



Move over seniors, there's other seniors in town

Over 525 grandparents visit their students and experience classroom life at annual Grandparents' Day

Abigail DeBlock
Reporter

On Friday, April 19, Illiana Christian High School hosted its annual Grandparents' Day. Around 525 grandparents enjoyed coffee and donuts in the morning while students attended chapel, then spent third and fourth period with their grandchildren, and ended the day with lunch in the gym. Before lunch, the orchestra played and shortly after lunch began, Mr. Davids talked about faithfulness, legacy, and Oreos.

Grandparent Bonnie Witvoet said her favorite part of Grandparents' Day is "being able to go to [the grandkids'] classrooms and watch how they interact with their teachers and classmates." She likes that it "is a day we show our grandkids we care about them, their school, and the classes they take." She expressed that she "leaves feeling thankful and blessed

that our grandkids are getting a Christ centered education with dedicated and caring teachers who love the Lord."

Mrs. Schaaf, who plans the day's events and coordinates the food, said the school continues to hold this day because the grandparents are "our [the school's] biggest prayer warriors, huge financial supporters, and alumni who love to come back and support their family. It is a special day for them to see this school and their grandchildren, and it brings them a joy that students cannot understand." She said this is one of her favorite days of the whole year, and she said she was excited to have so many grandparents here.

Senior Bayleigh Vander-Zee said she enjoys Grandparents' Day because she likes that her "grandmas get to see where I learn" and it makes her happy because "they are such a blessing" to her life.



Photo courtesy of Illiana Facebook

The grandparents gather in Illiana's main gym for lunch. This was the last event of the day and featured speaker Mr. Davids and Illiana's orchestra.



Photo by Dan Blom

Sophomore Daniel Pomeroy, a member of the boys golf team, readies the pancakes for the breakfast.



Photo by Dan Blom

School resource officer Brad Kamstra finishes the race with a time of 20:35, coming in 2nd place overall.

Annual Pancake Pacer attracts 423 total attendees

Giannia O'Neal-Schultz
Arts and Leisure Editor

On Saturday April 20 the Illiana Athletic Department had its annual 5k Pancake Pacer. The runners started at 7:30 am at Midwest Training and Ice Center, then ran the rest of the running course through the nearby neighborhood in Saint John.

Junior Kendall Van-Prooyen said, "I didn't run the race this year unfortunately, but I did go to breakfast, and it was really fun. The pancakes were really good."

Illiana spring athletes came together to help during the Pancake Pacer from cheering on the runners to serving delicious pancakes.

Junior Abbie Ritzema, a track athlete, said, "The race is always really fun to watch. Even though it was cold outside, it was still really fun cheering on the runners." This year there were 123 runners, and 300 people attended the breakfast.

School resource officer David DeBoer said, "My favorite part of the run was seeing the community come out to support. I really enjoyed seeing all the familiar faces, but the pancakes were really the best part."

This year's overall top three winners were Mark Calix, who came in 1st place with a time of 20:11. Brad Kamstra placed in 2nd place with a time of 20:35, and Mason Drost came in 3rd with a time of 20:56.

Only thing we have to fear is fear itself

When I was younger, I used to love riding my bike around the neighborhood after school. When it was time for me to come inside for the day, I would put my bike in the garage, but the next day after school I went to get my bike out of the garage and there it stood in all its glory--a huge black creepy crawler waiting for me to arrive. I was so scared that I ran into my house screaming. My screams were so loud that they alerted my mom to run to me. She was so confused about what was wrong with me. I told her that I saw a monster in the garage and that I needed her help. So we went back to the garage, and she killed the spider and got my bike out of the garage for me as I stood there with my mouth open in shock.

That's when I realized I was being ridiculous, the moment my mom killed the spider so effortlessly and nonchalantly. There I was panicking because I just saw a little spider, but Mom never lost her cool. That was when I decided to try to not let little fears consume me anymore.

Fear is an instinct that is meant to protect us from harm, but sometimes it can dictate our lives if we allow it to. Facing our fears is a really scary thing to do but, if we can get over that fear, we might come to realize just how strong and capable we are. One of the most eye opening things that comes from facing my fears is that I realized most of my fear is deep rooted in the unknown. The unknown to me is a dark endless space for all types of possibilities and outcomes that harbors the good and the bad. If I shine a light on my fears, I can overcome the darkness of the unknown.

Each time we confront a fear, we become more resilient, more confident, and more capable of overcoming future obstacles. In essence, facing our fears is a journey of self-discovery, one that reveals our inner strength and courage. Often, fear manifests as self-doubt and negative self-talk, holding us back from pursuing our dreams and ambitions. However, by confronting our fears, we challenge these limiting beliefs and open ourselves up to new possibilities.

