and Captain von Trapp, the play was a huge success. Olson said, “The musical this year was an absolute blessing; every single cast member put so much effort and so much work into this every single day.” She also said, “I think it really touched all generations.”

Sophomore Maddy VanBeek said, “The singing was amazing, the acting was amazing... Overall, you could tell they put a lot of work into it; I really enjoyed it.”

Mr. Rick Veldman, a longtime teacher who attended the Thursday night performance, said, “I thought the play was awesome. I’ve been to so

many of them in my career here, and this was one of the greatest musicals I’ve ever seen. It was just fantastic.”

Over its four-performance run, the cast and crews played to a total audience of 1,896 people, an impressive feat. “The Sound of Music” is a favorite musical for many, but Illiana’s production of the material also received rave reviews.

The spring musical was not without hiccups. Mrs. Rachel Monroe, the director of the orchestra, became seriously ill and missed the last three rehearsals plus all four performances. Mrs. Kathy Sliemers, the vocal director of the show, stepped in to captain the orchestra in her place. Sliemers said, “It was a little stressful taking over Mrs. Monroe’s spot, but I was glad that I could help her out. It was amazing to watch [the students].”

Another small hiccup involved the tech crew losing control of the lighting board a few different times. According to Mr. Kamphuis, the equipment failure only highlights the need for the planned auditorium.

This musical was also Mrs. Emily Hillegonds’s second time directing. Hillegonds said, “It was the most fun seeing all of it come together at the end, the students put in so much work.”

With a match of dollar for dollar up to 50,000 dollars, the production was able to raise 160,000 dollars to be put toward the construction of the auditorium.



Photo by Jim Kamphuis

Elliot VanDerGriend as Captain Von Trapp sings Edelweiss, a final goodbye to his Austrian homeland, during the Kaltzberg Festival as his children look on.

Springfield/Indianapolis Close-Trip gives students in-depth look at government operation, state landmarks



Photo courtesy of Illiana Facebook

The eight Illiana Close-Up participants pose in front of President Lincoln’s tomb, which is located in Springfield, Illinois.

Lucas VanderWoude

Editor-in-Chief

Eight Illiana students traveled to Indianapolis and to Springfield from March 4 to March 6 on a Close-Up trip to visit landmarks and learn more about state government.

Some of the landmarks that the students toured were the Tippecanoe Battleground, the Indianapolis Capitol Building, the Springfield Capitol Building, the childhood home of Abraham Lincoln, the Illinois State Treasurer’s office, and the Lincoln Museum and tomb.

The students also met with several government officials, including the Indiana State Treasurer, the Indiana State Representatives, an Indiana Supreme Court Justice, and Danny Davis, a U.S. representative from Illinois.

The students gave similar reasons for wanting to go on the trip.

“I wanted to learn more information about the Indiana and Illinois state capitals and experience the differences between the two,” said Gise Gibson, a senior who went on the trip.

“I wanted to get out and learn more about our government and

the states,” said Grant Rappold, a junior who went.

The students had many learning experiences on the trip, which for some turned out to be their favorite parts.

“My favorite part was seeing the Senate debate in Indianapolis, because it was fun to see two people from different states debate about full-time employment for minors,” said Gibson.

“My favorite part was the Indianapolis Capitol building,” said Rappold. “I enjoyed talking to the treasurer and one of the justices. It was a good learning experience.”

Illiana tunes in to mental health webinar hosted by Ben Zobrist

Abigail DeBlock

Reporter

On March 5, Illiana Christian students, caretakers, and coaches participated in a webinar with former Cubs second-baseman and World Series champion, Ben Zobrist.

Zobrist discussed the importance of balancing and maintaining a healthy lifestyle as an athlete. Zobrist

was inspired to create the platform, Champion Forward, to give athletes a holistic sports education, and he uses his experiences to educate others on achieving emotional health. Champion Forward defines balance as “having a healthy division of time, energy, and attention given to different responsibilities we have in life.” Zobrist admits he had depressive-like symptoms

and didn’t know who he was outside of baseball after he was a part of the 2016 Cubs World Series Championship team.

Athletic Director, Darren DeBoer, heard of this opportunity from another athletic director. DeBoer’s intent was for the audience to “feel better emotionally and become healthier athletes.” As an athletic director, DeBoer sees firsthand how students put

under pressure, under some circumstances, get burnt out with their sports. He wanted to give students a resource that would allow for athletes to reflect honestly on their mental health. DeBoer highlighted how meaningful connections are essential to people feeling grounded, and that is something that can be overlooked because of the busyness of life.

Around 200 people joined

the webinar online. Illiana also hosted a “watch party” where athletes could watch the webinar on the big screen in the Commons. One attendee of the watch party, Tobey DeVries, said the webinar was “different than I expected because it focused more on mental health breaks than a ‘get up and go’ approach.” He added that it was “a good takeaway and it would be beneficial to do it again.”

Make most of time that you have

Where has all the time gone? Believe it or not I still remember my first day of Kindergarten. My sister walked me to my classroom before going to her first day of sixth grade. I was a little nervous, but mostly excited. I knew a lot of the kids in my class, so it felt easy to walk through that door.



Lydia O'Riley

Sports Editor

I sat at my desk next to my other classmates and started putting my crayons and glue sticks away. It seemed like the same routine every day. I went to school, learned the abc's and simple addition, colored, and memorized some Bible verses. Life was so easy back then. All I had to worry about was whether or not my mom gave me carrot sticks or Cheez-Its as a snack.

Then eventually I got to middle school where I still didn't have to worry or even study that much. Again I memorized Bible verses, but I had more difficult math problems, science fairs, and group projects. Life got busier. I was hanging out with my friends more in middle school and it was an interesting glimpse of how high school was going to be. That was until COVID hit and everything stopped. I could no longer hang out with my friends. I was stuck at my house all day every day; school was extremely easy because everything was remote learning.

