



Lorain City Schools

www.lorainschools.org



Thursday, February 23, 2017 | The Morning Journal

Lorain middle school students honored for buying shoes for classmate

By Carol Harper, The Morning Journal
Damion McShepard and Kenneth Jenkins leveraged their ability earn money through chores at home to silence ridicule of an eighth-grade classmate.

The 14-year-old boys pooled the money they earned and bought a pair of gym shoes and gave them last month to the boy at General Johnnie Wilson Middle School, 2700 Washington Ave. in Lorain.

As a result, they were nominated by Principal Bryan Hilko and were honored by Lorain City Schools and Lorain Police Department in a "Do the Right Thing" program during a board meeting Feb. 6 at Lorain High School, 2600 Ashland Ave.

The students said they did not witness the ridicule.

"I found out through social media," Damion said. "Some girl said he was being made fun of because of shoes. I said, 'What size shoe does he wear?' She said, 'I don't know, 10, 9.' I think she's a close friend, someone who cares."

"I was sad for him when I heard about it," Kenneth said.

"I was mad," Damion said. "I started crying. Ooh, I was so mad."

Kenneth said he prayed about it.

"My grandma is a Christian," he said.

After talking about options, both boys performed chores around the house to earn money.

Damion said he added some Christmas money he saved, and Kenneth said he helped people around the neighborhood.

The goal was to buy "nice looking shoes," Kenneth said.

"I didn't want something too expensive, but nothing too cheap so he would get made fun of," Damion said, "We wanted everyday shoes; something he could play sports in, wear to school, gym shoes."

The boys handed the pair they selected to the classmate at school.

"He was shocked," Kenneth said.

"He smiled," Damion said, "and went to the office and told the principal what happened. He gave us a hug and said, 'Thank you.'"

Lorain Schools Superintendent Dr. Jeff Graham praised the boys' efforts and integrity.

"It was so heartfelt and so genuine and so appropriate," Graham said. "And for middle school students to step up and do the right thing to that level, it's incredible."

"And again, give credit where credit is due. Good kids don't turn out that way by accident."

Lorain School Board President Tim Williams moved and the board approved declaring the meeting, "General Johnnie Wilson Day."

"That was an excellent job of representing the district, your school, your parents," Williams said. "So, we're very proud of all of that. We hope this is the behavior that is the standard across the district at all of our schools."

"So you gentlemen demonstrate great character. The young ladies in their presentation, excellence. And that's really the best of what is happening here at Lorain City Schools."

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Lorain City Schools 2017-18 Calendar

Lorain Schools' Jay Nimene wraps services around families

By Carol Harper,
The Morning Journal

When Lorain City Schools needed a community savvy person to launch wrap around services they turned to Jayene "Jay" Nimene.

"I could talk all day long about great things Jay Nimene brings to the table," said Lorain Schools Superintendent Dr. Jeff Graham. "Incredibly insightful, a great depth of understanding of people, of their needs and how to meet their needs. And what I mean by that is not just connecting them to the appropriate agency, but getting the right people around the table.

"He's a great thinker in terms of process, putting things together and becoming a strong leader," Graham said. "He's somebody I lean on constantly. And we had some tragedies recently, and of course you lean on him in those times, because those are his areas of expertise. Even when we're not dealing with tragedies, he's still someone we lean on constantly because of his depth of understanding of people. And you need that, especially in an organization like ours. We have a lot of (different types of) people."

Nimene started working for the district seven years ago with deep community roots having spent 20 years in counseling and social services, including completing 1,000 suicide assessments a year for two years.

He was promoted Sept. 1 to director of student and family outreach at Lorain Schools.