Facing our fears is an essential part of the human experience. It requires courage, resilience, and self-awareness, but the rewards are immeasurable. By confronting our fears, we diminish their power over us, unlock our true potential, and cultivate resilience in the face of adversity. Ultimately, it is through facing our fears that we discover our inner strength and courage, and embark on a journey of personal growth and fulfillment.



Giannia O'Neal-Schultz
Arts and Leisure Editor

Students skip class to view once-in-a-lifetime eclipse

Gabriella Costello

Reporter

A once in a lifetime event happened this past Monday, April 8. At 2:00 P.M. the Illiana students were released from class to see the near total solar eclipse. It is said that the next total solar eclipse near this area will be in 2099. The physics students were lucky enough to be able to travel to Butler University to see the total eclipse, while the students left at Illiana only saw about 95% coverage.

Mr. Gabrielse, physics teacher, took all his physics classes to Indianapolis to get the full experience of the total solar eclipse. This opportunity consisted of being on the Butler campus, going into the observatory, listening to eclipse-themed music, looking through telescopes to see



Seniors Camron Williams, Jose Casillas, and Logan Wilson admire the solar eclipse with their stylish safety glasses.

sun spots, and interacting with people from all over Indiana.

"What makes it [seeing the eclipse in the path of totality] different is where instead of stopping at 95% and then backing away, it kept on going," said Gabrielse. "So we

watched that sliver get smaller and smaller till it was completely gone. It was like the sun just blinked out... we were able to see the hot gasses around the sun, which normally reflect the light from the sun making us not able to see them, or look

directly at the sun."

Freshman Hazel Porter, who saw the partial eclipse on campus, said her favorite part of seeing the solar eclipse was "watching the sun get blocked out by the moon with my friends."

Illiana hosts more than 50 vendors in very first Spring Market

Kaelyn Yonkman

Reporter

Illiana hosted the very first Spring Market on Saturday, April 13, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The market boasted 53 vendors in total, including food trucks, and around 600-800 people came.

Set up in the main gym, the Spring Market operated similar to a farmers' market, with vendors of various crafts and foods operating independently at designated tables.

Mrs. Jenna Dutton, Director of Admissions and the organizer of the Spring Market, said two goals motivated running this first-time event: they wanted to get more people inside Illiana to see the school and they wanted to raise money

for the general fund.

The market raised right under \$4,000, and Dutton said that she was pleasantly surprised with the number of vendors and attendees, adding that when creating an event like this for the first time, there's always a concern that people won't come and vendors won't sign up.

Most of the vendors were actually people from the Illiana community, and most items sold were Illiana themed. The market also included a photo booth and face painting for children.

According to Mrs. Cassie Siersema, the school plans to make the Spring Market a tradition for years to come, so if any students didn't make it this year, they can look forward to another Market next year.



Photo courtesy of Illiana Facebook

Pink Flamingo Cotton Candy shows off their colorful display at Illiana's Spring Market.

Illiana encourages students to participate in social media fast

Reese Jansma

Reporter

In the month of April, Illiana's administration undertook two important ideas to encourage spiritual growth among students: a schoolwide social media fast from April 15-19, and an encouragement to more prayer on Wednesday, April 24.

Director of Spiritual Development, Craig Slings said, "The social media fast is an encour-

agement for students to take a step of action. Most students responded to a survey that they realize they need to be more conscious of how they use their social media."

Slings said the fast has no extrinsic rewards. He said, "There is no reward, but [the goal] is for students to grow personally and hopefully to grow in their relationship with God and others too."

Slings added, "If we can get people just talk-

ing about their use of social media, to me that's how we know we've been successful. This is a first step for many other things in the future that Mr. Davids and I would like to see on a regular basis. The success will be seen in the future but we just need to start somewhere."

An Ice cream and prayer meeting was hosted during lunch on Thursday, April 18. Students gathered together and had a time of prayer and ice

cream. Head of School, Lance Davids handed out bookmarks with the 10 habits of prayer on them and we practiced a bunch of them during the meeting. Davids said, "I am hoping that students will start to find prayer habits that will build a more consistent and healthy prayer life. I also like that we do this together, so students are not alone." Davids is hoping that we all begin to value prayer and encourage our friends to do the same.

Fine Arts Committee travels to Windy City for Blue Man Group performance

Kenadie Piepenbrink

Reporter

The members of the Fine Arts Committee celebrated the conclusion of the Fine Arts Festival on April 18 by attending a Blue Man Group performance at Briar Street Theater followed by lunch at the 2d Restaurant a few doors down from the theater.

The performance showcased all kinds of the fine arts, including drama, music, visual arts, and dance. The show, an hour and a half of nonstop energy, is loud and creative. The Blue Men use paint in most of the performances and play music on a variety of non-traditional instruments. They even include people from the audience in every show.

Jim Kamphuis, art teacher, said, "It was a perfect fine arts experience - a combination of visual art, music, theater, and we even did a bit of dancing, too!"