When I started high school. I was taking Honors Geometry and Honors Biology. Those took a lot of hard work and studying to do well. I also did not have a study hall, which made my school life a little more tough.

It was a huge adjustment going to high school from middle school. Highland Christian prepared me pretty well, but it's an adjustment for anyone. I was trying to make new friends, while still trying to keep my old friendships with people now attending different high schools. I was also involved at my church, and I was just trying to learn how to juggle it all.

Now, I am in my junior year of high school. I'm thinking about what classes I need to take next year, what I want my major to be in college, where I want to go to college, and don't even get me started on the SAT and what my scores will be. I'm trying to balance everything I had to juggle freshman year again this year, except thankfully I have study hall this year, while trying to plan my future.

What I am trying to get at here is it is insane that eleven years ago I started kindergarten when it really feels like just yesterday sometimes. Life is going by too quickly and I want it to slow down, but I know that will never happen. I need to take in the little moments and remember that while school and other aspects of my life are important, it is also important for me to laugh and have fun with the time I do have because I know years can go by within the blink of an eye.

Illiana's performance band places 1st in Lemont competition, soon to compete nationally

Cheyenne DeJong

Reporter

The Midwest Band Competition took place on Sat., February 24, in Lemont, Illinois. Illiana's performance band, consisting of Wind Ensemble members plus a percussionist and a trumpet player from Symphonic Band, placed 1st of the 15 bands competing in their division.

Mrs. Rachel Monroe, Illiana's third-year band teacher, said, "We were the very first band of the day and I think all the students would agree that we really brought the energy and passion of the music forward. It would have been easy to be lethargic, but they played with so much intensity."

Since four years ago, the band has grown significantly. The Wind Ensemble is currently 27 of the best musicians in the school, and the band program as a whole boasts over 60 members. This growth has not only been in numbers but also in quality. At the competition, Illiana took awards



Photo courtesy of Illiana Facebook

Rachel Monroe, Illiana's band director, conducts Illiana's performance band at Lemont High School.

for Best Brass and Best Woodwinds.

Monroe said, "Generally, I like to be over prepared. However, we actually learned one of our pieces only a week prior to the competition! With our band concert the week before, we had focused on learning other music and then turned around and produced

a really difficult piece of music in only 6 days of rehearsal. These kids impress me so much."

The Illiana band was also encouraged to apply for a national music festival that will take place next spring to which only the top 30 bands in the nation will be invited. The Wind Ensemble will be preparing a video recording

submission in the next couple weeks to try to secure their spot.

"This year we are focusing a lot on telling the story for our music. We have great technique, so rather than focusing on being perfect all the time, we try to convey the story and emotion through our pieces first," senior clarinetist Alyssa Mulder said.

Preview Illiana draws over 200 kids, offers mock classrooms

Gabriella Costello

Reporter

Illiana hosted its bi-annual preview event on Thursday, March 14. This spring they hosted 215 kids, half of them already registered. They also had some seventh graders come to the preview, due to the good reputation Illiana is upholding.

"We are having people in line to register for the class of 2029 already after hearing that Illiana is filling up quickly," said Jenna Dutton, Director of Admissions.

This preview Illiana decided to bring back the mock classroom idea. A mock classroom is when a teacher runs a class for 15 minutes and teaches

how they usually would. This enables the parents and students to see what classroom life would be like at Illiana. Herr Luke Fennema ran a German class, and Mr. Gorter and Mr. Bosman ran a math classroom.

Brand new to preview was a student panel and a parent panel. Families that signed up for the panel sessions were divided up, the parents attending the parent panel and the potential students attending the student panel.

All future students who were already enrolled received a yard sign.

"[The sign] is a good welcoming gift and a marketing idea," said Dutton.



Photo courtesy of Illiana Facebook

Avery Olthof, Levi Sliemers, Alexi Shaffer, Aidan Drost, and Destiny Palmer participate in a student panel at Preview Illiana.

Auditorium match raises \$160,000 during week of musical

Reese Jansma

Reporter

In the month of March, Illiana has begun a "Strive for the Shell" campaign to raise the remaining money needed to build the outside walls of the auditorium this summer as a part of phase 2 construction. In the week of the musical, March 4-10, a special match led to a single's

week's donations of over \$160,000.

Head of School, Lance Davids said, "We need to reach \$7.5 million by April 15, and we have reached \$4.2 million (as of March 21), so we are more than halfway."

Davids sent two emails to the community on Feb. 16 and 23, both of which outline the details of the campaign and that share some numbers.

Putting up the shell of the auditorium in this phase of construction, Davids wrote, would save over \$200,000.

Davids also highlighted the needs for the auditorium. A new auditorium would give our music, drama, and arts students the first real performance space in the school's history. It would also be the beating heart of the school

as a place of worship for students and staff. Finally, Davids talked about how the new auditorium would make opportunities to build and serve the larger community as a potential event space.

Davids said he believes this school community will support the project. Davids said, "I'm going to stay positive and say we are going to reach the goal."

Pulled Pork Fundraiser a success, raises money for Illiana Mission Trips



Photo courtesy of Illiana Facebook

Abigail Postma, Kelley Postma, Kim Bolkema, and Jovie Bolkema pose for a picture while volunteering at the pulled pork fundraiser.

Isabella Girolimon

Reporter

The mission trip fundraiser went better than expected, with the musical drawing a large crowd for the pulled pork dinner on March 9.

“It was excellent,” said Ms. Johnson, Director of Missions. “Because the musical was sold out, we had more of a crowd here, which was excellent because then they stayed and donated, so I am thrilled about that.”

The fundraiser was

organized by Mrs. Schaaf, Illiana’s events coordinator.

