

Living

L'ANSE CREUSE
SUMMER 2018



LEADER IN ME

The 7 Habits
in action

TYLER CONKLIN

From Crusader Nation
to the NFL

DYLAN RHEKER

Giving back
despite challenges



CONGRATULATIONS CLASS OF 2018



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Living L'ANSE CREUSE



L'Anse Creuse is more than just a school district, it is the glue that holds together the four townships of Chesterfield, Clinton, Harrison and Macomb.

We are a family. A community. A lifestyle.

We may have varying demographics and geography, but we have one thing in common: *our investment in the future*. We know that our children are the voices that carry the tune of the community, and we will continue to provide them with unique opportunities to discover their passion to learn, both inside and outside the classroom.

Living L'Anse Creuse is a fresh new way to share the experiences and achievements of our students, staff members and community members. With this new format, we will highlight compelling stories from throughout L'Anse Creuse on multiple platforms and mediums. I encourage you to visit livinglansecreuse.com for more exciting content.

As always, we thank you for your continued support. I hope that you enjoy the remainder of the summer and look forward to another great school year!

Erik Edoff, Superintendent

CONTRIBUTORS



James Coller is a 2013 graduate of L'Anse Creuse High School — North, where he spent two years as the Editor-in-Chief of the *North Star* newspaper under the direction of advisor Kim Kozian. James is currently pursuing a PhD in Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering with a focus on Naval Autonomy at the University of Michigan. James is also a freelance photographer, continuing to pursue the passion for journalism that Ms. Kozian helped to develop.



Kathleen "Kitty" Reifert is a teacher of English, literature and writing at L'Anse Creuse High School — North. She has taught for 20 years and has been with L'Anse Creuse since 2008. Kitty was recently selected by the Michigan Council of Teachers of English as the Creative Writing Teacher of the Year for 2018. When she is not in the classroom she is a wife, mother and Mimi, and in her free time enjoys photography and crafting poems.

LIVING L'ANSE CREUSE

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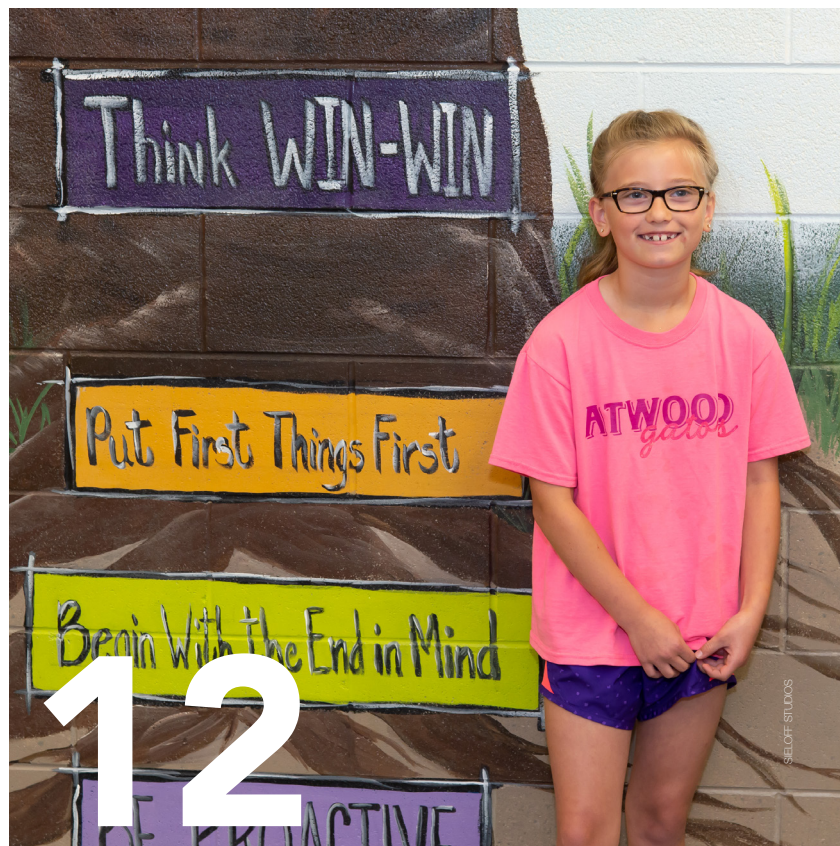
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TYLER KALFMAN

BRIANNA STEFFEN

by Melissa Tilley



“If there’s a book you really want to read, but it hasn’t been written yet, then you must write it.” *Toni Morrison*

Creating a children’s book from scratch was a huge undertaking. Kim wrote the words, which she read to her daughter Brianna to help her understand the situation. To make it publication-ready, she had some friends proofread and hired Emily Marino, a survivor herself, to illustrate. Both Brianna’s and Emily’s stories appear in the back of the book, which is titled “A Very Special Me.”

The book was kept gender-neutral and broad to appeal to all children. Brianna did insist, however, that the mother character have brown eyes and brown hair like her own mother. After all, this was personal.

At nearly four years old, Brianna began asking a lot of hard questions: Why did she have a bump on her stomach? Why was she having another surgery? A nurse recommended that Kim get a book to help explain it, not knowing that this would turn out to be much more complicated than simply running up to Barnes & Noble. When the book was released, it filled a void in the market, and everyone in Kim’s support group wanted a copy. It was time-consuming for the busy mom, who was shipping it herself, but hearing from parents whose children were delighted to see themselves reflected in its colorful pages made it all worthwhile.

The book may have been intended for children, but its straightforward explanation of what this little-known condition is, as well as its message of hope and love, is

equally powerful for adults. Parents often purchase the book when their babies are diagnosed, and pass it along to extended family to help them understand as well.

As a result, Brianna grew up fully aware of what her family called her “boo-boo.” Now older, she has taken to simply calling it “O.” Just like it did her parents that first day, the word “omphalocele” intimidates Brianna. But it also inspired her to share her story and spread awareness about this little-known condition.

Through her involvement in the Mothers of Omphalocele (MOO) support group that had embraced the release of “A Very Special Me,” Kim learned that two states had recognized Omphalocele Awareness Day. She didn’t have to ask Brianna twice if she wanted Michigan to become the third.

In 2015, nine-year-old Brianna reached out to her representative (Rep. Andrea LaFontaine) for Chesterfield Township, who introduced the resolution. Brianna and her family were invited onto the floor of the Capitol to watch as the motion passed to declare January 31 Omphalocele Awareness Day. The next year, Brianna teamed up with another omphalocele survivor from the Grand Rapids area to pass the resolution. Earlier this year, Brianna worked with her current representative (Rep. Pamela Hornberger) to pass it again. Michigan law stipulates that the resolution be re-submitted each year, but Brianna doesn’t mind making the trip. Every year, she looks forward to representing her fellow “O Warriors” in Lansing. And to parents and children affected by an omphalocele, the lively, active Brianna represents a light at the end of the tunnel.

