

Cardinal Corner

A School City of East Chicago Publication

Winter 2019



"Learning for all... whatever it takes"

Key Dates

Feb. 15-18 - President's Day - No School

Feb. 27 - Parent/Teacher Conf - No Students

Mar. 22 - Marking End of Period 3

Mar. 25-29 - Spring Break-No school

Apr. 19 - No School

May 22 - Teacher Prof. Dev. - No Students

May 27 - Memorial's Day - No School



School City of East Chicago
1401 East 144th Street
East Chicago, IN 46312

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Cardinal Corner



JROTC Plays a Role in Military Programs in East Chicago

Multimedia director excited to see participation

As the multimedia director for the city of East Chicago, Steve Segura is involved in various of the special events put on by the city. He's excited that East Chicago Central's JR ROTC has been involved with some of the city's events.

"I work for the city of East Chicago for Mayor Anthony Copeland. We do special events in the city. Some of our special events are of course with military, and we were happy to have the JR ROTC program participate in some of these military-gear events. For our Veterans Day program, we had them join us as part of the ceremony," Segura stated.

"My son was in the military and he also used to be in the ROTC," said Segura. "I thought how can we have them (ECC JR ROTC) become more active in the community and participate more so they can get more visibility and exposure."

Segura said, "We first had them participate in the Mexican Independence Day parade. That was the first time we saw them in public. I took a photo of them under our archway and I was like 'man, these kids look awesome.' The representation looked so beautiful. I'm talking about young men and women in uniform. It looked so nice to see East Chicago kids in that light."

"For the Veterans Day ceremony, part of the group was there to represent and they did an outstanding job," said Segura. The City of East Chicago hopes to have the JR ROTC participate in future events as well. Segura would like to see them involved in a military program at the beach, as well as the Mexican Independence Day parade and Veterans Day program again.

According to Segura, East Chicago has had a universal campaign to bring pride back into the city. Crime has been on the decline every year for the past eight years. The city wants to boost morale and pride, and has been partnering with the schools in a variety of ways to do that. Segura said that along with incorporating the JR ROTC into the military programs, the honor society students participated in the city's haunted house and the band participated in the holiday program this past Christmas.

Segura said that the mayor recognizes that while there are programs for the elderly and young children, there are not a lot of programs available for the teens. They are happy that the school has recognized that fact by giving the kids great extracurricular activities such as JR ROTC.

Segura grew up in East Chicago and is happy that things are moving in the direction that they are. "Once morale is boosted, the grades start going up and it's a snowball effect," he said. "I was a kid that grew up in the Boys and Girls Club. What you put in to the community, you get out. We're finally seeing some really nice results with our youth."

Segura is excited to see the JR ROTC program and looking forward to additional programs in the upcoming year. "If we give the students stuff to do besides hitting the books all the time, it starts to spark that curiosity. Once you start the fire again, it gets the neurons kicking off, and it makes smart kids," he said.

5th Annual Community Thanksgiving Dinner

As in past years, we invited the community to enjoy good food, awesome music, fun and comradery with us to celebrate the Thanksgiving Holiday. We partnered with Sodexo Magic to serve over six hundred meals on November 4, 2018. We raffled off 12 turkeys, 12 savory baskets of sides and 12 sweet baskets as well. The ambiance was enhanced by decorations which included student artwork. We were entertained by our high school choir and bands for a wonderful time had by all. We look forward to hosting a wonderful dinner again next year!





A Message from the Superintendent

- Dr. Paige McNulty

As expected, this school year is promising to be one of the best. Our students have plenty of opportunities to learn and achieve. Each school is focusing on our district and school goals set by a group of committed administrators, teachers

and stakeholders based on our growth data from NWEA (Northwest Evaluation Association) our district's formative assessment tool K-10. Students are showing steady progress toward growth as measured by this tool.