“Mrs. Schaaf does all of our events at Illiana,” added Johnson, “and she does a great job.”

Johnson explained the challenges that arise with the fundraiser, saying, “We don’t know how much food to prepare because we don’t know how many people are going to be there. We don’t offer tickets, so there’s really no way of knowing who is going to come and who isn’t.”

Johnson added that due to Schaaf’s expertise at

throwing these dinner fundraisers, there was “exactly the right amount.”

The dinner raised about \$1,000 more than their similar dinner last year. The money supports students going on Illiana’s mission trips to West Virginia, Uganda, and Dominican Republic.

Johnson said, “Thank you to everyone who came out and supported us, because we are very excited about these trips. It is excellent to share in our excitement with our family and friends, so I appreciate that ability.”

Middle school band festival attracts students from 4 different schools



Mr. Carter, a retired Wisconsin band director, guest conducts the middle schoolers at the final concert of Band Fest 2024.

Photo courtesy of Rachel Monroe

Kenadie Piepenbrink

Reporter

On Tuesday, March 12, 180 middle school students from Calvin Christian, Crown Point Christian, Lansing Christian, and Highland Christian, along with 40 Illiana Christian students participated in and helped with the

biennial Middle School Band Festival.

The Illiana gym bleachers were packed with friends and family there to be part of a great musical experience. Rachel Monroe, band director at Illiana, said that there was “so much talent to be able to play together so well.” These talented students played instru-

ments ranging from flutes and clarinets to tubas and electric guitars.

Monroe also stated that she loves letting Illiana students take charge and take leadership roles. For example, senior Alyssa Mulder said that students led sectional practices prior to the concert. They also helped lead team-building ex-

ercises.

Mr. Carter, Monroe’s father and a retired Wisconsin band director, conducted the final performance at this year’s band festival. Carter came in from Wisconsin to work with the students before the festival. Monroe said it was an extra special moment for her to have her father visit and help out.

One reason for the festival is to show middle school students a glimpse of how band changes when students get into high school, since in middle school, band is more about learning the basics of music and their instruments. Once in high school, Monroe said, “it gets cooler” and more exciting.

Illiana holds three separate testing days for freshmen, sophomores, juniors

Kaelyn Yonkman

Reporter

After launching a successful “testing day” last year, Illiana has chosen this year to split testing over three days: Freshmen tested on March 12, sophomores on March 13, and juniors took the SAT on March 14.

Until this year, the SAT,

and its related tests, were on paper. Last year, the whole school tested on the same day, with students divided into different classrooms. However, in order to do that again, most of the teachers would have to be trained to administer the tests online, which takes a lot of time, according to Mr. Boonstra. According to Mrs. Teach, to be able

to administer the test, teachers must be state certified, as well as complete an hour-long training session. Teachers that administer the PSAT don’t have to be state certified, but they still must take the one-hour training program.

A lot of students wonder about the reason for these tests. The freshmen and sophomore

tests help students, teachers, and counselors figure out the best placement in honors or regular classes. According to Boonstra, both tests also help give feedback on instruction, and measure Illiana students’ progress against national standards. Both tests also can help when students start to look at colleges. The PSAT in the fall gives juniors an

opportunity to receive the National Merit Scholarship, which is a very prestigious scholarship, with only about 1% of juniors receiving it, according to school counselor Neil Zandstra. The SAT is required by the state of Indiana, and most colleges and universities also require an SAT score as part of their admission materials.

Parent teacher conferences suffer from lack of participants

Giannia O’Neal-Schultz

Arts and Leisure Editor

Parent-teacher conferences occurred on Thursday, March 21, and they were poorly attended.

Parent teacher conferences at Illiana are for parents to be able to get together with teachers and confer about a student, discussing both successes and struggles and parents and

teacher work together to improve student learning. Each semester there is one parent teacher conference. The turnout for parents usually varies, but more parents tend to come in the fall, and most of those parents are parents of freshmen.

Despite the low attendance, Principal Peter Boonstra said that conferences are important. He added, “I think it is a great way for parents to hear the ‘real story’ of how their child is doing

in school, not just what grade they are getting. But it is also a chance for parents to let teachers know a little more about their child and how he or she functions. We view our teachers as serving in loco parentis. That means “in the place of parents.” And that means that it is important to make sure there is a rapport of cooperation and mutual support between teachers and parents.”

Rachel Drost said conferences

might be better attended with more promotion: “I think the teachers should talk about it in class and have the students encourage their parents to attend or promote it on social media more. The school communicates with parents pretty clearly that we are having this, and ultimately it is up to the parents to decide if they want to come.”

Some schools require student-led conferences, believing that giving

students ownership of the conversation about their education gets better results.

Boonstra doesn’t see it that way. He said, “No, I don’t think students should attend, and that’s because I want to make sure that parents and teachers can talk freely and plainly. It is a little like the way that moms and dads confer about what would be best for their children without asking for their children’s input.”

Spring break at home?

(No worries! We gotcha covered!)

Spring Break activities in greater Chicagoland

Kelsee Smit

Feature Editor

In the Spring break season many travel to popular vacation places like Florida. But some stay back in the Midwest and enjoy their time off with little to no traveling. So for the people staying home and still wanting to do some fun things nearby without breaking the bank, here are some options:

Another place that has a lot of options is Zig-e's Land on Wicker Ave. in Saint John. They have things from batting cages, to mini-



Photo from Tripadvisor

golf, to go-karts, and arcade games. Go-kart prices start at 8\$ for one ride and 50\$ for a day pass.

One unique activity if you need to blow off some steam is a wreck room. Region Rage is the place for you if you just want to go into a room and break things. It is located in Cedar Lake, IN. Rage Room Prices Rage Admission - \$30.00 which includes One crate of smashables, 15 minutes in the Rage Room, Unlimited FREE gameplay in The WRECK Room Arcade, and access to Aerial Alley and the Break Room Snack shop.