“When my mom tells me she got really scared when they told her the word, it just always freaks me out and makes me sad for the parents who hear that,” she said. “People out there don’t even know what it means, and sometimes it’s not even a big problem. They’re gonna fix you and you’ll be ready to go.”

Twelve years earlier, during a routine ultrasound, the Steffens heard the six words no expectant parents want to hear: “let me go get the doctor.”

The doctor informed them that their baby would have an omphalocele, an abdominal wall defect in which the organs develop outside of the body. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that about 775 babies are born with an omphalocele in the United States each year. To the Steffens, the word itself was unknown and frightening. Other birth defects and heart complications often accompany an omphalocele, so an amniocentesis was necessary. At

that time, technology was not as advanced as it is now. It took a full two weeks to learn the baby’s fate.

“We had no idea at that point if she’d be okay,” said Kim. “It was definitely frightening.”

Luckily, the omphalocele was determined to be isolated, meaning there would be no other complications. But that didn’t mean there wasn’t a hard road ahead.

When Brianna was born on June 19, 2006, her liver, stomach, gallbladder, and small and large intestines were contained in a protective sac outside of her belly. Just seconds after her birth, she was taken into surgery. Brianna would have more surgeries in her first few weeks than most people have in their whole lives.

When Brianna’s omphalocele was closed for good, her

“Sometimes when I’m at a pool I’ll think about it, but then I just go down the water slide and forget about it.”

pediatrician said, “From this day on, she’s never been sick.” Her boo-boo was better, and she could live like a normal kid. Now 12 years old, she’s not only normal, but extraordinary.

Brianna is small but lively, with a buzzing energy and an infectious smile. She has just finished the sixth grade at L’Anse Creuse Middle School — North with exceptional grades (which she monitors very closely using an app on her phone). At school, Brianna serves on student council, sings in choir and runs cross country. In her free time, she takes lyrical and ballet dance classes, sings in the Macomb Children’s Choir and performs in plays in her community and at school. She sang the National Anthem at Jimmy John’s Field on Memorial Day this year. She loves children and is an idol for her little sister.

It may come as no surprise that Brianna wants to be an elementary school teacher when she grows up, considering she’s made it her mission to educate the general public about her condition.

“What makes me happy about spreading the word is that people think [an omphalocele] is so scary, and ‘my kid is going to be in all these special classes, and have to be in a wheelchair.’” On the contrary, she says, “I’m singing, I’m dancing, I’m acting, I’m in regular classes, I love school.”

That scary four-syllable word, omphalocele, is certainly no match for Brianna Steffen. ♦

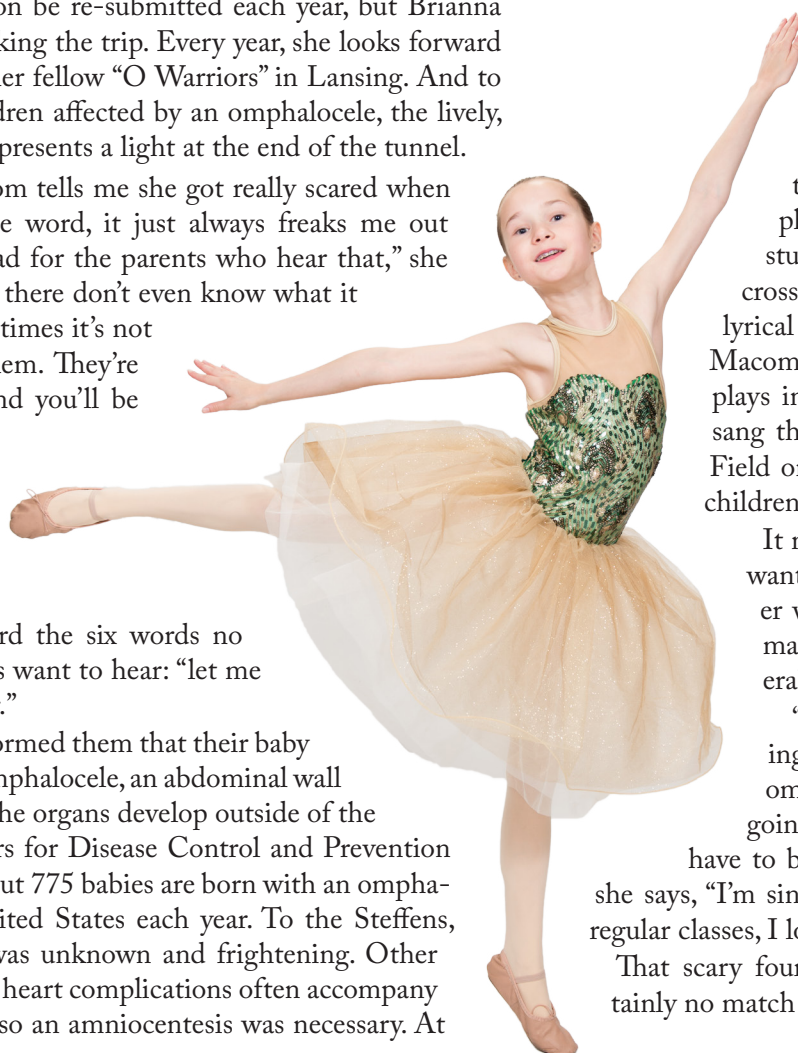


PHOTO COURTESY OF KIM STEFFEN

THE LIFE AND OF KIMBERLY

by James Collier, LCHS-N Class of 2013

When I graduated, Koz told me to never stop writing. So here I am, writing to honor her.

Kimberly Kozian, affectionately called simply “Koz” by most who knew her, was my mentor, my inspiration, and my grounding force. Koz inspired me to begin writing when I took her journalism class my sophomore year at L’Anse Creuse High School — North. I quickly joined *The North Star* newspaper staff and became editor-in-chief for my junior and senior years. It was in this role that Koz and I became especially close. If I was ever having a bad day, I knew that I could walk through the doors of room 213 to find support and decompress. Koz wasn’t just my teacher, but a part of my family. She became a second mother to me.

When Koz was undergoing chemotherapy treatments, she would miss school for a few weeks, but she never stopped teaching and leading during those times. I would call her in the evenings to discuss story ideas and to get advice on the next issue of *The North Star*. There were a few times when Koz would come meet me after school and we would work together because she wanted to ensure that the next month’s issue of the paper would make it out on time. Her dedication and commitment to us, her students, was unwavering.

Kozian had her life cut short on August 28, 2017 after a long fight with cancer. Her life may have ended early, but it was certainly full of meaning as she left

behind a profound impact on every person who met her.

In Kozian’s classroom, lessons extended beyond grammar and style. Kozian taught her students to challenge the status quo and to make a broader impact. She did not shy away from allowing student reporters to take on issues facing the community.

“She taught her kids about being a person, about always doing your best, about always looking out for the other person,” said Tom Denewith, former LCHS-N principal. “Her classroom was always open and that was her way of life.”