"Some of the things I'm responsible for are wrap around services for the district," Nimene said. "What that means is mental health services and social services. I'm responsible for seeing that there

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Professional Development Days

August

14 10 Month Staff Return
21 Teachers Return/Professional Development
23 Students Begin

September

4 No School - Labor Day

October

13 No School - NEOEA
16 No Students - Professional Development Day
20 End of 1st Grading Period

November

3 No School - Parent/Teacher Conference
22-24 No School - Thanksgiving Break

December

18-29 No School - Winter Break

January

1-2 No School - Winter Break
11 End of 2nd Grading Period
12 No Students - Professional Development/Records Day
15 No School - MLK Jr. Day

February

16 No School - Parent/Teacher Conference
19 No School - President's Day
20 No Students - Professional Development Day

March

16 End of 3rd Grading Period
26-30 No School - Spring Break

April

2 No School - Spring Break
16 No Students - Professional Development Day

May

28 No School - Memorial Day

June

7 Last Day for Students
7 End of 4th Grading Period
8 Last Day for Teachers
21 Last Day for 10 Month Staff

August 2017				
Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thur.	Fri.
	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30	31	

September 2017				
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October 2017				
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November 2017				
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December 2017				
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January 2018				
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February 2018				
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March 2018				
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April 2018				
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May 2018				
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June 2018				
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July 2018				
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23	24	25	26	27
30	31			

Calamity Make-Up Days:

March 26,27,28,29,30

June 8, 11, 12

Graduation Day: June 5, 2018

Approved by the Board: February 6, 2017

are currently mental health agencies assigned to every building to address the needs of each building. Lorain County Mental Health Board helps us with those assignments. We work very closely with Dr. (Kathleen) Kern.

"We've always tried to meet the non-academic barriers for our families," Nimene said. "But now instead of being the liaison and working with it, I'm now overseeing it and making sure that it's happening."

The district learned that in order to increase academic achievement and attendance, it must meet non-academic barriers, he said.

"Anywhere from food, transportation, helping them with their utilities, mentoring, tutoring," Nimene said. "Our main battle, I find, is the battle between home culture and school culture. Meaning, we do all these things we can for the student here at school, but then they go home and face whatever they're facing. So it's a constant battle for the student. So we're trying to make that transition smooth, so home is just as safe and structured as school is."

"Some of those things, you know, a kid does not care about two plus two if he's hungry," Nimene said. "It's meeting those things. It's nothing too small, nothing too big that we try to help them with. So I often try to be that liaison for those resources. Because I find that they don't follow through, or they're just embarrassed, they don't know how, they're not confident enough. I just try to keep those links together."

When Graham started in the district in 2015, he asked about the needs of the families.

"We can assume and think we know," Nimene said. "That is a scary place to be, to assume you know a person's story."

The district created a community survey and asked parents what they need. Mercy Health Clinics emerged from the list of needs, so students and teachers can visit a clinic at one of three elementary buildings, he said.

A new development is optometrist Dr. David Del Principe's office in the clinics for thorough eye exams, and

glasses on site.

"It's rewarding because I'm able to link the families up with resources," Nimene said. "Kids stay in school. Families are able to be successful. I like that part."

But when the worst happens, Nimene takes the call and shows up for others.

"I've been doing a lot with the crisis plan, just trying to help us through when we lose staff and we lose students," Nimene said. "I've worked closely with the Lorain County Crisis Team, and with the Lorain County Mental Health Board and they have been awesome. But the leading agency that has been really tremendous for us has been Hospice of Western Reserve, and Cornerstone out of Independence. Those two agencies have really helped us out of some difficult times."

At Lorain High School, Nimene continues work with about 1,000 students in GEAR UP, a program paid for through a grant to help youth be successful after high school.

Another 400 seventh- through 12th-grade students are targeted with the AVID program, Advance Via Individual Determination.

The best evidence of success is in voluntary testimonials of students who return to tell younger ones about life after high school, he said.

"What happens is, during Christmas break and spring break, students come back and they present," Nimene said. "And what better way to hear than from their peers to say, 'Hey, I was in that seat last year, two years ago, and I didn't believe in it. But this is how it's helped me in college.' That's just the fluffy stuff that I like."

He praised the GEAR UP staff for their great relationships with students. That makes all the difference, he said.

"Then we focus on them to make sure they are on target to graduate and they have everything they need," Nimene said.