I am also very proud to announce that we have partnered with Ivy Tech and the Foundations of East Chicago to create a mentoring program led by Spark Consulting for ten of our East Chicago Central High School girls called I Have Promise Project. The mentoring program connects high school students with St. Catherine Hospital employees as they empower the girls to explore any and all careers in the medical field as well as any career in the hospital. For their first meeting the group created vision boards, met with their mentors and began the program with much promise. *(pictured below)*



We have strengthened our STEM instruction at the elementary and middle school levels by including a STEM class at all elementary schools and at our middle school. Our Pre K center has also partnered with the Children's Museum of Chicago to create a STEM room. Our students have regular access to STEM activities across the district. We have partnered with Parenting Partners as a means to collaborate with stakeholders and empower our parents to be positive change agents for student growth in both academics and social emotional learning. We have also strengthened our focus on social emotional learning by having all of our assistant principals and deans trained in Multi-Tiered Systems of Support or MTSS by partnering with Wabash Valley Education Center.

As we approach the second semester, and testing season for our 3rd through 12th grade students, we are excited to see all of the growth that they have made. We are confident that the collaborations, programs and focus areas will prove relevant to student continued success. We are continuing to improve and grow.

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2400 Cardinal Drive

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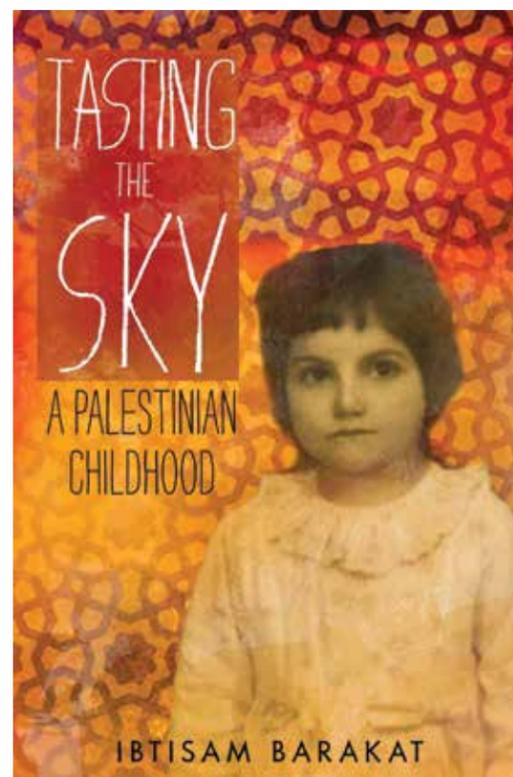
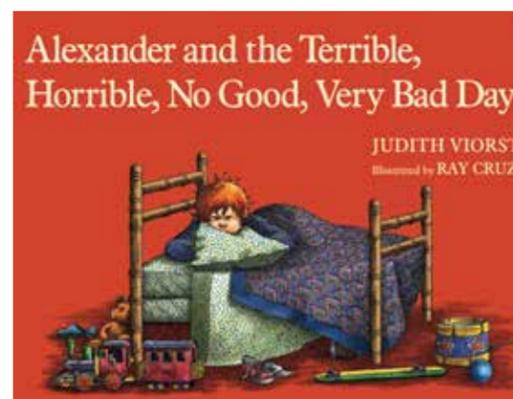
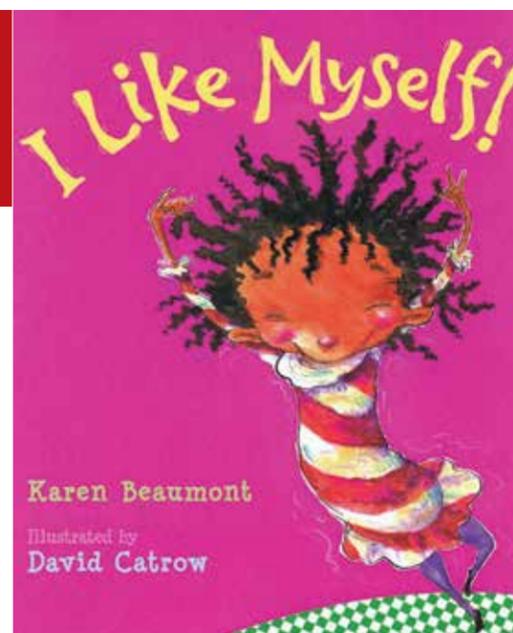
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Joel Rodriguez



Building Bridges with Books

INAUGURAL COMMUNITY READING PROGRAM IS OFF TO A SUCCESSFUL START

SCEC Superintendent Dr. Paige McNulty knows how important reading is and believes that "a reader today becomes a leader tomorrow." Under her direction, School City of East Chicago initiated the first SCEC Community Book Read this past fall to enhance the love of reading and create a bridge between the schools and the community. And it's working.