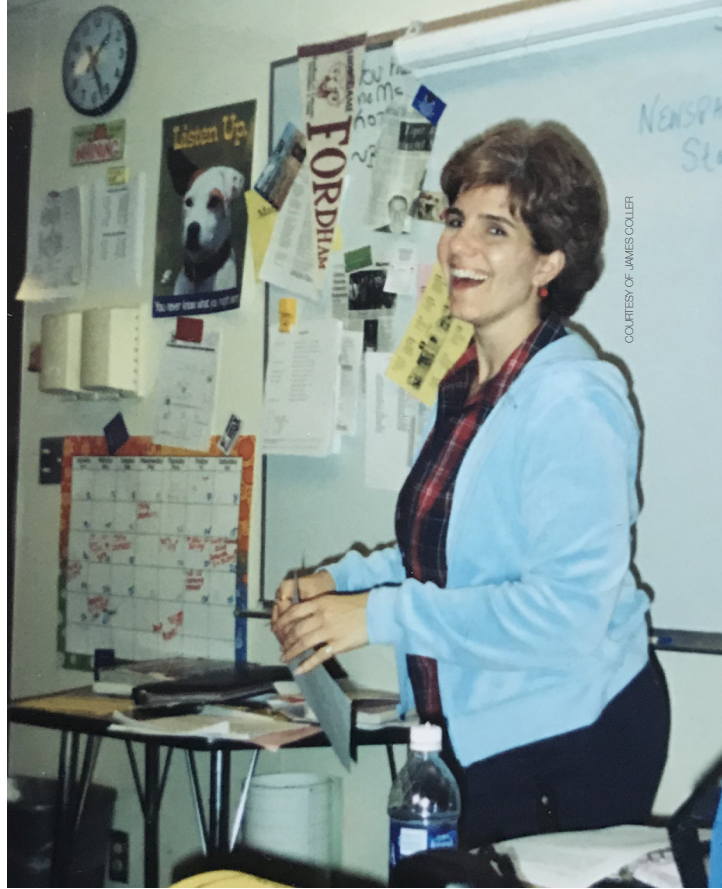
Kozian was always LCHS-N’s number one supporter, and in the wake of her death, the community rallied together to honor her life and to cement her leg-

“She’s just one of those very special people. Your life is richer because you could cross paths with Kim Kozian.”

acy. LCHS-N Student Council launched its inaugural charity week during the 2017-2018 school year. The proceeds would benefit cancer research and the Humane Society in honor of Kozian’s fight and her love of animals.

The outcome was an incredible showing of support and the community rallying around the memory of a hero. The \$1,500 goal was surpassed many times over with the final tally being over \$7,000. An additional \$4,000 was raised during homecoming to support the Kimberly Marie Kozian Memorial Schol-

LEGACY KOZIAN



COURTESY OF JAMES COLLIER

arship Fund.

“There was a difference in the atmosphere around [the school] during the week,” said Tori Kuzmanovski, one of the student organizers of Charity Week. “People were supporting others and helping out or going to events they normally wouldn’t.”

While future students of L’Anse Creuse High School — North will not have the opportunity to learn from Kozian herself, they will be able to learn the same messages that she imparted. Kozian would not want to be remembered for the things she did, but for the values she stood for. Love, honor, respect, friendship, journalistic integrity, and compassion will always have their place in the halls of LCHS-N.

Kimberly Kozian was more than a teacher and at the end of the day, I will never forget her. She inspired me to challenge the status quo and to discover myself and the importance of journalism. ♦



This SADD Story Has a Happy Ending *by Melissa Tilley*

The time: spring of 2018. The setting: DiAnne M. Pellerin Center, an alternative high school in Clinton Township. The scene: students have just declared victory over more than 60 other schools in a state-wide contest.

Let's rewind a bit.

It's a few years earlier, and Ryan Barck, teacher at the Pellerin Center, has noticed a pattern of depression, drug use, and poor grades and attendance among his students. He also sees no real "escape" for students to discuss these problems with their peers.

Because students are transferred to Pellerin from traditional high schools, they sometimes feel displaced, like the school is not their own. The few extra-curricular activities offered are designed for natural-born leaders, leaving at-risk students, and those with untapped leadership potential, with few outlets to feel connected to their school.

Enter the Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) Club, intended to empower teenagers to make and promote positive choices. Barck formed the Pellerin chapter in 2016, but it really hit its stride in December of 2017 when they joined the Strive 4 A Safer Drive (S4SD) contest. Students titled their campaign "Focus, Drive, and Stay Alive" and planned and executed activities throughout the year, with a goal of raising awareness about impaired driving. By far the most popular was a simulator that let students experience first-hand

the effects of drug and alcohol on driving ability. Their efforts earn them third place, beating out much larger schools like Dakota and Lake Orion.

Now we're caught up, but there's much more this story than just a successful

"Now they have something that makes them want to come back. They feel wanted, they feel needed, they have a purpose."

campaign. When the third place verdict came in, interest in joining SADD rose to an all-time high. By the end of the school year, the club had gotten so popular that they had to limit membership. Students are proud of their school, and they want to take part in improving it. For a small, alternative high school to come out on top of so many large, traditional schools became a huge point of pride for the entire student body.

"It's something they never thought they would have the opportunity to have here," Barck explained.

Club members are also more mindful of the decisions they make as a result of being involved with SADD. After taking part in the simulator experience,

Mondale Smiley said to himself, "I don't ever want to get this drunk."

Brandi Martos takes care of anything her friends need done on their phones so they aren't tempted to reach for them while driving. Ciara Agrusa advises her friends to drive carefully, abide by speed limits, and put their phones away.

Most importantly, the students in SADD have now found their place in a group of like-minded friends who constantly remind each other of the importance of positive behavior. "It's a good environment to be around," Agrusa reflected. "We're like a family here."

Barck has also seen first-hand the influence that the club has had on the at-risk students he set out to help. Students who abused drugs or alcohol in the past are no longer doing so, academic performance is improving and attendance is on the upswing.

The students don't plan to slow down any time soon. They want to engage in community service at nursing homes and speak to younger students about starting off on the right path. They plan to compete in S4SD again — "we're going for first next time!" exclaimed Smiley — and continue spreading awareness about safe driving.

The SADD Club has given students more than just an award. Students have built a community and a safe space to just feel normal, Barck explained. "They feel wanted, they feel needed, they have a purpose." ♦





A Hero's Happiness

by Kelly Allen | photos by Michael Kaufman

Theresa Rheker and her husband tried to smile through the tears streaming down their faces. They watched their 14-year old son Dylan receive a standing ovation as he walked across the stage to accept an award nobody saw coming. This was one of “those” moments. A moment Theresa says she would bottle up and play over and over if she could. This was a moment that personifies why Dylan is his parents’ hero.

On March 28 at the L’Anse Creuse Middle School — East National Honor Society Awards Night, Dylan, along with his family and peers, learned that he had completed more community service hours than any other student in the school, surpassing the students behind him by 100 hours. By completing 236 hours over the course of two years, he not only set the record for the 2017-2018 school year but he broke the record for hours completed by any male student in the school’s history. His accomplishments gained him local notoriety from several local media outlets and earned him the title of 2018 Macomb County Volunteer of the Year.