One great place to visit is the Brookfield Zoo, which covers 216 acres and has around 450 species; it is a family-friendly experience. Ticket prices start at Adults: \$29.95, Seniors 65 and over: \$24.95, Children 3 to 11: \$20.95,

and ages 2 and under get in for free.

Lincoln Park Zoo is another great zoo that boasts free admission but is smaller than the Brookfield Zoo with only 35 acres with around 200 species.

Staying in the Chicagoland area, another place to see is the Skydeck, located on the 103rd floor of the Willis Tower (formerly the Sears Tower) with a prepaid admission ticket. Tickets: Adult admission (ages 12 and up) costs starting at \$32; tickets for children ages 3 to 11 cost \$24. Admission for children under 3 is free.

A fun place to go on a warm day is Whihala Beach located in Whiting, IN. Whihala is home to the WhoaZone, featuring a floating water park, stand-up paddleboards, kayaks, and more! Beach hours vary but are from 10 am-6 pm. Parking meter fees start at \$5 per hour or \$25 daily.

For a more recently popular activity, you can go to Goat or Puppy Yoga. One place nearby named Goat Yoga Chicago is located in Elgin, IL. It offers

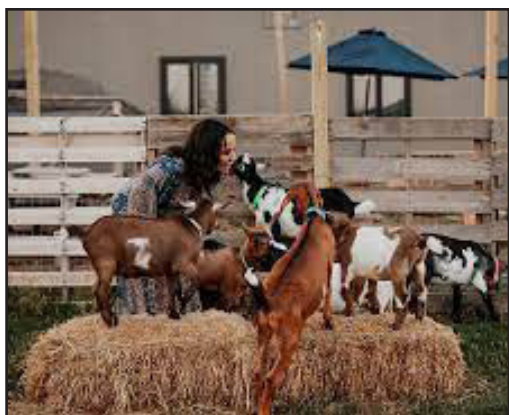


Photo from Goat Yoga Chicago



Photo from TimeOut website

traditional yoga, goat yoga, puppy yoga, goat hangout & hike, and more.

Goat yoga is an hour of fun split into 30 minutes of yoga with goats taught by a certified yoga instructor and 30 minutes of playtime to pet the goats, take photos, and relax with your new furry friends. The price for that hour of fun is \$39. Puppy yoga is similar to Goat yoga, split into 30 minutes of an all-level yoga flow with puppies taught by a certified yoga instructor, and 30 minutes of playtime for extra cuddles and selfies with a price of \$49.

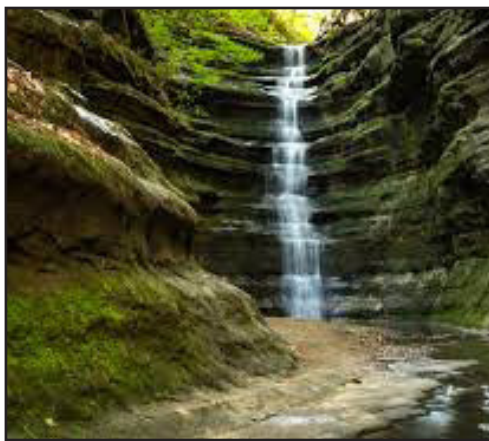


Photo from NBC Chicago

Another option that is a little farther but worth the drive is Starved Rock State Park, in LaSalle County, IL. There is no fee to enter the park but the parking fee is typically around \$5 per vehicle for non-residents and \$1 for Illinois residents. The Visitor Center is open daily from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. The park is open daily from 7:00 am to sunset and the trails offer stunning vistas and beautiful waterfalls—not the landscape you normally expect in the Midwest.



Photo from Navarro Farms

Spring break volunteering opportunities

Kelsee Smit

Feature Editor

Another fun and free idea for break is to volunteer at different places and organizations. Doing so will not only enrich your break but also help your community.

First up is Feed My Starving Children, a Christian non-profit organization that believes hope starts with food. While volunteering you'll hand-pack rice, soy, dried vegetables and a nutritionally complete blend of vitamins and minerals into bags which are then sealed, boxed, placed on pallets and shipped to partners working hard to reach the neediest children around the world. You can go on their website and sign up for a time and location to volunteer; reservations are required. There are locations in Aurora, Libertyville, and Schaumburg, IL.

A little closer to home is

Phil's friends located in Crown Point, IN. Volunteering includes coloring cards, coloring boxes, making fleece blankets or packing boxes. The hours vary from Monday 5:00pm – 6:30pm, Tuesday 9:30am – 11:00am and 2:00pm – 5:00pm, and Thursdays 9:30am – 11:00am and 1:00pm – 2:30pm.

Navarro farms is another place that will give you a different and rewarding experience. Navarro Farm, located in Frankfort IL, provides transformative agriculture and animal adventures for children, young adults, and families impacted by special needs. You can sign up and learn more about their program on their website.

Hopefully these helped get some ideas for ways to spend spring break or something to do over a weekend. It is also a great way to get service hours before the end of the year exams roll around in May.



Photo from Feed My Starving Children

Satellites, sensors change farming game completely

Lydia O'Riley

Sports Editor

With the advent of industrialization, farming underwent great change. It is currently in a second major stage of evolution. This time, the changes to efficiency and productivity are tied to computer technology.

Satellites

According to the Global Center on Adaptation's website, satellites set over 32,000km above us help farmers determine rainfall and drought patterns, and property sizes.