Prior to his seven years at Lorain Schools, Nimene worked in the community for 20 years: for example, 10 years at Nord Center, as a case manager tech, mental health education and medication compliance, and supervising homes where mental health



Carol Harper - The Morning Journal

Jrayene "Jay" Nimene, director of student and family outreach at Lorain City Schools, 2601 Pole Ave., Lorain, delivers a message to 16-year-old junior John John in the lunchroom at Lorain High School, 2600 Ashland Ave., Lorain. Nimene finds ways to help students be successful at school and beyond.

consumers lived within the county; and four years at Applewood, as a therapist counseling families, he said. And working with youth involved in juvenile court requires a steady heart.

"It's interesting how they all are related," Nimene said. "You teach a child; you're helping them; but then they go back. They go right back to home where a lot of these issues occur. So I think that's the problem. It's that constant fight and that constant battle."

"What if instead of paying a child as a reward for, say, cleaning their room, you increase parent involvement in the relationship?" Nimene said. "What happens if I say, 'Hey, if you clean your room, then you can make cookies with Mom'? And you already know what is going to happen while you're making cookies. 'Hey, how was your day? How are things going?'"

"Remember back in the day we had dinner all together, Mom and Dad," Nimene said. "We talked about our day, and that is when you found out stuff. It's sad when you call home and there's things going on, and we have

good parents and they just don't know what's going on. And it's not because they don't love their kids and they're not good parents. It's because they have to work. And because of where our economy is in our community, a lot of our parents are doing two, three jobs. Sometimes our parents are out of touch. Sometimes kids are raising themselves."

Originally published Jan. 30, 2017





Lorain High School welcomes Vex Robotics competition

By Keith Reynolds,
The Morning Journal

The usual sounds of competition were replaced with the sound of whirring machinery Feb. 17 as the Lorain High School gymnasium was taken over by the Lorain Titans Vex Qualifier.

The competition drew more than 300 students and 64 different teams who took turns competing in a game called Starstruck.

In each match two sides, each made up of two teams, attempted to push cubes and stars over a metal barrier; kind of like a game of volleyball, but instead of the teams moving the items by hand, the heavy lifting was handled by robots built by the students.

Speaking before the qualifying matches began; Superintendent Dr. Jeffrey Graham thanked the parents who made the event possible.

"I think this is just a great way to spend a day," he said. "I think it's an opportunity for us to witness what happens when you combine imagination with ingenuity, perseverance and hard work."

Organizer Deb Hansen, Vex Robotics adviser for Longfellow Middle School, said that the competitions started in Marion and that the district is trying to bring more of them to the area.

"This is taking what kids are learning in the classroom and now applying those skills," she said. "They're taking (all of those skills) and now taking it to another level because they are now designing, building, programming and competing all over Ohio."

"It's giving the opportunity to experience a competition for those 'nerd-type' students," she said. "It's preparing them for opportunities for careers and experiencing it."

Russell Laux, 15, a freshman at Elyria High School, was back in the pit area of the gym. He and his team were frantically attempting to repair their robot Elvis.

"We basically just ripped our (robot's) guts out, but it's fixed," he said.

Russell said that he was dragged to the club by his friends, but it is now a key part of his educational experience.

"Robotics is the only reason why me and a whole bunch of other people come to school," he said. "We do good in school just so we can be in this."

Lanie Prodonovich, 13, a seventh-grader at Brookside, is part of an all-girl team that called themselves The Squirrels. Their robot, named Richard, was adorned with LaserJet printed photos of their team's namesake and the "cash me outside, how bow dah" girl.

According to Lanie, their team hasn't been receiving the respect they deserve because they are girls.

"We all know that girls have two arms, boys have two arms and we can do the same things as boys can," she said.

When the day was over it was the alliance of three teams who were crowned tournament champions: The North Union Middle School and High School teams from Richwood in addition to the River Valley High School team of Caledonia.

Perry High School Robotics from Perry took home the Overall Excellence Award demonstrating their robotics capabilities in multiple areas of competition.