While this level of giving to the community is admirable all on its own, there is much more to Dylan’s story. He was diagnosed at birth with neurofibro-

matosis, a genetic disorder that causes tumors to form on nerve tissue both inside and outside of the body. In 2007, at three years old, he was diagnosed with stage two brain cancer. Dylan is legally blind in one eye, combats several physical constraints and will take daily chemotherapy medications indefinitely. Somehow, all of these obstacles have not stopped him from earning straight

Dylan will always make you smile. Regardless of what kind of bad day you are having, he will try and cheer you up.

A’s and helping others.

His mom has a theory behind his drive to serve. “Because of what he’s going through, I believe it makes him feel better to help,” Theresa explained. “Even when he is at St. Jude he will clean up or push children around and play with them. I think that’s just his nature to help. He’d rather help others than himself.”

Dylan has his own take on things as well. As he explained very matter-of-factly, “It makes me feel happy. I just love to help out and volunteer. I just forget about everything and have some fun!”

The Volunteer of the Year completed

many of his hours at the Village of East Harbor, a senior living community in Chesterfield. After talking to some of the residents, it’s clear that it isn’t just Dylan having fun. Playing games and spending quality time with the residents, Dylan has made several lasting connections.

“When I see him I’m like a magnet,” said resident Linda Sharpe. “Dylan is full of energy. His youth makes him appealing to the residents because he is just more excited about things.”

Her sentiment was echoed by many, including Salvatore Carrato, who has invited Dylan to come back and work on a favorite hobby: building model action figures and vehicles.

Dylan has certainly made an impression on many over the years and he will continue to do so with his big plans for the future. For the next four years, he has all intentions of maintaining his straight-A status, and he’s decided the sky’s the limit on community service hours as he already has several completed. After high school, he plans to further his education and hopes to become either a police officer or emergency medical technician. Regardless of which path he chooses, there is one thing that’s for sure, he is set to become a hero on an even larger scale. ♦

SCIENCE OLYMPIAD

A FAMILY AFFAIR

What do you get when you combine equal parts teamwork, commitment, collaboration, and family? The Tenniswood Elementary Science Olympiad team's secret recipe for success.

MICHAEL GOUTMAN

by Melissa Tilley

It's a warm June day, and Tenniswood is hosting an assembly to honor their Science Olympiad team. The whole school is packed into the cafeteria, parents and volunteers lining the back of the room. One by one, the team members walk out to raucous applause, their smiles as bright as their orange shirts.

Behind those proud smiles is a lot of hard work.

All year, Wednesday evenings have been reserved for Science Olympiad practice. It's not a drop-off and pick-up activity, either. Parents serve as "event coaches," meaning that they're hitting the books at home before students even begin to learn and practice. You may see a nurse building a water rocket, a mechanic memorizing the structures of the human muscular system, or an engineer studying different types of rocks and minerals.

These parents then coach the team on that event, while also working with their own children at home to make sure they understand the many other events they are competing in.

"It's not a one-day thing, it's an every-day thing," explained parent Andrea Highfield.

But the commitment to Science Olympiad at Tenniswood runs deeper than just time spent.

"We're all in it together," said head coach and Tenniswood teacher Stephanie Share. "Even if [a parent is] not the main coach, they're in there helping."

"You want the kids to succeed," agreed Gene Louzon. When his son joined the team as a third-grader, he got a lot of help from the parent coach of the event he would be taking over, giving him a strong foundation. Helping each other is just part of the gig for

Science Olympiad parents.

With such a supportive environment, it's easy to see why Tenniswood has won the district competition and landed in the top three in the county tournament for the past three years.

"We formed a good team and we worked together a lot," reflected fifth-grader Natalie Kollmorgen. "Doing everything together made it a lot better."

Many parents return even after their own children have moved on to middle school, either to train a new coach to take over their event or continue to coach themselves. Students have come back in middle school and even high school to visit and help out.

As Share puts it, "Once you're part of it, you're always welcome and you're always part of this Science Olympiad family here at Tenniswood." ♦

Hobby to Career

by Kelly Allen



“The moment I walk in that room I am judged. I always want to come out on top to prove that it is a man’s world but I can do this just as good, if not better.”

Amber (Bryce) Scotti is a woman in a male-dominated profession. Her confidence didn’t come overnight. It came from years of hard work and heart-to-heart conversations in a garage.

Amber is a 2012 L’Anse Creuse High School — North graduate who took Career and Technical Education classes at the Frederick V. Pankow Center. Now she is a successful Paint Technician for Penske Vehicle Services, where she mixes just the right amount of art and science to do specialized painting on vehicles of all makes and models.

To truly know Amber one needs to go back to when she was a young girl. Amber grew up in her father’s garage, spending countless hours with him learning how to fix cars. At the age of 10 her father brought home her first project car, from then on there was no

turning back.

Once in high school, she was excited to see auto body classes as an option at the Pankow Center. She signed up right away with a plan in mind: she was going to fix up her dad’s 1970 Chevelle SS. For her, it was her chance to give back to him. In only five months, she and her classmates completed a top-to-bottom restoration and showed the car at the Detroit Autorama car show.

The timeline seemed unrealistic but they got it done. Amber cites what she found to be the biggest benefit to enrolling in the auto body classes: time management. “They really taught me how to make sure that that you have a plan because in the field it’s all about deadlines. I’m not just tinkering in a garage anymore. I’m getting stuff done.”

After high school, Amber thought

that cars would always be her hobby, and she went to college to become a math teacher. But something didn’t seem right. She pursued nursing and returned to teaching. Every time she questioned her career path, she was with her father in the garage. Then finally, it hit her. The one common denominator and passion throughout her life was cars. So she closed the books on teaching and turned her hobby into her career.

Today she talks about how much she loves her job. “It is a very critical thinking field, so it always keeps your motor going and you always have to face new challenges daily. The reward out of it is always the greatest feeling.”

Her advice for a teenage girl who loves working on cars but is nervous about being the only one in the room?

“Just go in there and forget that you’re a girl. Pretend you are a normal person doing something that you love. You are not defined by your gender. You have to go in there with passion and confidence and just forget you are a girl.” ♦

LEADER IN ME

is a whole school transformation process, based off of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* by Dr. Stephen Covey. The process that teaches 21st century leadership and life skills to students while creating a culture of student empowerment based on the idea that every child can be a leader. We sat down with students, staff and parents at Graham and Atwood to hear stories about the 7 Habits and how they are being used at school and at home.

by Kelly Allen
photos by Sieloff Studios

BEGIN WITH THE END IN MIND



BE PROACTIVE

One of my students was struggling to self-regulate her emotions. Then later that year, her family went through a traumatic experience. Her whole family was crying, and she stood in the middle of the room and said, "Be proactive. I'm in charge of me." Then she was totally calm.