Dr. McNulty explained the program initiative in a video on the SCEC website, where she stated that "the hope is to build a stronger community with deeper connections through this shared experience and the common love of reading." She also said that more than 2000 books with accompanying literacy activities were given out to pre-K through eighth grade students, as well as both libraries, community centers, boys and girls clubs, and churches.

Pre-K students received "I Like Myself" by Karen Beaumont. The book and activity sheet helped teach the younger children about what makes them special. Kindergarten through third grade read "Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day" by Judith Viorst, which followed Alexander's day of mishaps, helping students realize bad things happen to everyone. Grades 4 - 8 were given "Tasting the Sky: A Palestinian Childhood" written by Ibtisam Barakat. It is a memoir of the author's experiences in Ramallah as a child who was living as a refugee following the 1967 Six-Day War, and how her discovery of the Arabic alphabet leads to her love of language. High school students were encouraged to be reading buddies to the younger students and to mentor them.

"A Reader Today Becomes A Leader Tomorrow"

"It's been a very positive step for the people in our community - if you see a kid, sit down and read with them. That's why we were very active in getting the books pushed out to the Boys and Girls Clubs, community centers, and churches," Dr. McNulty stated. "We're inviting anyone that wants to come in and read at our school to please contact our school or their school principal and set up a time to come in to read to students. It's just a natural way to develop a mentorship with those kids. We're asking any adults or teenagers to sit down and read with the kids."

Dr. McNulty and her staff asked, and they received. "We've had a huge surge of volunteers into our school and a lot of that is directly related to us doing the community book read," Dr. McNulty said. "We've had a lot of people come fill out their volunteer forms so that they can come in to the schools. We want our families and people in the community to help with reading and then realize that they can come in and help with other clubs and programs. We want them to come in and partner with us as much as possible."

The Community Book Read and the need for volunteer readers didn't stop at the end of last semester. There will be a set of new books going out at the end of January. Along with these books will be another short curriculum or list of guiding questions that will also be posted on the school's website. In addition to the books being sent home with students, they will again be available at libraries, community centers, churches, and the Boys and Girls Clubs. The literacy activities will also be available at these locations, so that when community members are reading to the kids they can ask questions like "What do you think will happen next in the book?" Or "what was the main idea of the paragraph we were reading?" "It helps to give them some guiding questions so that the students are learning and the people that are reading to them are helping them learn," stated Dr. McNulty.

If you are interested in volunteering your time to read to the students or to help out with a club or school program, please reach out to one of the schools or the principals. Come help build a stronger community with deeper connections through our shared experiences!

BP funds Robotics at SCEC



In partnership with the School City of East Chicago (SCEC), BP has contributed \$10,000 to fund robotics programs in all K thru 8 buildings in SCEC. Their support for funding this opportunity gives our students exposure to possible career paths, which can have a direct impact on The City of East Chicago.

Why is robotics important? Listed below are the top four unexpected benefits for students who participate in robotics programs:

1. Robotics can be a launching pad for students to realize their passions.

By going through the process of building a robot, students explore many different learning pathways. It's amazing to watch students' passions grow in subjects that they never knew they would love.

2. A strong robotics curriculum can create leaders.

When students interact with robots in the classroom and make them perform various motions and tasks, students' strengths will start to shine. When assembling robots in teams, some students are great at speaking and can verbally bring ideas to life. On the flipside, there are students who may not be as vocal but they lead behind the scenes: they code, perform technical tasks and/or makes sure the team stays on task. Through the exercise of putting the robot together and making it move, these two types of students—both leaders in their own right—learn to communicate as a team and express their ideas to craft the best end result. The ability to come together as different types of leaders, communicate with each other and utilize their personal strengths will be essential throughout these students' lives, no matter if they become an artist, a business executive, or an engineer.

