Plymouth Community School Corporation

The Plymouth Pilgrimage

Summer 2018



Jefferson's Robotics Club Among the World's Best *(Page 9)*

Registration for the 2018–2019 School Year:

Plymouth Community School Corporation will be offering one-stop, on-site registration at Plymouth High School on **Tuesday, July 24,** 7–9 a.m., 11 a.m.–1 p.m. and 4–7 p.m.

Online registration is available at plymouth.k12.in.us

Superintendent's Message

By Andy Hartley, Superintendent



Plymouth Community School Corporation (PCSC) is a proud partner with many others who help make Plymouth a great place to live and raise a family. We fully understand and take seriously our responsibility to ensure that all students achieve at high levels and that all our stakeholders are engaged in the education of our children.

The opportunities we offer to PCSC students and families are great and continue to grow. From successful robotics programs at every level, to a music program that continues to earn state and national recognition, to athletic programs with a rich history of success, to academic programs that prepare students throughout their K–12 experience for life after high school, we have tremendously caring faculty members and staff that embody our mission to do whatever it takes to help students learn and develop. Our goal is for every student to be prepared and to have a plan for life after high school, and we are confident that the opportunities we offer throughout the K–12 experience will ensure we meet this goal.

It is an honor to serve as superintendent of our school corporation and to be a part of this community. I hope you will enjoy learning more about us through this issue of *The Pilgrimage* as it offers a glimpse into the great things happening in Plymouth Community Schools. If you have questions or wish to explore our opportunities further, please feel welcome to contact me.

Plymouth Community School Corporation Supports the Marshall County Promise

"What do you want to be when you grow up?" It's a question young children get asked often, but the question that likely doesn't follow is one that is needed: "What is your plan to make that happen?"

Here at Plymouth Community School Corporation (PCSC) teachers and administrators believe that students and parents should start thinking about and planning for their futures as early as kindergarten. This is one of the reasons we believe so strongly in the Marshall County Promise. The program brings postsecondary education and careers to the forefront in the minds of elementary students and their families through a collaborative effort called The Promise.



Webster Elementary School students visit Ancilla College for the Walk Into My Future event.

The Marshall County Promise makes educational savings a reality by helping families start a College Choice 529 Direct Savings Plan through partnering school corporations like ours, seeding the account with an initial investment of $25 from a local or regional sponsor and rallying the community to match deposits that families and champions contribute to the account.

The enrollment window for parents of students in kindergarten through third grade is now through September! To enroll simply visit www.marshallcountypromise.org and click on the orange bar that says Enroll in Promise Indiana now!

For the past two years, thousands of PCSC kindergarten and first-grade students have taken part in the Marshall County Promise Walk Into My Future field trip on the campus of Ancilla College.

Superintendent Andy Hartley says, "The Marshall County Promise program is a great opportunity for our community to invest in the future of our children and instill a hope in their future. The Walk Into My Future event at Ancilla College provides our kindergarten and first-graders excitement now about the prospect of attending college one day themselves."

Webster Principal Carrie McGuire says, "Our students thoroughly enjoyed their visit to Ancilla. Most students this young have never seen a college or university. Partnering with the Marshall County Promise has provided educators with readily available tools to make a college field trip like the one to Ancilla a reality for our children. Activities like this are eye-opening for students. These types of opportunities allow them to realize that their learning doesn't stop with high school and that there are options such as college or career and technical training."

Financial contributions to help sustain the program can be made to the Marshall County Promise Fund by contacting the Marshall County Community Foundation at (574) 935-5159.

Front Cover: Jefferson Robotics Team (L-R) Peyton Miller, Freddy Kallenberg, Jonah Rich, Coach Jenn Shidler, Ethan O'Leary, Jacob Olivares, Mannin Howard, Brandon Ganshorn, Chance Miller, and Izabelle Hayn. Jefferson staff and students behind the team.

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Recipe for This Year's Culinary Arts Program

By Laura Orozco, Class of 2018, and Matt Champion, Class of 2021

Plymouth High School (PHS) students have the opportunity this school year to be part of a growing culinary arts program. New this school year, students will be able to take a yearlong dual-credit course at Ancilla College. PHS has partnered with Ancilla College to bring students dual-credit career and technical education opportunities that can better prepare them for the practice of culinary arts.

Students will also be able to earn college credits by taking a yearlong class offered at PHS called Intro to Culinary Arts taught by Family & Consumer Science teacher Susan Kuckie. "We encourage any student who has a passion for food and nutrition, or if they want to explore what culinary careers are available, to enroll in our program," says Kuckie.