For lunch, everyone that was on the field trip went to eat at the 2d Restaurant, which is a unique restaurant decorated like a black and white comic book and known for its Asian fusion fried chicken and Mochi Donuts.

Sophomore Sia Bennett said that the restaurant was her favorite part of the trip because it was "very cool and fun."



Photo courtesy of Jim Kamphuis

The Fine Arts Committee poses inside the 2d Restaurant, which is located on 3155 N Halsted St. in Chicago.

"Strive for the Shell" campaign funded, construction to begin soon

Kelsee Smit

Feature Editor

Illiana completed the funding of the shell of the auditorium on Thursday, April 18. Illiana has received around \$7 million in gifts from the generous Illiana community.

That means the construction on the auditorium shell will begin as soon as work on phase 2 expansion allows. This brings the total to about \$22 million raised for the expansion of Illiana.

Head of School Lance Davids said, "It's hard to put how I feel into words because it's all so new sometimes. I've been involved in fundraising for a long time now, but it

never ceases to amaze me how generous these people are and how much they love Illiana and how much they believe what we do here is important, which is why they give. High school is an important part of a kid's life and we need to keep doing a good job in taking care of the kid's hearts and minds and I think that's where that comes from."

The plan now is to take a break from public fundraising until the fall. Then the school will put together a new campaign to finish the auditorium. By then we will know how much the interior will cost and hopefully, by Christmas of this year, the auditorium will be fully funded.



Photo by Lucas Vander Woude

This computer-rendered image shows what the completed Illiana auditorium could look like.

Students forego AP classes for more advantageous dual credit

Ellie Ratliff

Reporter

In the last several years, Illiana's curriculum has been undergoing a slow change, particularly in its honors track. As dual credit opportunities have risen, the number of Advanced Placement (AP) classes and the number of students signing up to take AP exams has slowly declined.

More Illiana students chose to take Dual Credit classes because of the guaranteed college credit they receive from Ivy Tech Community College, the institution with which Illiana partners for its dual credit program.

AP classes, on the other hand, while offering a cur-

riculum similar to a college course, do not guarantee a college credit. Rather, the whole semester or year of work in an AP class comes down to a student's performance on a single standardized test taken in May. The exam is graded on a scale from one to five, one being the lowest and five the highest. A student must receive a grade of a three or higher to get the college credit for the course, and the AP exam can be taken only once.

There is an AP exam fee but that is paid for by the school. However, if a student signs up late for a course or drops out, there will be a fee not covered by the school. Freshmen and sophomores have to take an assessment for a Dual Credit course while juniors

and seniors, if given a certain GPA, do not have to take the assessment. With AP, a student could get a D- for the whole course but still get the credit if that student receives a passing exam grade. The College Credit comes from the exam performance, not the course. There is also a GPA bump that is added to students' grades in the AP like in Honors, and some classes can be Dual credit and AP or Dual Credit and Honors.

Illiana's counselor Neil Zandstra said, "I do not see a huge disadvantage of the AP exam. If you're a good student and you study hard and do well at Illiana in our AP classes because they train you really well," he also added, "Our kid's scores are very high."



Photo taken from vinu.edu

Ain't no mountain high enough to stop West Virginia mission

Lucas VanderWoude
Editor-in-Chief

Twelve Illiana students decided to spend their spring break in West Virginia to honor God through service and to learn about how God works in other parts of the world.

This mission trip took place from March 28 to April 7, but the application process began last year in Nov. In the application, students had to answer questions about their faith commitments and how their gifts and abilities would benefit the mission group. This application was due Dec. 1.

The students on the West Virginia Mission Trip worked with the Young Life organization, which is a Christian ministry that

reaches out to children and adolescents in all 50 states and more than 100 countries. Part of their mission involves "Working in community alongside like-minded adults (volunteer leaders, committee members, donors and staff)" according to the group's website.

While there, students did help a local church member move into a new house, repaired and cleaned a church building, and spread gravel around the church grounds for a parking lot.

Carter Slings, a junior who attended the trip, said, "I liked seeing the impact that people can have on an area and getting to know the different people in our community."

Sara Johnson, Illiana's



The mission team helps a family move

Photo credits to Illiana
instagram

Director of Missions who organizes each mission trip, encouraged students to go on mission trips. "It is important as Christians to acknowledge that God exists outside of our churches

and to experience how God works in other places," she said. "Sometimes we lose sight of our blessings in day-to-day existence, and we need to remind ourselves of how blessed we are."



The West Virginia Mission Trip team enjoys the beautiful country side

Photo credits to Illiana
instagram

Uganda mission team creates lasting memories, relationships

Giannia O'Neal-Schultz
Arts and Leisure Editor

This past spring break one of the Illiana missions teams went on a mission trip to Uganda. During their time in Uganda they experienced many different things that helped them learn more about Uganda's culture. The Illiana students arrived in Uganda at 1:00 am on Friday after 20 hours of long traveling.