3. Robotics can teach students how to communicate across different technology platforms.

Through this extension of robotics, students learn how to communicate across different technology platforms, understand the audience of these different platforms, and gain experience crafting effective messages for the various audiences—a crucial skill that we all need to be familiar with, no matter what career path we follow.

4. Robotics teaches essential teamwork skills.

Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math (STEAM) lessons are extremely important for students as they prepare to enter the 21st-century workforce. Through robotics, students can learn more than just how to code. They can learn skills in leadership, community involvement, communicating across different technology platforms, finding their passions, and teamwork, which will position them for success well beyond their school years. As students continue to explore their education journey, we will all benefit from our students' experiences.

Thank you BP for contributing to the future of our students in the City of East Chicago!

CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION OF THE STUDENTS MONTH

September



Katherine Garfias, Jaden Blunt, Isaiah Gandara, Dakota Murphy, Julian Torres, Melanie Romano, Grecia Alcantar, Oscar Ramos

October



Abigail Pozo, Anthony Gonzalez, Ivonne Cabrera, Jesus Moreno, Angela Alanis, Daisy Castenada, Jazmin Najera, Rodrigo Lopez

November



Alpheus Johnson, Josiah Aponte, Jaylene Smith, Lizbeth Ortiz, Kayla Garcia, Crecenia Alvarez, Veronica Cervantes, Charisma Saulsberry

Congratulations

A Trip to The Nutcracker Ballet in Chicago

On December 7, students and staff from School City of East Chicago attended Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky's most well-known ballet, The Nutcracker. Ballerinas pirouetting in sparkling dresses. Lifelike dolls dancing with delight. A toy turning into a prince. An audiovisual smorgasbord of twisting and twirling, spinning and swaying, lifting and leaning to the strains of classical music. It was the first time many had seen a ballet or theatrical performance of any kind. With arts programs diminishing in schools, this gave students an opportunity to explore art in the form of ballet dance. Students thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

Tickets were donated by Tickets for Kids through our partner Athletes for Charity. Students in grades 5-12 were chaperoned to The Athenaeum Theatre on the Northside of Chicago. Snacks were donated by Strack and Van Til's in East Chicago. Thank you to everyone!



East Chicago Central's band program is music to Mr. Murphy's ears

EC Central welcomed a new band director at the start of this school year. Mr. Dee Murphy is halfway through his first year at Central and he loves it. He grew up with a love of music that has permeated his career.

Currently there are 23 students involved in the program and Mr. Murphy is excited about their first performances and how involved the students are in making them a success.

"I am passionate about bringing East Chicago Central something exciting that they've never had before: a five-star award-winning marching band program, as well as a symphonic band and a wind ensemble. I want to provide the students here with the opportunity to obtain scholarship opportunities to go to college. That's how I got through college; my mother did as well, and the same thing with my father and my grandmother. It's in my blood."



"We had our first holiday concert on Dec. 12 and we had a packed house. The support shown by the community was overwhelming! The kids did the decorations and learned the music. About 85% of the band students are novices and for them to be able to pull this off brought tears to my eyes," Mr. Murphy said. "We're now getting ready for our next concert. This one will be during school so the student body can really see what we have going on, and get them to want to be part of the program."

Mr. Murphy attended Lincoln University of Missouri and Lane College in Tennessee. While in college he was a student leader and a student staff member assisting with recruitment and scholarships. He has been involved in marching bands, symphonic and concert bands, chamber music and both solo and ensemble competitions throughout his educational years and beyond. He currently plays trombone with the Gary Civic Symphony.

Mr. Murphy sees huge potential in ECC's band program and is working hard to help the students succeed. "We're trying to really establish a music education instrumental culture here at Central. Within the next few months, the current band plans to go to Block Middle School to show them what we have here. I want to go the elementary schools as well to give them something to look forward to," he said. Mr. Murphy is looking forward to doing a recruitment tour to the middle school and elementary schools, and having a summer band program for incoming freshmen to get them ready because he says it's imperative that ECC has a marching band program going next fall.