With the aid of satellites, farmers are able to produce more of their crops because of how much land they can utilize. Before, farmers would have fewer

acres of land because farming is hard work and takes a lot of time to plant seeds, find pests, put down fertilizer, and harvest. With the help of satellites, farmers are able to plant more seeds per acre of land, see images of their crops to measure growth and to determine what they need to do to increase production. They are able to farm larger parcels of land. (<https://interactive.satellitetoday.com/>)

Satellites have also transformed the way fertilizer is used and distributed. An app connected to the satellite can send images of soil to farmers showing how much fertilizer is needed for different areas of the fields. This helps farmers cut costs on fertilizer, and it also reduces unwanted environmental hazards be-



Photo from AgriMANIA

cause fertilizers are used more sparingly (gca.org).

Sensors

Farmers use sensor technology to monitor temperature, moisture, disease, etc.

Sensors that will stay throughout a growing season can be placed in a field

of crops to monitor moisture and humidity. Other portable sensors that can be placed and removed as needed. Moisture sensors monitor water levels to help farmers understand the health status of their plants and whether irrigation is necessary (thomasnet.com).



'EarthScout': Crop management sensing technology Photo from potatonewstoday.com/

Farming takes new forms

Lydia O'Riley

Sports Editor

Another change to farming is that it is no longer strictly a rural affair. Farming can be seen anywhere now. People can grow plants in their homes, their backyards, the tops of their apartments, greenhouses, warehouses, and even in freight containers.

Vertical Farming

Vertical farming involves stacking plants rather than spreading them horizontally across the ground. With vertical farming, the sky is quite literally the limit. Farming vertically saves farmers space and water, which allows them to plant more crops and use less water.

To have a vertical farm, there needs to be artificial light, temperature and humidity regulation, and access to water. Vertical farms can be seen on rooftops, in houses, greenhouses, and storage boxes like here at Illiana. The plants can be grown hydroponically (with roots just bathed in water) or geoponically (with roots in a growing medium).

People who use vertical farming are more likely to have

plants whenever they want. They don't have to worry about seasonal weather when planting because they can produce their food in interior spaces.

(edengreen.com)

Modern greenhouses/rooftop gardens.

Planting

in greenhouses and rooftop gardens is a way to grow plants and food during months, such as winter, that are not prepared for growing things like fruit and vegetables. They also provide a better way for those who live in urbanized areas to grow their own food.

People will grow plants on the tops of their apartment buildings and even a lot of apartments in cities have rooftop greenhouses.



Future face of farming arrives

at Illiana

Science teacher Bryan Sylvester shares about Illiana's agriculture classes

Lydia O'Riley

Sports Editor

Q: What are interesting ways have you seen technology being added into farming?

A: "Plant cloning of specimens with highly desirable traits. Grafting, which is taking portions of one species of tree and attaching it to another. This is done often at Fair Oaks apple orchard to produce hearty yet tasty varieties of apples. Genetic engineering of plants using a technique such as CRISPR (Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats). This process essentially allows for the insertion of foreign genetic material into a host to produce new properties. It has actually been used to make petunia plants 'glow in the dark.'" (newatlas.com "Firefly Petunias")

Q: What are some technologies Illiana uses for the freight farm? There is already vertical farming and hydroponics, but what else?

A: "Aside from the climate controlled farming, we have water monitoring techniques we use to ensure proper pH & electrical conductivity and nutrient uptake. We also measure P.A.R. value which detects how many and what wavelength photons of light per second strike the plant."

Q: Are there any other ways of farming you plan to add to Illiana in the near future?

A: "Currently we are working on developing aquaponic systems. Aquaponics uses fish waste as nutrients for plant growth. The plants in turn clean the water for the fish. The fish can then be used as a food source as well. We are also currently developing algae photo-bio reactors to grow algae as a potential food additive due to its high nutritional content and ability to remove nitrogenous waste runoff. The reactors can be used to generate algae for potential precursors for biofuels, bioplastics, and potential drug and cosmetic additives as well. The new Integrated Science class will also discuss, explore and investigate these techniques as well."

"Dune: Part Two" Movie Review: Impresses and shocks audience

Lucas VanderWoude

Editor-in-Chief

Dune: Part 2 is an epic and satisfying conclusion to the journey that started with Dune, and in some ways is more thrilling and visually satisfying than its predecessor. Directed by Denis Villeneuve, the film's cinematography is stunning and its storytelling spot on.

Dune: Part 2 starts off where the first part left off: The Harkonnens have betrayed House Atreides, attacked Arrakis, and killed Duke Leto. Paul Atreides (Timothée Chalamet) and his mother Jessica have narrowly escaped death and are hiding with a sietch (group) of Fremen deep in the desert. Some of the Fremen are convinced that Paul is the Lisan al-Gaib (Voice from the Outer World) but others, including Chani (Zendaya) are skeptical. Paul hasn't stopped seeing visions, but his visions in the second movie have a darker undertone to them: he sees millions dying due to a holy war caused by him. As a result, he becomes hesitant to take his planet and his throne back.

Meanwhile, the Harkonnens are intent on stamping out the Fremen, and a new villain, Feyd-Rautha, is introduced, who is played by Austin Butler. His cold and calculating persona is a delightful contrast to the beast-like Glosu Rabban (Dave Bautista), who was the key villain in

the first movie. In the end, Paul has to decide whether to accept his role as a leader and fight the Harkonnens or to live a peaceful life with the Fremen.

One of the best scenes was the arena fight scene with Feyd-Rautha on the planet of Giedi Prime, which was filmed in black and white and sharply contrasted with the brown sand and blue sky of Arrakis. This stylistic choice emphasized the brutality and ruthlessness of the Harkonnen people, and added a very interesting look into how their culture contributes to their unfeeling persona.

My only complaint with the movie was the ending, which felt rushed. The movie was faithful to the book for the most part, but in order to keep its runtime down, Villeneuve drastically diminished the scope of the final duel between Paul and Feyd-Rautha.