Junior Raelyn Sederstrom said, "The journey was very long and during our flight there was a baby crying, but it was all worth it in the end."

On Saturday and Sunday the Illiana missions team went to Kids Camp to help set up fun games and serve the children food. Kids camp is a place where children from the surrounding areas come to have fun and learn new things.

"I found the kids to be really inspiring," said junior Abby Ritzema. "They were so happy."

Later on that night they had a bonfire where they sang songs and danced with

the children. Senior Maya Flipse said, "I really liked talking to the kids and getting to know them and their culture. I especially enjoyed talking to a girl named Josephine. I appreciate her for being able to open up to me by telling me her life story."

Junior Brandon Deyoung said, "The kids were super nice, usually I'm nervous around kids but they made us feel welcomed."

The Illiana missions team went to Murchison Falls National Park, they also went on a Nile river boat tour. The next day the Illiana mission team went to Nakisa pregnancy relief center and helped the patients there. They also went on a tour of Zana Community Christian school.



Illianas team and all the kids at kids camp gather for a picture

Photo courtesy of Sarah



Members from Illianas team wait with the kids for bread and porridge as the morning snack

Photo courtesy of
Sarah Johnson

After what I experienced in Africa, 'U-ganda go'

I had the amazing opportunity to go to Uganda over spring break. Before going, our service team had many meetings to prepare, talking about what to bring, what to expect, and what to do and say. But nothing could have totally prepared me for how it actually was.



Kelsee Smit
Feature Editor

We knew this wasn't a manual labor trip; we were told to love the people and let them love us. And that is exactly what happened.

We began the trip with a kids' camp. We spent

part of the day playing with the younger kids, teaching them Bible stories, coloring with them, and just spending time with them. The kids were so much fun to be with: they loved being held, touching our hair, holding our hands, or getting piggyback rides.

Other parts of the days were spent playing different games like tug of war, soccer, and relay races. One of my favorite memories was going back to the camp Saturday night for a bonfire where we taught them how to make s'mores and danced with all the younger and older kids.

The final day of camp was Easter Sunday. We went to the church service and were able to worship with all the kids. It was amazing to be able to worship together in ways that were bold and bodily expressive. We finished camp with a big meal and time to fellowship.

Another favorite part of the trip I was able to meet the girl my family has sponsored since she was five years old. She is now 22. I had the chance to talk to her and learn more about her. She is so kind and beautiful, and she loves Jesus. Saying goodbye to her was hands down the most difficult part of my trip.

Throughout the whole trip, I was able to talk and connect with many different people with different stories. When we visited the Crisis Pregnancy Center, I spoke with a girl 14-year-old girl who was 2 months pregnant from rape. She had no resentment or hate in her heart. She wanted to go to school after having her baby and become a cardiologist.

She asked me to tell her stories about myself and what America is like. She amazed me with her faith in God and love for her unborn child. I was encouraged to see how God was moving in the Wakesa Crisis Pregnancy Center.

This Mission trip challenged me mentally and spiritually. I was able to see how God is working in the lives of the people I met in Uganda. I want to thank everyone who helped make it possible for us to go. Without the support and prayers from the Illiana community, it would never have been possible.

This may sound cliché but I came back changed, I have become less focused on the little worries of life and more focused on all the amazing things God has done for me. I hope to return soon to see my new brother and sisters in Uganda.

Fine Arts Festival

Visual Arts Winners

Black and White Drawing

- 1st Kimmei Baker
2nd Klissa Chen
3rd Sia Bennett

Ceramics

- 1st Maisy Vroom
2nd Abbey Helmus
3rd Abbey Helmus

Color Drawing

- 1st Carol Yang
2nd Leah Noble
3rd Rachel Albert

Sculpture

- 1st Samuel Franco
2nd Abbey Helmus

Painting

- Best of Show** Moriah Colar
1st Steven Seibert
2nd Chase Docter
3rd Steven Seibert

Photography Winners

Abstract

- 1st Mylie Boersma
2nd Leah Carton

Architecture

- 1st Daniel Persenaire
2nd Seth Hanenburg

Nature

- 1st Daniel Persenaire
2nd Daniel Dykstra
3rd Daniel Persenaire

Portrait

- Best of Show** Tyler Mock
1st Leah Carton
2nd Janna vanBelle

Still Life

- 1st Daniel Persenaire
2nd Mylie Boersma

Instrumental Music

Solo

- 1st Elliot VanDerGriend
2nd Brandon DeYoung
3rd Levi Sliekers

Ensemble

- 1st Annabel Kamphuis and Alyssa Mulder
2nd Raelyn Sederstrom and Heidi Gorter
3rd Wyatt Jones, Levi Christofels, Isaac Gorter, and Samuel Franco