He also wants to bring in some of his colleagues that are college band directors to come in and recruit students. He plans to do it this year for the seniors so that they can audition and get scholarship money to potentially go to whatever college they want. "I know the opportunities that can be afforded to students that want to go to college, not specifically into music, but that even have that interest. Music was my motivator, and that's the reason I went to school because I knew I was going to band every day. It was so much fun," Mr. Murphy stated.

Mr. Murphy says that he is excited and humbled that he's in the position where he can really teach and do what he truly believes is his God-given talent. "Students want to be in the program. It seems like the need is here. It's something that I hold dear to my heart and I just want to extend that opportunity to others as someone did for me," said Mr. Murphy.

East Chicago Lilly Counseling Initiative Update



It's been a year since the Lilly Foundation grant was awarded to the School City of East Chicago, and the guidance department couldn't be happier with the progress that has been made because of it.

Counselors say that the K-12 program model as a whole is comprehensive, allowing them more time to work directly with the students, rather than having to spend a large portion of their time doing state assessments and clerical work.

There is now an organized plan in the guidance department that allows students to spend more time with the counselors. Existing programs have been bolstered and new programs have been put in place.

One of the exciting new programs is an intern program, which allows students to have more frequent and organized time with the guidance team.

In the high school, the ratio of students per counselor is about 250-300. In the middle school, there are 500+ students per counselor. With the introduction of the intern program, the counselors are able to get to know the students and their needs on a more direct basis.

Interns from Ivy Tech Community College are working alongside the counselors on a weekly or twice weekly basis to meet with students, where they spend time doing hands-on games with the students, and work with them on behavioral projects as well.

Another exciting new aspect of the program is the creation of student support teams. Teams include counselors, social workers, administrators, teachers and parent liaisons - all experts in their fields.

This interdisciplinary approach to social/emotional learning helps build a positive culture within each of the school buildings. The goal of the teams is to have a wrap-around approach for students, where everyone involved is working together as a whole.

Raquel Ordaz, the elementary school counselor, works at all four of the elementary schools. She works with the students on self esteem and investment in their future using power points. She also works on helping them to better improve their grades, which will increase graduation percentages down the road.

Jackie Fuller, the ninth grade counselor, meets every last Wednesday of the month with each of the classes during what would normally be their social studies class. She talks with the students about such topics as Core 40 and what their GPA means, and also does an open mic time where students are free to talk about any issues going on in their lives. She has an open door policy for students to come to her at any time and holds regular parent/teacher conferences. Fuller also helps them prepare for college or career readiness.

High school counselor Liliana Rosala reaches out to students and parents through weekly phone calls and focuses on social/emotional learning. She says that she sees less absences in the student body because of the changes that have been made due to the grant.

The counselors in each of the schools have received positive feedback from the students. The students say that they are enjoying the groups that they are involved in, and when asked if they would join another group, students respond positively.

Dr. Shaunna Finley, assistant superintendent, is excited about the progress and reception of the programs, and is grateful to the communities and schools, Foundations of East Chicago, and L & R Innovative Solutions for partnering with them on the Lilly Grant. Dr. Finley says that they have a K-12 model working in the schools and that they have had more collaboration between the students, administration and counselors than ever before. Stay tuned for more exciting news in the future!

Spanish Heritage Month celebrates diversity

Students and their families enjoyed learning about other cultures during Spanish Heritage Month, held this year from Saturday, September 15 to Monday, October 15, 2018.

Joseph L. Block Middle School hosted the kickoff event for the first district-wide ENL (English as a New Language) program. The Spanish Heritage Month Family Night Event was held on September 13. Approximately 300 families attended the event and enjoyed a night of cultural awareness and fellowship. Students, families and friends engaged in literary activities and cultural breakout sessions. Motivational and educational speeches were made by local community members and parents of students. Families had the opportunity to get their pictures taken.

Mr. Raymond Flores, a long-time Spanish teacher at Block Middle School, was honored as the district's lifetime achievement teacher. Community vendors present at the event included 21st Century Scholars, Healthlink, Geminus Corporation, the East Chicago Library and the school/parent liaison group.