Hans Zimmer has returned to write the score for this movie, and he does not disappoint. The score is both majestic and mysterious, with an aura of foreboding to it that drives home the seriousness of the story.

All things considered, Dune: Part 2 is an epic and sweeping narrative that does justice to Frank Herbert's 1965 book. I truly enjoyed watching it, and it has become one of my new favorite sci-fi movies.

Rating: PG-13

Runtime: 2h 46 min



Dune Part Two poster

Photo courtesy of Citiesbox.com

Tattoos: Illiana students respond to heavily debated subject

Giannia O'Neal-Schultz

Arts and Leisure Editor

Gen Z are bringing back trends from different decades, one of those being tattoos. Tattoos are a big part of pop culture, because of the trend of tattoos many Gen Zers have begun to get them. Many mainstream artists and celebrities go under anesthesia to get 8 hours plus worth of tattoos. This proliferation of tattoos can influence teenagers to get tattoos to feel trendy.

Christians are varied in their views on getting a tattoo. On the one hand some people believe that tattoos are art that expresses them and what they believe. Some Christian will get tattoos of religious symbols like

a cross, and others might get a piece of scripture inscribed on their arm. Other Christians oppose tattoos, pointing toward Bible verses such as Leviticus 19:28: "You shall not make gashes in your flesh for the dead, or incise any marks on yourselves."

Senior Jose Casillas is one such believer. Casillas said, "I won't ever have tattoos. It says specifically in the Bible that we are not to tattoo our bodies. We are to keep our bodies Holy, for we are Christ's Temple. However, I don't dislike people who have tattoos, as God still loves them, and God always looks at the heart, never the outside."

Here at Illiana a few senior students have tat-

toos. Some got them in remembrance of things in their life that have left an impact on them. In an

Echo survey of the senior class, 90.6% of respondents said they don't have any tattoos. The two most common reasons in the survey for not having tattoos are that parents won't allow it or that students simply have no interest in getting a tattoo.

Senior Abby DeBlock said, "I do have one tattoo but plan on getting more soon. The meaning of my tattoo is a reminder of my faith and how Jesus will always be there for me. His love will never fail and he will always help me."

Senior Carson Ulrich said, "My tattoo is about grandma and aunt that passed, it's just a way to remember them."



Photo courtesy of tattoojournal.com

This tattoo is meant to be a reminder of Gods sacrifice.

Illiana's only swimmer, Zack Vervlied, advances to state tournament

Joy Ramsey

Reporter

On Feb. 24, 2024, junior Zack Vervlied represented Illiana Christian's newly founded swim team at the Indiana state finals swim meet, capturing finishes in the top fifteen in

two different events. Zack is the first student in Illiana's history to participate in state finals as a swimmer.

After competing in prelims on Friday, Feb. 23, Zach was able to move onto the finals round which took place on Saturday, Feb. 24. Prelims consisted of around roughly 40

swimmers. The top sixteen finishers in each event then advanced to the state finals. Vervlied participated in both the 50 yard freestyle and the 100 yard butterfly as his events. He placed 11th for the freestyle and 12th for the butterfly.

Zack was quite aware of his po-

sition of being the first Illiana swimmer to go down to state. He said, "It was a lot of pressure, but I really just like the recognition too. I really enjoyed it and I still do"

Prior to swimming for Illiana, Zack swam for the Munster swim club. This is his first time that he is

swimming for a high school team instead of simply for a club. Although there are a few students, like sophomore Haley Vervlied and senior Emily Bantsolas, who swim for different clubs or schools, Zack is the only swimmer on Illiana's team at the moment.

Illiana track and field teams highlight talented athletes, following motto "Clothed in Christ"

Lydia O'Riley

Sports Editor

Boys:

The Illiana boys track team has started off the season with a team of 41 boys. The team has participated in two all event meets and one field event only meet. The first was on March 2 at Lincoln-Way Central High School. The second was on March 9 at Portage High School, and the third was on March 16. While there were no team scores recorded on March 2 or 9 for the runners, at least two of the boys beat their personal records at these indoor meets. Freshman Zach Skrabutenas came in fifth place for shot put on March 2.

Boys track and field coach Luke Fennema said of the young season, "So far so good! Those who trained in the winter have come back stronger."

The team's distance "core" is Jarvis Mickles, Nolan Bouwman, Isaac Olthof, Josh Wondaal, and Cody Aardsma who have all set great times for the early season.

According to Fennema, Issac Gorter will be strong in the mid-distance, Divine Olikagu will be a strong sprinter, and Owen Bandstra will be strong in hurdles as well as shot put.

Throwing coach Richelle Vander Zee said the top discus throwers are Stephann Jean-Philippe, Jaydon Colar and Ethan Bultema.

The team has been focusing on being "Clothed in Christ" this season. Fennema said, "We want to imitate him while specifically focusing on the attributes of discipline, servanthood, and character."

Girls:

The Illiana girls track and field team has 38 girls this year. They have also competed at the two all events meets on March 2 and March 9, as well as the field events only meet on March 16. The distance runners and sprinters did not keep team scoring; however, many advanced to the state meet on March 23.

Girls track and field coach Deb Top said, "We have some really good talent in our returning seniors--Audra Davids in

long jump and the sprints, Nora Filler in long jump and pole vault, Kelsee Smit in hurdles, and Maisy Vroom in distance."

As for the younger team members, Top said, "Dani Dodge has been working hard in the off season and is standing out as a sprinter as has Cadence Knisley in the hurdles. Freshmen Jori Davids excels in the 400m and shorter sprints as well as Keilah Mudde and Hazel Porter. Keilah Mudde also shows great promise in the jumps."

Both senior Cheyenne DeJong and junior Abbie Ritzema came from another sport to participate in track and field this year. They are the team's top shot put throwers according to throwing coach Richelle Vander Zee.