Lyndsey Lawrence (Teacher)



Yesterday, I asked for a Popsicle, but I couldn't get it because my room was really messy. So I decided to clean up my room, then I got my Popsicle.

Peyton Chatman (K)

PUT FIRST THINGS FIRST



I'm learning how to play euchre. My mom was folding laundry and I wanted to help her so we could play euchre together.

Matthew Higuchi (2)

THINK WIN-WIN

4



If you are quiet in the hallways you get a peace sign. If you get 20 peace signs you get a prize and the other people can get work done because it is quiet.

Lamiya Swope (4)

SYNERGIZE

6



For economics we made our own small businesses and we could hire people. So I hired two people to help me, I told them what I wanted done, they did it for me and they were nice about it.

Eleanor Clayton (3)

5



SEEK FIRST TO UNDERSTAND, THEN TO BE UNDERSTOOD

[The talking stick] gives us each a moment to listen to each other and to celebrate or help each other. When you come to our house there is communication, it is so fun and we have such a good time with it.

Amy Harwedel (Parent)

SHARPEN THE SAW

7



At home, if I read a book for 20 minutes I have an extra 20 minutes to do fun stuff. When I have time to relax I am less tense and have more fun at school.

Annabelle Rau (5)

TEACHERS *of the year*

"I don't see this just as a job. Instead this is my calling and I absolutely love coming to work every day. Whether you have me first hour or sixth, I strive to have the same enthusiasm and passion on a daily basis and love working at High School — North."



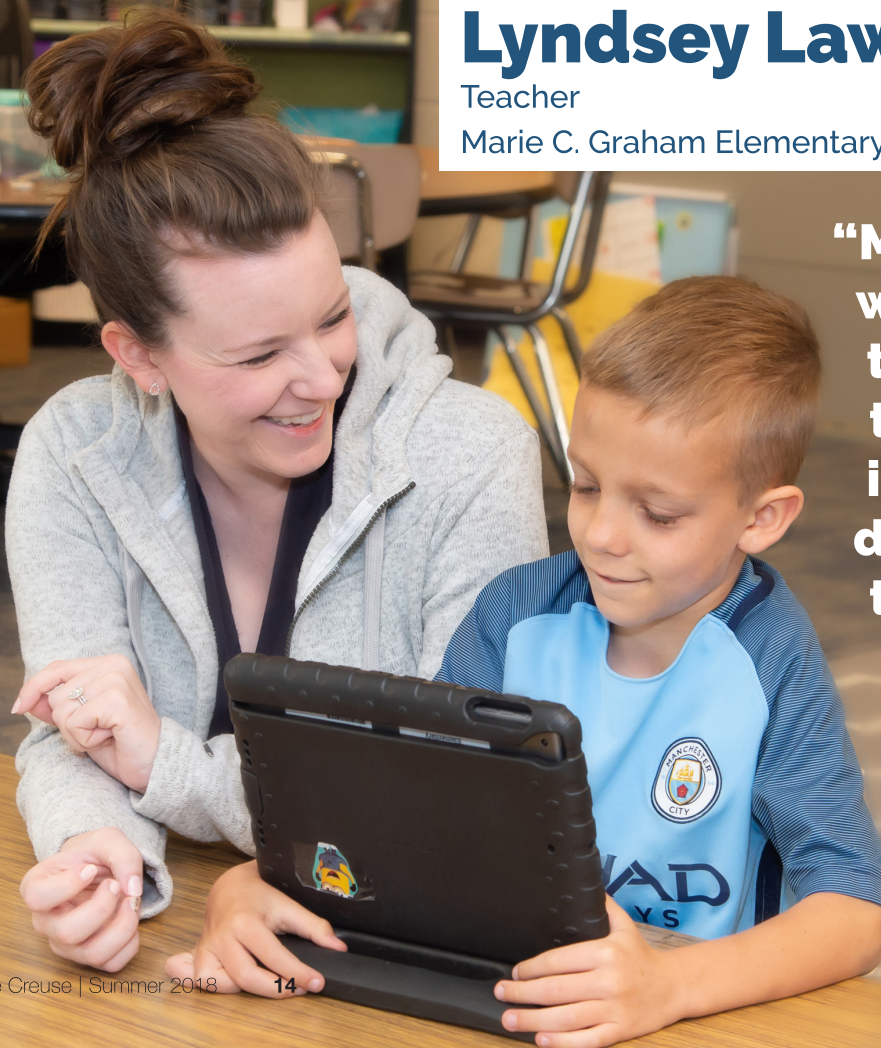
Rosa Hough

Teacher/Student Council Sponsor
L'Anse Creuse High School – North

Lyndsey Lawrence

Teacher

Marie C. Graham Elementary School



"My job is to do whatever it takes to get students to become so independent at daily skills and tasks that they no longer need me. Every achievement in my classroom is the biggest achievement!"



Crafting Words and Thoughts Into Magic

by Kitty Reifert, L'Anse Creuse High School — North teacher and 2018 Michigan Council of Teachers of English Creative Writing Educator of the Year

One of my fondest memories is attending my very first creative writing workshop. It was a glorious encounter to live, eat, breathe, and sleep creativity for five days and nights along the shore of Lake Huron. I remember my apprehension and excitement as a writer — all these thoughts in my mind, but transferring them onto paper. Yikes, that was scary for me! I learned to accept the comments and refine my craft. I learned to accept the compliments, which encouraged me to look even deeper. I learned to take on the most challenging exercises and let my mind freely flow.

Creative writing truly calls students from all different walks of life. There are students who have been writing creatively for years. There are students who have never creatively written once. There are the strong academic students. There are the struggling academic students. There are the well-grounded students. There are the “walking the tightrope” students. There are the athletes, the techies, the gamers, the loners, the believers and dreamers. These students become my kids in our creative writing family.

At Crusader Nation my greatest joys

and surprises come from my kids in creative writing each and every day. I embrace the moments when the crafters truly believe in themselves as writers. I cherish the moments of witnessing their discoveries of voice. Yes, their voice as a crafter of words! I harbor the jour-

I see in the eyes of my students the same apprehension and excitement. I see my role as a bridge between doubt and self-actualization. My greatest joy in the classroom is to watch this growth in my crafters of words.

neys of discovery as my kids weave their words into poetry or prose. I am ever so humbled to be that teacher who offers guidance, the helping hand, the mentorship into molding promising writers.

Jake VanDenBerg is just one of the multi-talented students that have crossed my path in creative writing over the years. I have watched him from the stands in the hockey rink for four years. He has been the starting goalie during his time on the hockey team. This year,

Jake was bestowed the honor of wearing the “C” on his jersey.

I am ever so fortunate that I finally had the opportunity to have Jake in my classroom. I was able to witness the writings of the student whose face was protected by a mask. In creative writing, Jake needed to let his guard down and face his opponents, the pen and paper. He did so like a pro. Jake was willing to take on the challenge of prompts from all angles flying in his direction. He poured his heart, mind, and soul into his crafts.