Vocal Music

Solo

- 1st Adia Falvey
2nd Natlie Carpenter
3rd Amelia Yonkman

Ensemble

- 1st Anna Bauer and Abbey Helmus
2nd Amelia Yonkman, Lainey Schoon, Kamryn Taylor, Hannah Sherman
3rd Natalie Carpenter, Addison Lanting, Raelyn Sederstrom

Piano Winners

- 1st Heidi Gorter
2nd Levi Schutt
3rd Adam DeBoer

Literary Winners

Essay

- 1st Kelsee Smit
2nd Giannia O'Neal-Schultz
3rd Lucas VanderWoude

Short Story

- 1st Brinn Miller
2nd Chase Docter
3rd Mattie O'Keefe

Poetry

- 1st Donovan Docter
2nd Bri'Jae Knight
3rd Bri'Jae Knight



Senior Moriah Colar's painting and collage, "After All is Said and Done," won Best in Show for the Visual Arts Competition.



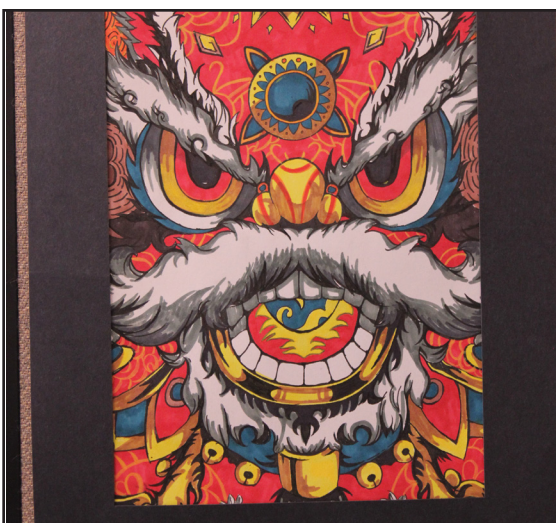
Abbey Helmus won 3rd place in ceramics.



Sophomore Carol Yang won H.M. in black and white drawing.



Senior Steven Seibert won 3rd place.



Sophomore Carol Yang won 1st place in colored drawing.



Junior Sam Franco won 1st place in sculpture.

Varsity softball team follows 1 Peter 3:8, working to love one another, other teams

Joy Ramsey

Reporter

The Vikings softball team has gone undefeated up to this point. With a now 5-0 record, the team scored 8-4 against Wheeler, 19-0 against Calumet New Tech, 2-0 against Boone Grove, 19-0 against Lake Station Edison, and 8-1 and 11-8 against Chesterton.

Seniors Maya Wondaal and Mikayla Derks also added how all the girls have been very supportive of each other through this start. First year Illiana junior Adeline Mulder said, "This team is unlike any other that I have played with before in that we are so excited for each other. Each and every player is just as excited for each other's success as their own."

For this season, Illiana only has one team. On the idea of only a varsity team this year, sophomore Cayden Peterson said, "It was scary at first knowing that we would only have one team and we didn't know what to expect but we are doing amazing and proving everyone wrong."

For this season the team's verse is 1 Peter 3:8 which reads, "Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble." Commenting on this motto, freshman Lucy Sjoquist said, "Our ultimate goal is to be loving to one another and everyone we come across during the season and stay humble giving all glory to God."

For this season the team has done lots of bonding experiences. Junior Lydia Vanderwoude said, "One weekend we played pickleball and we did a pickleball tournament and that was really fun and competitive. We also like hanging out at people's houses and doing fun activities like Just Dance." Another bonding experience they have is a wolf pack stuffed animal named Mudita which is given to a different player every week and it helps remind the athletes to have a good mindset and to fight.

On Wednesday April 17 the team will play against Beecher which will be a game to challenge the team.

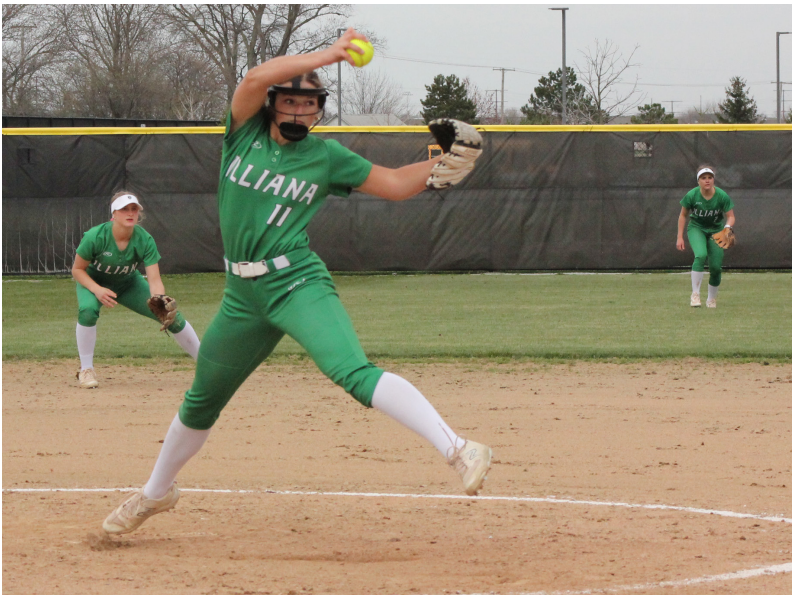


Photo by Jeff DeVries

Senior Mikayla Derks goes pitches at game against Boone Grove on April. 10.