Vander Zee said Hannah Bruinsma and Sam Bultema, both returning team members, are the top discus throwers.

The girls track team, whose motto is "Clothed in Christ," is focusing on the goal of doubling the number of athletes advancing from the sectional meet this spring.



Photo courtesy of Jill Rozendal
Junior Shawn Kramer bumps the volleyball at game against Crown Point on Mar. 14.

Boys volleyball starts season strong, undefeated in conference, 3-1 record

Kelsee Smit

Feature Editor

So far the boys volleyball season is starting in a smashing fashion, undefeated in conference play and sporting a 3-1 overall record as of Friday, March 22. They started their season on Wednesday, March 13, with a win against South Central High School by a score of 3-0.

They have eleven guys on the team, four seniors

and seven juniors. Senior Hunter DeYoung said, "The season has been good so far; we just need more time to gel."

One of the team managers, Senior Anna Bauer, said, "Our hitters are very good, but we struggle with passing and serving. Serving is the big one, but if we can improve our passing and service, I think that we will have a very good year."

Boys basketball wraps up season after sectional game, seniors give parting advice

Kelsee Smit

Feature Editor

The boys varsity basketball team finished its season on March 1 in the semi-final sectional game against Andean losing 48-50. They ended the season with a 15-10 record and finished 3rd in the Greater South Shore Conference.

"I thought overall it was a suc-

cessful year again," Coach Roozeboom said. "Obviously we didn't end where we wanted it to end, and that was a little bit of a heartbreaker. But I think success can be defined by more than just wins and losses. If people looked from point A to point B, we grew as a team and they grew their skill and that is more successful than wins and losses."

Some of the team's favorite

memories over the year include winning the Grace tournament, team dinners, beating Chicago Christian, the homecoming game, going to Wendy's, and Lowd Crowd games

Senior Dylan Polak said his motto was "Play hard, practice hard, and the game will become easy. Everything will be fun if you play hard and give it your all."

Senior Isaac Sherwood

said, "I definitely think the season was a success. At the beginning of the year, people didn't think we would be that good. Throughout the year we started to play together and the younger guys really stepped up, and we did some things that people didn't expect us to."

Sherwood added his advice for next year's team, "Play each practice and game like it is your last because

pretty soon it will be over, and try to build a relationship with all of your teammates because [the experience] is bigger than basketball."

Senior Anderson Spoelman advised, "Try to have as much fun as you can, because if you get down on having to run or morning practices, then it will be a long season but if you enjoy the little things that helps a lot."

Male Athlete of the Month

Junior Jake Scott is March's male athlete of the month. Scott has been playing for the Illiana basketball team for the past three years, and he was key to the team's success in the last month of the season.

Boys varsity basketball coach Tom Roozeboom said, "I'll give it to Jake Scott. Not only for his defensive work by knocking down some big shots and assisting, but also for being able to lead us as a point guard."

Roozeboom added, "He leads by example on and off the court. He is very vocal at times and is a team player. His attitude is uplifting and he encourages his teammates."



Female Athlete of the Month

Junior Nolee VanDrunen is March's female athlete of the month. She is a top hurdler and high jumper for the Illiana track and field team. This year she is recovering from a severe shoulder injury; however, that has not taken away her passion for participating in track.

Girls track and field coach Deb Top said, "She is working so hard in physical therapy and is way ahead of schedule. In the meantime she is literally at practice every day she can be and helps out the new athletes in high jump and hurdles--she is a great coach! I know she hasn't competed in any meets yet, but to me she personifies what we are trying to develop on our team--discipline, servanthood, and character. She stands out in all three and that, to me, is more important than any individual athletic accolades."

Editorial

It's not about eggs and bunnies: the real reason to celebrate Easter

A lot of people, when they hear the word "Easter," think of colorful, plastic eggs filled with candy and coins left by the Easter Bunny in their yard. Or, they may think of coloring eggs when most of the time they get more dye on their fingers than on the egg itself. People also think of waking up early on Easter Sunday to discover a basket filled with candy and toys. Some people go to church to celebrate and worship, followed by a family feast and get together. Although it is always fun to receive delicious treats and go on egg hunts, this is not why we, as Christians should celebrate this holiday.

Easter is the central event in all of human history. It is the point on which all creation and all time pivot from darkness to light, from meaninglessness to purpose, from despair to hope, from death to life. Nothing greater has ever happened nor will ever happen than what happened the morning a dead Jewish man in Palestine came back to life and walked out of the grave, opening a door through which we can all follow. To lose sight of this miracle is to lose the beauty of the most important holiday on the calendar.

Jesus is the ultimate servant and we should strive to be like

him. We should strive to serve like him and love like him. On Easter, we Christians celebrate Jesus' ultimate act of service and love, giving up his own life to save all of ours, sacrificing himself so that we can live eternally with him on a new Earth.

Easter is the central event in all of human history.

As Christians we start celebrating Easter on Palm Sunday, where kids dress up and carry palm branches down the aisles of the church singing "Hosanna." We do this to memorialize Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem.

After Palm Sunday comes Maundy Thursday which commemorates the Last Supper and the washing of the disciples' feet. This is the last Passover Supper Jesus would attend. The supper recognizes the sacrifice of a lamb whose blood was marked

on the doors of Egyptians homes to save their firstborn sons during the 10th plague. Jesus was God's first and only son. He was our sacrificial lamb and by his blood we are saved from death and given eternal life. We are reminded of how Jesus was betrayed the night

of the supper by one of his closest friends and disciples, Judas. Jesus was arrested by Pontius Pilate's soldiers in the garden of Gethsemane after praying while his disciples fell asleep.