The Middle School Excellence Award went to Brookside Middle School and Brookside High School was victorious in the robot skills competition.

Originally published Feb. 18, 2017



Eric Bonzar—The Morning Journal

Sixty-four teams, from across the state of Ohio, converged on Lorain High School for a VEX Robotics Qualifier competition, Feb. 17, 2017. Using robots they built and programmed, some 300 middle and high school students participated in a competition designed to encompass science, technology, engineering and math (STEM).

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Lorain Sports Hall of Fame announces 2017 class

By Sports Staff, *The Morning Journal*

The 2017 Lorain Sports Hall of Fame class has been announced, and it includes everything from a trainer to a Super Bowl champion.

Eight individuals and one team will enter the Hall of Fame. There are five individuals in the regular, two in the senior and one in the special categories.

The induction banquet will be May 4. Ticket information can be obtained by contacting Ron Feldkamp at 440-244-3449 or Tom Bauer (440-282-4624 or tbauer@bright.net).

The individuals in the regular category are:

Matt Wilhelm >> The Lorain native and Elyria Catholic graduate was a football and basketball star of the Panthers. Following his graduation in 1999, Wilhelm attended Ohio State, where he was a two-time recipient of the Randy Gradishar Top Linebacker Award and helped lead the Buckeyes to a national championship in 2002. He was selected in the fourth round of the 2002 draft by the San Diego Chargers and spent eight years in the NFL, winning an NFL title with the Green Bay Packers in 2010.

Mike Horne >> A Lorain Catholic graduate, Horne was a member of the Spartans' 1976 state runner-up team. The

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SPORTS HALL OF FAME FROM PAGE 6

guard tallied 1,072 points in his career, which was a record at the time. After high school, Horne attended Cleveland State and got into coaching in 1985, leading the Firelands varsity team from 1990 to 1999.

Meredith (Feric) Bingham >> A member of the 1994 state runner-up Lorain Catholic volleyball team, Bingham was the school's all-time passing leader and ranked second in kills. After high school, she attended Tennessee Tech, where she was named to the All-Ohio Valley Conference all four years, only the second player to achieve that honor in conference history.

David Emerick >> Widely accepted as the top golfer in Northeast Ohio when he graduated from Lorain Catholic in 1975, Emerick led the Spartans to a 54-6 record during his high school years. He relocated to California in 1980 to golf professionally, winning 27 mini-tour and local PGA titles over his 25-year career.

Bill Morris >> Widely regarded as one of the best tennis players Lorain High School produced, Morris was the 1979 Buckeye Conference No. 1 singles champion, dropping only two matches that year. His success continued after graduation, winning three Lorain City Championships and two Lorain County Championships individually to go with five doubles titles and three mixed doubles titles in the Lorain International Doubles Tournaments.

The individuals in the senior category are:

John Telatnik >> Until Lorain's Zion Cross won the state title in the 100-meter dash last year, Telatnik held the honor of being the city's last track state champion. The high jumper won the state title in 1947 with a jump of 5 feet, 11 inches during his senior year.

Norris Sinclair >> Sinclair holds the distinction of being Lorain County's first state champion in any sport. At the 1915 state meet, the Lorain High graduate won the 120-yard high hurdles (16.4) and the 220-yard low hurdles (26.4)

The individual in the special category is:

David Dury >> The Admiral King graduate has been around the block when it comes to athletic training. Currently the head athletic trainer for Oberlin High School, Dury has spent time helping out programs at Ohio State and the University of West Alabama and has also spent time with the Browns and Atlanta Falcons. Prior to his position at Obelrin, Dury spent time at Admiral King and Southview.

The team in the 2017 class is:

1985-86 Admiral King Boys Basketball >> The Admirals advanced to a Division I state semifinal, leaving an AP poll path of destruction in their wake. With a record of 23-4 on the year and ranked No. 8 in the final AP poll, Admiral King defeated four AP-ranked teams in Cleveland St. Joseph, Sylvania Southview, Toledo Scott and Westlake while claiming the sectional, district and regional championships.

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