Photo by Jeff DeVries

Junior Luke Smith slides into third base at game against Calumet High School on April. 9. Illiana winning 24-1.

Boys baseball comes on strong, winning first five games, 'ready to attack in any circumstance'

Cheyenne DeJong

Reporter

Illiana's baseball team is off to a great start, winning its first five games. Shortstop Isaac Vanderwoude, Jack McDonald, and pitcher Gavin Meyer all contributed in their first game with home runs in their 24-2 win against the Wheeler Bobcats on April 8.

Although the team hasn't faced the strongest competition, the boys have managed to stay focused and serious and not fall into a lower level of play. The Vikings baseball team hopes to face tougher teams soon, such as Crown Point, Hanover, and Munster.

"I would say our offensive side has been making a bigger statement this year so far," Meyer said.

"When we get to the field, it is business. We are locked in on our goal for the game and getting ready for the situation the game could put us in," said VanderWoude.

McDonald, the team's third baseman and left-fielder, a new addition to Varsity this year, claims to be warming up to this level of play but his hard work in the off-season seems to be paying off as he is currently batting fourth. His goals are to stay consistent throughout the season, remain confident in his abilities, and contribute to winning the state championship.

Defensively, the players are becoming more fluent and confident. Since losing a starting pitcher since last year, pitcher Gavin Meyer has stepped up to perform more.

"Pitching is just kind of my thing..." said Meyer. "There's nothing for me to be nervous about when I'm out there. I just have to trust my stuff and the defense behind me, and with that, I should be more than okay."

VanderWoude said that the team is ready to attack in any circumstance. The long term goal is to win the state championship again, but in the meantime, they set out to win the day and to focus on the task at hand at every game.

Tennis team starts season slow with only two matches against Hanover Central, Crown Point

Kelsee Smit

Feature Editor

The Illiana girls tennis team has battled not only other teams but also rain with the second match, a competition with Wheeler, canceled. But the Vikings kicked off the year with a 5-0 win against Hanover Central on April 9.

On April, 15 the Vikings fell to Crown Point with

senior Avery Olthof commenting, "We lost 2-3 to Crown Point, who is our biggest competitor this season. Most of the matches were close, and since it was our second match, I was really proud of how my team fought. We plan to keep working when we see them again in the postseason."

The varsity team's lineup: in first singles is junior Gianna Vukas, the sec-

ond singles is senior Avery Olthof, third singles is sophomore Sienna Eenigenburg. 1st doubles is junior Morgan Smith and sophomore Sophie Plank, 2nd doubles is junior Aubrey Vanbeek and freshman Anya Lindemulder.

The team has a promising season ahead with home matches on April 30 against Lowell, and May 1 against Highland.

Boys volleyball excels at hitting, blocking, record of 12-4

Lydia O'Riley

Sports Editor

The 2024 Illiana boys volleyball team is boasting a record of 12-4 this season.

Varsity coach Adam Clark said, "The team continues to get better throughout the season. Our passing has more room to improve, but continues to get better, and our hitting was strong from the start, but keeps improving also."

The team has faced some difficulties in staying ener-

getic during their games as well as getting their serves in. Clark said, "Our biggest challenge is staying up throughout the entire match. Volleyball is very much a game of momentum and if you let even average teams get the momentum on their side, they will get wins."

With weakness there are always strengths, and this year the boys volleyball team is excelling at, according to Gise Gibson, "flowing with our offense, and running

some good plays. Our hits and blocks have been really good this year."

Clark said, "If we can keep our serves consistent our hitting can carry our offense and our block makes teams have to try to get over or take shots around helping out our defense."

The team's overall attitude has been positive this year. Clark said there was a rough patch before spring break, but "they came back rested and ready to play."



Photo courtesy of Jill Rozendal

Junior Daniel Persenaire goes to bump the volleyball at varsity game against Homewood-Flossmoor High School on Mar. 18.



Viking sports briefs



Early in campaign, golf team places in top three at all matches, promising season ahead

Kelsee Smit

Feature Editor

Illiana's boys golf team started slowly with only a few matches in the beginning of April.

The Varsity team took 3rd overall out of 16 teams at the Marquette Catholic Invite in Michigan City. The team only lost to first place by 3 strokes, and senior Isaac Sherwood placed 5th out of a total of 90 golfers.