Jake can now claim many accolades, including being a published writer. He was also selected by the members of the English Department as LCHS-N's Student of the Month. Jake leaves creative writing with many moments of self-discovery and moves on to his conviction of majoring in forensic biochemistry at Northern Michigan University.

Thank you to Jake and all my former creative writing students for this golden opportunity to witness the challenges, the growth, and the discoveries of being crafters of words. I am enthusiastic to watch the magic unfold in creative writing for the upcoming years! ♦

FROM CRUSADER NATION TO NFL

by Kelly Allen

Tyler Conklin waited, surrounded by family and friends and singularly focused. When his cell phone finally rang, he walked through the sea of people to take the call that would set the trajectory of his life. After a brief but impactful conversation, he walked back into the party to hear the words he had been waiting for. “With the 157th pick of the 2018 NFL Draft, our Minnesota Vikings select Tyler Conklin, tight end, Central Michigan University.”

On April 18 years of ambition and hard work came to fruition for Tyler, but his journey from Crusader Nation to the NFL was not an easy one. Just a few years prior, he was neither a tight end, a Central Michigan Chippewa or even a football player. All he had was grit.

Tyler graduated from L’Anse Creuse High School — North in 2013 and headed up to Midland to play basketball on a scholarship at Northwood University. He had played both basketball and football throughout his high school career, but at that time he felt like basketball was his game. After playing eight games at Northwood he felt it wasn’t the right fit, and worried

he had sold himself short.

After a few conversations with the football coaches at Central Michigan University, he left behind a full-ride scholarship in basketball to try walking on the football team. Though some doubted his decision, he felt it was a pivotal step in his pursuit to achieving his life-long goal of becoming a professional athlete, something that he knew

“Whenever you think you are working hard enough, you can always work a little harder.”

many kids talk about but few achieve.

Tyler didn’t find a quick, easy street to his dreams at CMU. Switching schools and walking on meant he had to spend time on the bench, conditioning and training rather than playing in the games. He switched positions from wide receiver to tight end, bulked up, and by the time he arrived at his junior year he was ready to shine. Shine is exactly what he did. His first game ever as a Chippewa was one of his best, with 100 yards and two touchdowns. Tyler’s performance his junior year put him in in the Top 10 for tight ends in

the nation.

Just as it seemed like the stars were starting to align for Tyler, on the first day of football camp his senior year, the unthinkable happened. He suffered a Jones Fracture, a break in the foot that makes it difficult to return to the game. This may have stopped some, but not Tyler. After eight weeks he was back on the field, playing well and getting the attention of all the right people. As a result, he was invited to play in the Senior Bowl.

Tyler graduated from CMU in December 2017. From there he played the Senior Bowl, trained hard, and performed well at the NFL combine. Four months later he was drafted in the fifth round. He expects that his success story is just getting started.

This summer Tyler came back to where it all started to talk to current Crusader football stars. He explained his story, even the not-so-glamorous parts. He didn’t sugarcoat the process and explained what it really takes: courage, determination, a strong support system and the ability to get back up, dust yourself off and make it happen. ♦

“AT THE END OF THE DAY IT COMES DOWN TO YOU BELIEVING IN YOURSELF, YOU WANTING TO MAKE IT HAPPEN MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE.”

ALL-AMERICAN LANCERS

by Kelly Allen

The LCHS Marching Lancers certainly have something to be proud of: In addition to another stellar season, the band has had back-to-back years where one of their own has earned a spot on the U.S. Army All-American Marching Band.

PAYTON WHITE

LCHS 2017, All-American 2017
University of Michigan

"After we finished performing, we all went to the back and gave each other hugs. I literally cried so hard afterwards, **I cried my eyelashes off.** I really got to know all those people in that one week and it was just so amazing!"

JAMES MILLER

LCHS 2018, All-American 2018
Michigan State University

"I don't really get nervous, I get excited, especially for All-American. **We worked so hard and we go out there once.** We were so proud of what we did, and we hadn't even done it yet. It was probably the most fun show I've ever marched!"



EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS

by Kelly Allen



Brooke Nadolny, a soon to be senior at L'Anse Creuse High School, is like most 17-year-old girls, sporting her Harry Styles concert t-shirt and professing her love for her dogs Daryl and Lacy. But there's something else about her: she just keeps hitting home runs. Nadolny has hit so many home runs that she is breaking state records.

Brooke was recruited to play softball at just four years old after former coach Doug DeCeuninck saw her playing catch on the sidelines. "You knew she was gonna be good, how good was going to be up to her," said DeCeuninck. "She even surpassed my expectations!"

By the time she was five, she was swinging for the fences with a team of girls up to twice her age. One of those girls was her big sister Kaitlyn. "I looked up to her," explained Brooke. "I loved it from the beginning."

As a freshman she crushed six home runs, a great start to her high school career. The very next year she kicked things up a notch and sent 22 balls sailing, breaking the season homerun record for Michigan. Then during her junior year, she broke her own record, blasting 26 home runs. If you are

counting, that is a total of 54 home runs in three years. The high school career record in Michigan is 55, which means she is only one away from tying the record and two away from beating it.

When asked what her goal is for next year, she repeated the same modest, team-player mentality she has carried throughout the years: "I'm not going to try and hit home runs." Brooke continued, "That has to be my mindset. Focus on base hits and when they come, they'll come."

We are all rooting for her in the 2019 season and have faith she will knock out of the park not only a few balls, but the the record too. ♦

**SOFTBALL IS
LITERALLY MY
WHOLE LIFE.**

Brooke Nadolny



*A Tree and Me
What Will We Be?*



MASTER OF REINVENTION

by Kelly Allen | photos courtesy of Colleen Hall

Frederick Pankow wrote and illustrated a book for his great-grandchildren titled “What a Tree Can Be.” Throughout the pages the story encourages the reader that they can do anything they want to do and be anything they want to be.

The moral of the story was the motto of his life. Mr. Pankow was a master of reinvention through his passion for lifelong learning.

Many locals likely have heard of the Pankow Center and have driven down Pankow Boulevard, both of which are named after him. Mr. Pankow is the longest-serving superintendent of L’Anse Creuse Public Schools, and was essentially one of the district’s founding fathers.

His daughter Colleen and son-in-law David shared dozens of stories, pictures and artifacts commemorating the remarkable life he lived. He’s the kind of man people make movies about; much like Forrest Gump, it just seemed unreal that one person could accomplish so much in their lifetime, even it did span 93 years.

As a young man Mr. Pankow was a combat diver in WWII, where he was fearlessly dropped into the middle of the ocean in the dark of night to “get the job done.” He spent three years in the service before going on to finish his schooling at Central Michigan University, where he not only earned his bachelor’s degree but also started the

school’s gymnastics team. He attended four universities, obtained his master’s and got all the way to the finish line with his doctorate before deciding not to defend his dissertation. He had achieved the knowledge but didn’t want to spend the money for the title.

He was also husband to his beautiful wife of 75 years, Joyce, father to three children, grandfather to five and great-grandfather to seven. Family meant everything to him. To say that he loved would be an understatement. Proof of that was in his last days, when he held his one month old great-granddaughter for three days straight and passed away three days later.