Before students can sign up for the program's second- and third-level dual credit courses, they must successfully complete two semesters of a level 1 course called Advanced Nutrition & Wellness, which has been taught at the school for years.

PHS Principal Jim Condon says, "Adding second- and third-tier components to our culinary program allows Plymouth students greater knowledge, skills, work experience and ultimately a more successful journey into the culinary field after graduation."

After the second year of the program, successful students can leave the program with ServSafe® training certification, which is recognized by more federal, state and local jurisdictions than any other food safety certification. Students also can receive the ProStart® National Certificate of Achievement, which can help high school graduates find a job.



Angel Arroyo, Susan Kuckie, Nate Ruggles and Catelyn Becker get cooking in Advanced Nutrition and Wellness.

Kuckie says growth of the PHS culinary program also offers exciting opportunities the community can be part of and will notice. "This school year we will be unveiling numerous hands-on fundraising opportunities that our culinary students will be part of, such as a holiday pie fundraiser, and we will be launching catering opportunities for school events."



PHS Transcript Audits Keep Students from Falling Through the Cracks

By Diego Guzman, Class of 2019

It might seem easy for a student to fall through the cracks at a school with a student body of more than 1,000. This is one of the reasons the Plymouth High School Guidance Department started conducting transcript audits for every student every year.



Guidance counselor Stacy Scheetz says that during the audits the Guidance Department literally relocates to the second floor of the varsity gym where there is ample space. "We sit down and meet with every student to look at his or her transcript," says Scheetz.

PHS Director of Guidance Aimee Portteus says her team of counselors wants to know whether students are on track for graduation. Counselors make sure students have passed all their Indiana Department of Education required Core 40 courses and find out what students want to do after high school.



"If students have failed a class or are failing a class," says Portteus, "we go over such options as summer school, night school or enrolling in an online class so they can take the course again and not fall short of their graduation goal." The audit meetings are also used to schedule underclassmen for classes for the following year.

"We meet with seniors right at the beginning of the school year in August to make sure they will graduate on time. Our support staff works directly with their transcripts to help students create a Parchment account. The site securely stores transcripts, test scores and other credentials. It also creates scatterplots showing college admission odds, using data from past Parchment users," says Portteus.



Kelsey Flynn and Kelly Manning, Ancilla College Director of Admissions Events



‘Go Center’ Helps Students Go for Success

By Anna Hite, Class of 2018

The College and Career Center at Plymouth High School (PHS), better known to students as the Go Center, began in 2017 after a yearlong planning process. The center was created to help all PHS students with college decisions, resume building, interview skills, job placement and obtaining college scholarships. It opened during the 2017–18 school year, but the Plymouth Community School Corporation has aspirations of expanding to Riverside Intermediate and Lincoln Jr. High over the next few years.

Kelsey Flynn, College and Career Center coordinator, says, “The first year we have been excited to see the interest and need among our students. PHS has a lot of seniors that needed help with financial aid and filling out the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid form). A tremendous number of underclass students have come to get help creating their resumes, and students in all grades have sought advice and information about colleges and career choices.”

The Go Center hosts many college and university representatives throughout the school year. They meet with students to discuss college majors, costs and admission requirements. The Go Center also works with every military branch, so interested students can meet and discuss their desire to serve our country. The Army, Navy, Air Force, National Guard and Marines are all represented and are available to meet weekly with students.

Flynn sends e-mails to the student body on a regular basis, informing them of job opportunities within the community as well as upcoming dates when college and military representatives will be visiting the Go Center.

Aimee Portteus, director of guidance at PHS, says, “We love all the great work Flynn has done with the Go Center here at PHS, and we look forward to seeing how the center evolves in Plymouth schools. This is just another tool we can give students to help prepare them better for college and future careers.”

WSOI Precision Machining Class Student Discovers Her Future

By Laura Orozco, Class of 2018

Cristina Olvera, Class of 2018, had no idea what field she wanted to pursue after high school until she enrolled in the precision machining program at the Weidner School of Inquiry @ PHS her senior year.

“I took sports marketing, advanced nutrition, digital design, child development and business classes for electives to try to figure it out,” says Christina. “But it wasn’t until my precision machining class and internship that I discovered that precision machining is what I want to do in life.”

Precision machining is a type of technical manufacturing essential in creating and designing machines, parts, tools, and other hardware crucial in modern manufacturing under specific specifications. It makes possible the many large and small objects and their components that we use in everyday life.