The Vikings took the win on the road against Wheeler High School on

April 15 with a score of 169-207.

Senior Zach Davids said the goals for the seasons are "to get our top 4 scores in the 70s, win sectionals and get to regionals"

The team also had a new rider cup challenge which was a scrimmage against the DeMotte Christian High School's team on April 16; the team took an easy 7-0 win at Sandy Pines.

Senior Isaac Sherwood commented, "I think this team has the potential to be the best team Illiana has ever seen"

Girls track places 2nd at Houseward Invitational, attitudes exemplify team's hard work

Lydia O'Riley

Sports Editor

The Illiana girls track and field team placed 2nd overall at the Houseward Invitational on April 13. The team competed against 13 other Christian schools at Unity Christian High School. Senior Nora Filler said, "It was nice to compete against all Christian schools because everyone was so nice to each other."

The girls started off the morning with team devotions and then went into the meet with little to no setbacks. Girls track and field coach Deb Top said, "Everything went smoothly and as we hoped. They did great!"

The team was "well-rounded," specifically in

their scoring according to Top. She added, "Everybody contributed. We had points from the field event girls, the sprinters, the hurdlers, and the distance team. It was a great team effort."

The team had worked hard to prepare for this meet and their attitudes even showed it. Top said, "They are competitive and want to do their best. They have great work ethics and great attitudes, most of the time. I would describe their attitudes as positive, motivated, and willing to learn." Filler added, "The team's cheering was great, especially during the boys 4x4."

Filler said, "I was excited to go to this meet. Bonding with the team on the bus ride and at the hotel is always fun."



Photo by Jeff DeVries

Senior Owen Bandstra leaps over a hurdle at the track meet against Calumet High School on April 10.

Boys track places 4th at Houseward Invitational, improvements being made athletically, spiritually

Lucas VanderWoude

Editor-in-Chief

The boys track team has started the season off strong, with a 4th place finish in a Michigan meet with 13 other schools and a strong performance against Calumet Christian High School.

The theme for the boys track team this year is Clothed with Christ. "We want our athletes to be 'Clothed with Christ' as they grow physically, mentally, and spiritually and discover their specific role

on our team," said Luke Fennema, the coach for the boys track team. "In every practice and competition, we want them to grow in discipline, servanthood, and character."

The team has avoided injuries pretty well this season, with the only major injury so far being shin pain and stomach issues with hurdler Owen Bandstra. "In general we have been pretty healthy with only the typical aches and pains of a track season," said Fennema.

Isaac Olthof, a senior

on the team, was optimistic about the team's improvement. "The boys distance team has been dropping a lot of time for their races, and there is good work ethic happening all around, which is very good."

The team is growing spiritually as well. Olthof said, "You have to be mentally tough for longer distance races, and with the mental training comes spiritual training...I can be more focused about doing spiritual things because I learned to battle through tough situations."

Male Athlete of the Month

April's male athlete of the month is senior Nolan Bouwman. Bouwman has been on Illiana's track team for all four of his years at Illiana.

Bouwman ran the anchor leg (1600m) in the distance medley relay that represented Illiana at Indoor State Invite. He and his relay team also placed fifth at the Houseward Invitational in Michigan on April 13.

Boys track coach Luke Fennema said, "Nolan is a senior and leads in word and in deed. He is meticulous in his workouts, lifting, and stretching and leads by example in those areas. He has led our team spiritually by doing devotions and is a good role model for other athletes."



Female Athlete of the Month

Freshman Jori Davids is April's female athlete of the month. As a first year track runner, Davids jumped out to an excellent start.

Davids placed 1st in the 400m at the Houseward Invitational in Michigan on April 13. She was also on the winning 4x200m relay team. She qualified for Indoor State with the 4x200m relay and 4x400m relay teams; however, due to illness she was not able to compete.

Girls track coach Deb Top said, "Jori Davids is a freshman and has made a huge impact on the track team already. She is one of our top sprinters... She is intentional and hard working in her workouts, does the 'little things' right, and adds so much more to the track team than just her running and jumping abilities."



Editorial

Social media fast proves mostly positive

At the beginning of April, Illiana announced we would be having a weeklong social media fasting from April 15-19. Mr. Slings explained that this fast is to help us “create new habits and boundaries in social media use.” Two of the four Echo editors decided to participate in the fast and share our experiences.

At the start of the week both of us turned off our notifications for social media. One has always has her notifications for social media turned off, and the other just started this week. The editor who normally has notifications on said, “It was less distracting with them turned off. I felt like I didn’t need to check my phone every two seconds because of SnapChat notifications.”

Not using social media left quite a bit of free time for the two of us. We both swapped some of our social media time by playing games on our phones, such as “I want watermelon” and “Gardenscapes.” In fact, staying off social media made our screen time go down quite a bit. One of us lowered our screen time by

two hours from the previous week and the other lowered it by three hours. One of us did take some of the extra time we saved from surfing social media and used it to spend more time with family and reading.