Professionally he was a teacher, principal and superintendent. During his 20 years with L’Anse Creuse, Mr. Pankow was always looking for ways to enhance opportunities for our students and build a stronger community. In that time he enhanced the Community Education program, implemented Advanced Placement courses, and started the Career and Technical Education program.

“He respected all people and he stressed that no matter the education level, there are people out there with very important jobs,” Colleen recalled. Appropriately enough, the Career and Technical Education Center bears his name.

For a man with little spare time, he somehow found ways to add to his list

of talents. Throughout his life he had a passion for horticulture and tended to his gardens in a scientific way. In his 40s he decided it was time to learn something new and took an art class, sparking decades of painting, drawing, whittling and stained glass work. In his later years, he picked up his final hobby: writing. He regularly wrote detailed essays for his community newsletter as well as the children’s book.

According to Colleen, “Lifelong learning was in his DNA.” Mr. Pankow was constantly learning something new and forcing this habit on everyone around him. At a recent celebration of his life, his oldest grandson explained that grandpa was so focused on learning all the time that he would send them letters with typos, paying his grandchildren for every typo they found. He later carried on the tradition by sending emails with typos to his great-grandchildren.

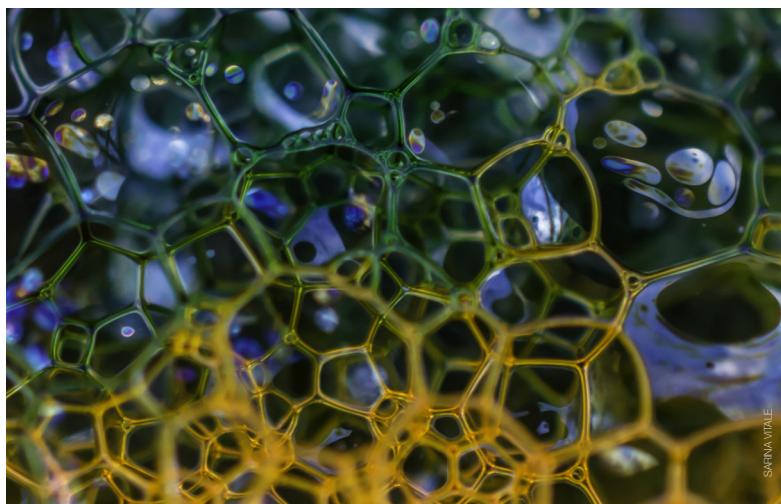
His story teaches that it’s never too late to try something new, we are constantly evolving and if you give it your all you will succeed. Whether it be your spouse, your children, your career or your hobby, you can achieve great things if you truly apply yourself with unbridled passion. Frederick V. Pankow wasn’t born to be an artist, a teacher, a leader, a soldier, a gardener, a superintendent or a writer; he was born to be a lifelong learner. ♦



Alexandra Mikszan, "Bozena"



Olivia Archer, "Sunflower Garden"



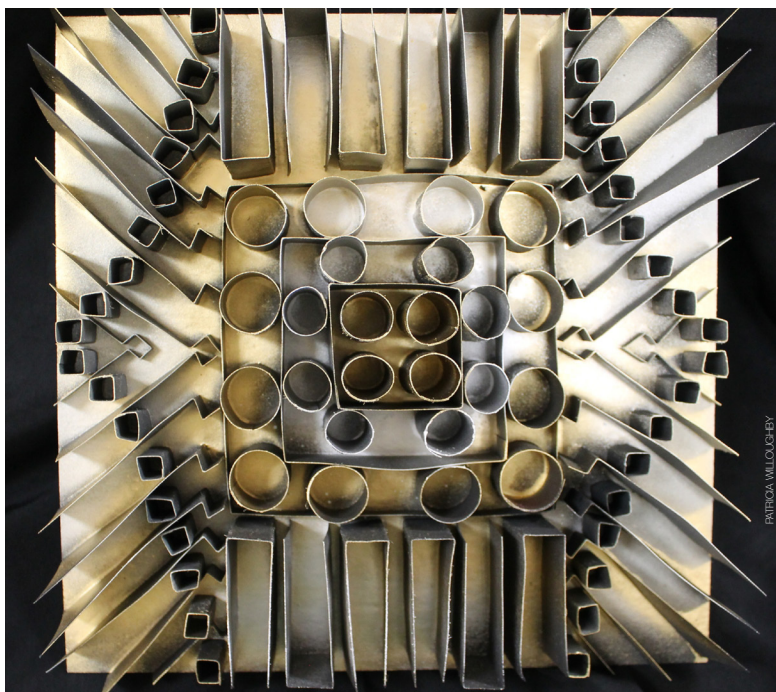
Sarina Vitale, "Escape"



Katherine Hacanyan, "Roses Plate"



Genna Bellestri, "Immortality"



Jada Young, "Industrial Future"

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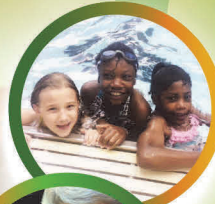
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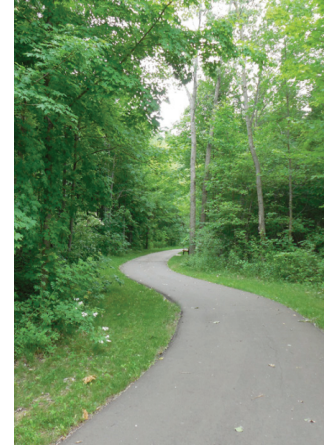
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Macomb Township

Positive growth in the heart of Macomb County

From its thriving economic opportunities and robust retail shopping to its excellent schools and wonderful recreation activities, there are many reasons why Macomb Township is one of the fast-growing communities in Michigan.

In fact, from 2010 to 2014, the township boosted its population by nearly 5,800 to more than 88,000 residents. That's an impressive leap, but the number of people who want to call Macomb Township home doesn't come as much of a surprise for longtime residents who have always known about one of the best-kept secrets to live, work and play.

Its location in the heart of a bustling Macomb County keeps drawing people to Macomb Township, an area first settled in the early 1830s. Back then, it was flat land and fertile soil courtesy of the Clinton River that prompted people, many of them German farmers, to construct homes and build businesses.

Today, Macomb Township's combination of world-class schools, parks, recreational opportunities, shopping and sense of community makes it appealing to individuals, couples and families who want the convenience of modern living, but the amenities that make it a pleasant place to call home.

Growth is a point of pride for township officials, who are quick to point out that affordable housing and low tax rates make the area attractive to new residents. The population growth has resulted in a building boom with a number of single-family housing projects as well as a variety of other options such as condominiums and apartments currently under development to meet the needs of all families and budgets.

Families find that the school districts are a great fit for their children. The township is served by four school districts: L'Anse Creuse Public Schools, Chippewa Valley Schools, New Haven Schools and Utica Community Schools. All offer a quality education with innovative programs and a focus on career preparation. L'Anse Creuse Public Schools, for example, has an average graduation rate of 97.6 percent, with both high schools among the top five in Macomb County, according to the district's website.