The next day is Good Friday where we remember how Jesus, utterly abandoned by his disciples, was nailed to the cross and gave up his precious life to save us from lives of sin and misery and death. After being arrested he was flogged with leather strips with nails and metal ripping at

his flesh and muscles. He, then, carried his own cross to Calvary where he was nailed to it through both his hands and feet. He wore a crown of thorns that dug into his head and caused him to bleed. He was poked and prodded and given vinegar to drink when he was thirsty. His body was stretched to compress his lungs so it would be difficult for him to breathe, and then right before he died he asked God to forgive the people torturing him because they didn't know

what they were doing. They didn't want to believe he was the Son of God who came to save them.

When Easter Sunday approaches, we celebrate Jesus' resurrection, where after three days from his crucifixion Jesus rose from the grave. Mary Magdalene went to his tomb that morning and found the stone rolled away and the tomb empty. She went and told Peter and John, and then many people believed in Jesus being the son of God that day.

We choose to believe that Jesus is the son of God, that he came to save us, that he died for our sins, and that he rose from the dead three days later. This is the true celebration of Easter.

The source of senioritis is lack of motivation

No matter what Mr. DeVries says, senioritis is a real thing. It may not be something that is diagnosable and treatable but it is definitely something that can happen easily and quickly. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, senioritis is defined as "a supposed affliction of students in their final year of high school or college, characterized by a decline in motivation or performance."



Kelsee Smit
Feature Editor

The part that says a decline in motivation is probably the biggest part of senioritis. Questions like, "Will it really hurt my grade if I don't do this assignment?" "Is it actually important if I miss one class?" or "What is the point of me doing this?" will begin to arise, causing a lack of motivation. Then things like not doing assignments and skipping class start leading to bad grades.

Senioritis is all about lack of motivation. So how can we find the motivation? I am in a sport right now, so I am motivated to keep up my grades so I can continue my sport. Then also we have the exam voucher for seniors. If seniors' grades are above a B-, they will not have to take the exam as long as they have gotten 10 service hours as well. That is a motivation for seniors to keep their grades up so they do not have to take any exams.

But there will always be some students who just do not care, who may have cared a little more at the beginning of their high school career but now that it's near the end who find it almost impossible to even open their backpacks when they get home from school.

To those people I have to say, I understand the difficulty of motivating yourself to stay on top of school work when things like video games and sleep are other options, but we are called to do the best we can in all circumstances.

Colossians 3:23-24 says, "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward."

This doesn't just apply to seniors battling the final months of high school, but also to people in all different areas of life. Whether it's at a part-time job, volunteering, working on relationships, or anything we spend your time doing, we work for our Lord. In all things, we are called to work in a way that points to and testifies about the glory of God.

So as a reminder to my fellow students, even if you aren't motivated by doing good for yourself, be motivated to do the best of your ability for God. Have fun, but don't forget at the end of the day who you are representing.

the Echo

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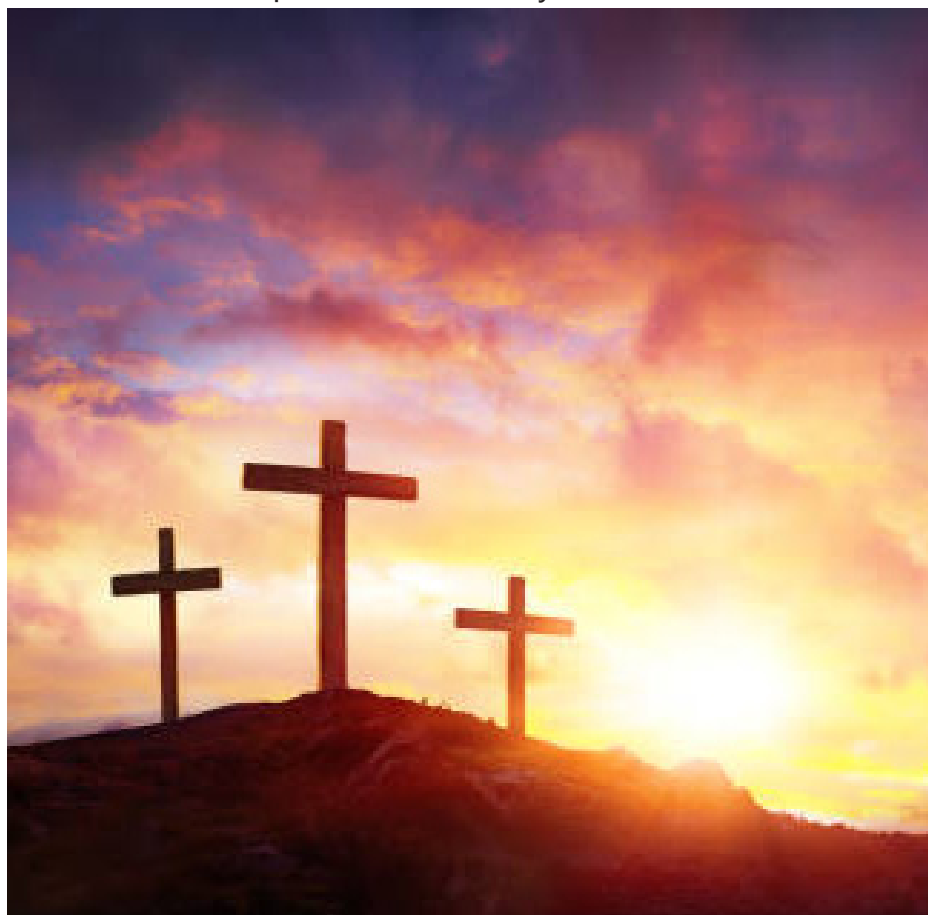
Jeff DeVries

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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.

Have a wonderful Easter!

"He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay." --Matthew 28:6



Picture taken from istockphoto.com

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