One of the highlights of the evening was a performance by the Mexican Ballet Folklorico. The court from the Mexican Heritage Parade was also there to enjoy the festivities. During the course of the month, the school's English teachers focused on Spanish heritage readings and authors in their classes and there were Spanish items in the display cases for students to enjoy.

The culminating event, a Coco Canvas Family Painting Night, was held on October 25. About 200 families attended the event and enjoyed a dinner of chicken, rice, mostaccioli, salad and beverages. Verona Pizza III in Highland generously donated the delicious meal. Attendees also enjoyed pan dulce, a Mexican sweet bread, for dessert.

Families did a step-by-step painting project led by Mrs. Darlene Rosario-Reese, which they got to take home with them. A good time was enjoyed by all, and it was a fun ending to Spanish Heritage Month.

Kershell Hobson, principal of Block Middle School, said that Block's mission is to build relationships, embrace diversity and empower lifelong learning. She said that students really enjoyed learning about other cultures during Spanish Heritage Month and came out to support each other because the school is so diverse and is serious about embracing that diversity.

Ms. Hobson is excited that the school is preparing for Black History Month, which is coming up in February.

SCHOOL SAFETY TIPS

BULLY BUSTING: Help yourself, help your friend, or just help someone that doesn't know how to get help: anonymously report bullies and bullying activity on the School City of East Chicago confidential Stop Bullying Hotline 219-354-9655.

Sharing Locker Combinations or Login Passwords: When you share your combination or your password you create an opportunity for people to transmit or place something in your name that YOU will be held responsible for.

ID Badges: "I don't need no stinking badges." Most of us don't like our picture and many of us don't like carrying them, but it is becoming a standard that most schools and businesses now require all of us to present some form of a valid photo identification card for a countless number of things. This includes a requirement by most employers for their employees to display a photo ID for security purposes. If you show up to work without your ID tag, you may not be able to work that day.

Check it OUT! Winter months means it gets dark early. Always look around and pay attention to your surroundings before you leave the building or your house. When you can, always walk with a friends and make sure someone knows when you are leaving and where you are going.

SOCIAL MEDIA: Good People who love to 'post' where they are and what they are doing create a great opportunity for Bad people and a whole lot of other strangers to get to know you! From these posts your provide your picture, tell them where you are, let them know that no one is at the house, and how long you'll be away.



Mix it Up! we're all creatures of habit, we park in the same place and walk the same routes. It's always a good safety practice to periodically change your routine.

A whole lot of "Vaping" going on: We now know how dangerous tobacco is for our health, but keep in mind these supposed tobacco free flavored vape alternatives contains chemical fragrances that people are breathing into their lungs.

EVERYBODY's LOOKING: As part of the hiring process most employers routinely check us out on social media to learn more about us before they make a job offer. What does your internet profile and posts say about you?

Keep the inside of your car clean: Place any valuables that you may have inside your vehicle out of view or lock them in the trunk. If you can see something valuable sitting in your car so can a thief.

BACKPACKS can be a real PAIN: Use your locker. If you regularly carrying EVERYTHING in your backpack- you could be putting your back and shoulders at risk! Carrying heavy weight in your backpack on a routine basis can cause chronic back and shoulder problems.

See Something - Say Something! At school or at home if you see something that looks suspicious or know about someone who is in personal crisis or distress you need to say something to a responsible adult, a Staff Member, Safety Personnel, or the Police. If you don't say something, who will?

HARRISON ELEMENTARY ★ STAR STUDENTS ★

Front row left to right:
Liliana Yanez, Kaylee Cabrera, Amaya Paez-Velasco, Cataleya Contreras, Nickolas Bernal, J'Adian Darey

Middle row left to right:
Divinna Tyner, Alison Galindo, Anahi Delgado, Antonio Ibarria Haro, Christian Gonzalez, Jesenia Sandoval, Jeremi Johnson, Vivian Sanchez Beade

Back row left to right:
Daziyah Brown, Jaslene Guido, Alianah Easley, Niko Jiminez, Mariangela Ramos, Joselyn Silva, Alani Wilkins

Not Pictured: Fernando Campos, Mariaelena Sanchez