All of this positive growth hasn't taken place overnight and it hasn't happened by chance. For years, township officials, with

input from business leaders and township residents, have carefully crafted a plan for a strong industrial and commercial corridor designed to boost the community's tax base and create employment opportunities for residents.

With growth comes changes to infrastructure and Macomb Township is no exception. As traffic increased, officials carefully evaluated road conditions and traffic congestion, targeting a number of roadways for improvements.

Current road projects include widening the two-lane 23 Mile Road to five lanes through a one mile stretch between Fairchild and North Avenue. A roundabout is also slated for the western section of 25 Mile Road and Romeo Plank where an easterly roundabout was completed in 2016 at Romeo Plank's split intersection on 25 Mile Road.

While road projects improve the township's infrastructure, the parks system speaks directly to residents. It is an attractive amenity for families who appreciate the peaceful green space available at Waldenburg and Macomb Corners parks as well as the opportunities for fitness and leisure at the Macomb Township Recreation Center.

The 92,000 square foot recreation center opened in 2004. It houses a fitness center, two gymnasiums, three birthday party rooms, two aerobics spaces, an indoor playground and a meeting area in addition to an activity pool, lazy river feature, water slide and hot tub. According to its website, the center is visited by several hundred people daily.

Interested persons can become annual members or pay for daily access to its exercise facilities and activity pool area. Classes are a popular option for youth, adults, seniors and individuals with disabilities and include everything from swimming lessons and water aerobics instruction to yoga and Forever Fit classes.

Join in the fun during unique community events such as the popular Music in the Park series, Movie Under the Stars event and Tons of Trucks as well as seasonal activities like Halloween Hoopla, Holiday Tree Lighting and Eggstravaganza.

For more information about Macomb Township, visit macomb-mi.gov.



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Foundation**

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L'Anse Creuse for nearly 30 years through
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Harrison Township

Plan a visit to "Boat Town U.S.A."

Harrison Township is the type of community where once people decide to live there, they rarely leave. That's because it is a mostly residential area with great restaurants, located close to a major highway, and truly a boating community.



With roughly three-fourths of its borders nestled along Lake St. Clair, Harrison Township has been referred to as "Boat Town, U.S.A." given the large number of marinas located within its borders. That lake access is a big part of the township's identity, according to Township Supervisor Ken Verkest.

"It's a popular attraction not just for residents but many of our visitors who may know Harrison Township as a great place to grab a meal, enjoy time with friends and family and experience lake life together," Verkest said. "We certainly have families and individuals who may consider the township their second home because that is where their boat is docked."

From Luigi's to River Rat to Crews Inn and more, Harrison Township has a number of well-known and highly regarded

restaurants that draw visitors from around southeastern Michigan. Diners can enjoy all types of cuisine including American, Mexican, Italian and seafood.

During the summer months, the township offers a free shuttle service on Friday evenings as well as Saturday and Sunday. Whether you want to enjoy one of the many fine restaurants or attend religious services, you can call (586) 612-4454 for a free ride. This is available for both residents and guests and is especially popular with marina guests.

Finally Harrison Township is the home of the Air National Guard 127th Wing and Selfridge Air National Guard Base. In addition to air shows and other public events on the base, the 127th Wing is active in the community in assisting civic groups, schools and community projects.

Learn more by visiting
<http://www.harrison-township.org>.

FAST FACTS

Founded: 1827
Population (2010 census): 24,587
Square miles: 23.6



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

DATE	HOSTED BY	LOCATION	EVENT	TIME
8/20	Board of Education	Wheeler	Committee/Regular Meeting	5:30 pm
9/4	FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL - HALF DAY			
9/17	Board of Education	Wheeler	Committee Meeting	9:30 am
9/22	L'Anse Creuse Foundation	LCHS-N	Outdoor Movie Night	Dusk
9/24	Board of Education	Wheeler	Regular Meeting	6:30 pm
10/15	Board of Education	Wheeler	Committee Meeting	9:30 am
10/22	Board of Education	Wheeler	Regular Meeting	6:30 pm
10/25-26	LCBS Drama Club	JAPAC	TBA	7:00 pm
11/2-3	Pankow Performing Arts	JAPAC	TBA	8:00 pm
11/6	NO SCHOOL - ELECTION DAY			
11/7	LCHS-N	JAPAC	Celebration of Excellence	7:00 pm
11/8-9	LCHS-N	JAPAC	TBA	7:00 pm
11/19	Board of Education	Wheeler	Committee Meeting	9:30 am
11/20	LCHS-N	JAPAC	Talent Show	7:00 pm
11/21-25	NO SCHOOL - THANKSGIVING RECESS			
11/26	Board of Education	Wheeler	Regular Meeting	6:30 pm
11/26	South River	JAPAC	Winter Performance	7:00 pm
11/27	Tenniswood	JAPAC	Winter Performance	7:00 pm
11/28	Atwood	JAPAC	Winter Performance	7:00 pm
11/29	LCHS-N	JAPAC	Band Concert	7:00 pm
12/3	MS-South	JAPAC	Choir Concert	7:00 pm
12/4	Higgins	JAPAC	Winter Performance	6:30 pm
12/5	Yacks	JAPAC	Winter Performance	7:00 pm
12/6	Green & Graham	JAPAC	Winter Performance	7:00 pm
12/7	MS-South	JAPAC	Band Concert	7:00 pm
12/9	LCHS	JAPAC	Choir Concert	3:00 pm
12/10	Board of Education	Wheeler	Committee Meeting	9:30 am
12/10	Carkenord	JAPAC	Winter Performance	7:00 pm
12/11	LCHS-N	JAPAC	Choir Concert	7:00 pm
12/12	MS-North	JAPAC	Band & Choir Concert	6:00 pm
12/13	LCHS	JAPAC	Band Concert	7:00 pm
12/14	MS-East	JAPAC	Band Concert	7:00 pm
12/17	Board of Education	Wheeler	Regular Meeting	6:30 pm
12/18	MS-Central	JAPAC	Band Concert	7:00 pm
12/21-1/2	NO SCHOOL - WINTER RECESS			
1/7	Pankow Center	JAPAC	Monologue Night	6:00 pm
1/8	LCHS-N	JAPAC	Mr. Crusader	7:00 pm
1/9-10	Pankow Center	JAPAC	Dance Performance	7:00 pm
1/9	HALF DAY FOR ALL STUDENTS			
1/18-19	LCHS Choir	JAPAC	"Legally Blonde"	7:00 pm
1/21	NO SCHOOL - MLK JR. DAY			
1/22	Board of Education	Wheeler	Organizational Meeting	10:00 am
	Board of Education	Wheeler	Committee Meeting	10:30 am
1/28	Board of Education	Wheeler	Regular Meeting	6:30 pm
2/15-18	NO SCHOOL - MID-WINTER BREAK			