We both missed a few things about social media though. One editor said, “I

we missed not being able to look people up on Instagram at lunch when someone mentions a random person who we have never heard of.

Only one of us noticed a difference in sleep. This editor said not being up at night scrolling on social media led to an earlier bed-

agreed that our opinions of ourselves didn’t change this week. Neither of us, however, tend to compare ourselves with others online, but we know some people who do and we are hopeful that taking a break from social media can give one time to appreciate oneself and to realize that no one’s life is happy all the time.

One editor’s closing thoughts on the social media fast were as follows: “Doing this fast helped me realize how much time I do spend on social media, and how I could be using that time to spend with my family and friends. Social media started to take over parts of my life, and this week put things into perspective.”

At the end of the day, it seems we could all take a break from social media. Eventually scrolling and looking at your feed become a habit, if not an addiction. It’s hard to break the cycle, but taking time to turn off notifications, or getting off an app all together can be really beneficial to create new habits, find new hobbies, and spend more time with loved ones and on things that really matter.

Eventually scrolling and looking at your feed become a habit, if not an addiction.

miss the mindlessness of it. It is a break and you can just sit and scroll. I think I’ve been sent about 50 Instagram reels now that I’m not going on social media.”

The other said, “I’ve missed snapping my friends, but they know I’m trying not to use social media, so they will just text me. I’ve noticed that if people are really my friends they have my number and will reach out that way or vice versa.”

We both agreed that

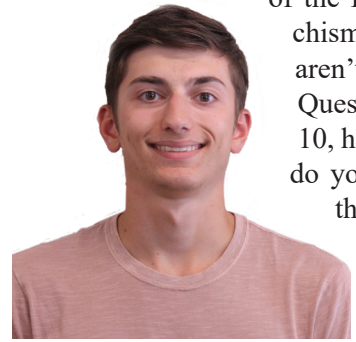
time and better sleep than before.

We both noticed that the week went by very slowly. We couldn’t tell if it was from lack of social media use, or we were both just busy with school and extracurricular activities that it seemed like the week dragged on.

Social media sometimes brings jealousy and negative self-talk because viewers are basically watching the highlight reels of someone else’s life. We

Great mystery of God’s providence

When I was young, I heard a lot about God’s providence. The name of my middle school was Providence Christian Academy, and I learned a song in my Sunday School that put



Lucas Vander Woude
Editor-in-Chief

Question and Answer #10 of the Heidelberg Catechism to music. If you aren’t familiar with Question and Answer 10, here it is: Q: What do you understand by the providence of God? A: God’s providence is his almighty and ever present power, whereby, as

with his hand, he still upholds heaven and earth and all creatures, and so governs them that leaf and blade, rain and drought, fruitful and barren years, food and drink, health and sickness, riches and poverty, indeed, all things come to us not by chance but by his fatherly hand.

This idea of God ordaining everything that happens to us is a very comforting idea, but sometimes it can be hard to accept. We don’t like having our life already planned out for us, and oftentimes we take a leaf out of Fleetwood Mac’s book and decide to go our own way. We don’t feel like living the story that God has called us to live, and we forge our own path.

I have been thinking more and more about God’s providence ever since I finished the play Hamlet in my Advanced English class. Hamlet is challenged to avenge his father’s death and to take back the throne of Denmark from his uncle, and almost the entire play consists of Hamlet struggling to accept his destiny. He cannot accept that all of these terrible things have happened to him, and he does not want to live the story that he has been put in. Sometimes I feel this way, too. I feel envious of other people’s lives and wish that God had given me a different story. Of course, I shouldn’t think this way, because who am I to contradict God and his plan for me?

Another thing that made me think about God’s providence was the death of Rorie Wright, my brother’s best friend in middle school who died in a car crash over spring break. When I attended his funeral, I couldn’t help thinking, Why did God allow this to happen? I have not been able to come up with a satisfactory answer, and I don’t think that anybody else has either. I know that the only thing that we can do when these things happen is to trust that it is part of God’s plan for Rorie’s story and for ours.

I admit that I don’t fully understand how this broken and twisted world fits with the idea of God’s providence, but I have learned that I don’t have to. Instead, I can take comfort in the fact that everything does not happen by chance, but instead happens according to God’s fatherly hand. With this in mind, I will continue to live out the story that God has lovingly crafted for me for as long as I live.

April Echo Word Search

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

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|--------------|------------|------------|
| GRANDPARENTS | PANCAKE | FAST |
| ECLIPSE | MARKET | FINE |
| ARTS | MISSION | TRIPS |
| TRACK | VOLLEYBALL | PROVIDENCE |

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- Feature
Kelsee Smit
- Arts
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- Sports
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- Advisor
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