Plymouth High School precision machining instructor Scott Kaser says, “Cristina is a natural leader. She has the gift of being able to communicate with people in a way they can understand. Her inquisitive mind wants to know how things work, and she helped many of her classmates achieve project completion.” Cristina was such an excellent class leader during the first semester that Kaser was proud to recommend her for an afternoon internship at Indiana Technology and Manufacturing Companies (ITAMCO) in Plymouth second semester.



ITAMCO is one of the most extraordinary gear shops in the world. Kaser says Christina continued to show her natural leadership abilities and dedication while there. Her daily tasks involved using such precise measurement tools as micrometers, calipers and various types of gages as well as determining whether a product/part passed or failed inspection by using advanced manufacturing technology.

“What I liked most about my internship,” says Christina, “was the change that happened in my work, meeting new people and also taking on more responsibility.”

Kaser says, “When speaking with Mark Neidig, one of Olvera’s supervisors at ITAMCO, about her performance, he left an open invitation for her to return if she wanted full-time employment. That alone speaks to the caliber of person Cristina is.”

Christina has already gained one certification for Measurement, Materials, and Safety and is currently working on her Job Planning, Benchwork, and Layout certification. She also is certified by NIMS (National Institute of Metalworking Skills), widely accepted around the nation as an industry-recognized credential.

Christina’s plans include relocating to Texas to study manufacturing engineering at either the University of Texas: Rio Grande Valley or South Texas College. She advises other students who are interested in testing out the field to enroll in precision machining at PHS and try to secure a semester internship as she did.

Kaser also has advice for potential students: “If students like to be challenged, problem solve and work with their minds and hands, then we encourage them to stop in and take a look. They might be surprised to see what modern manufacturing has become in today’s world.”

Computer Science Gaining Popularity

By Erik Galindo-Zelaya, Class of 2019

Computer Science is a popular course in its second year at Weidner School of Inquiry (WSOI) @ PHS. Students in grades 9–12 can take this beginning yearlong course. Students who wish to continue for a second year can enroll in a course called Computer Science Principles. Facilitator Lindsey Moore teaches both classes for Project Based Learning students who attend WSOI; and traditional students, who attend Plymouth High School.

“These courses provide a great foundational understanding that puts students a step ahead in their future studies,” says Moore. “Computer science careers are projected to grow significantly faster than any other career field between now and 2026. Typically, computer science and computer engineering majors can expect high average salaries when they begin work after graduating.”

Computer Science is an elective course considered part of the Business Department by the Indiana Department of Education. Neither WSOI course currently offers college dual credit. However, students may qualify for college credit if they score high enough on the end-of-the-year Advanced Placement (AP) exam administered at PHS.



Moore adds, “Offering these courses allows students to investigate this career field, which they may not have otherwise considered. Another good reason students should enroll in this course is that they can further their critical-thinking skills in preparation for any STEM field.”

Lincoln Service Club Still Going Strong

By Hannah Gibson, Class of 2020

The Service Club has been going strong for the past four years at Lincoln Jr. High School (LJHS). In fact, the club is so popular, when students leave LJHS many still want to be, and are, part of the club when they get to Plymouth High School.



The Service Club meets once a week for an hour on Wednesdays after school. LJHS Principal Reid Gault says, "At the beginning of each year, students come together and pick what community or school projects they would like to work on. Then with the help of the club's adviser, they tackle projects that can make a positive impact on that cause."

Former LJHS science teacher Brittany Hull has been leading the club for the last four years. This past school year she taught science at Plymouth High School. Hull says, "Over the years the club has doubled in size. Each year, we've earned more than $2,000 in grants to spend on the projects." The grants thus far have been secured through two organizations: generationOn and Learning to Give.

The overall importance of the club is to show students that they can make a positive impact on the world. This past school year, students had a bake sale that raised money for the Marshall County Humane Society; they surprised teachers and students by doing random acts of kindness; and they painted rocks with positive messages and then "planted" them all over the community for others to find.



"Students build leadership skills, communication skills and empathy by being members of our Service Club," says Gault. No doubt, the club will continue going strong this school year.



New Lincoln Jr. High Slated for Completion by May 2020

Ground was officially broken for the new Lincoln Jr. High School (LJHS) as LJHS students, teachers, administrators and school board members rolled up their sleeves and took part in a ceremony on May 23, 2018. The new building is currently being constructed just east of the current building.

Fort Wayne architectural firm Barton-Coe-Vilamaa designed the new school with input from current LJHS teachers. Superintendent Andy Hartley says, "Getting input from our teachers on classroom design was extremely important. We had a series of conversations with our staff about natural light, social and collaborative settings, modern and creative workspaces, storage and many more important aspects. The consensus is that we are all pretty excited about what's to come for our community and students."

The building is expected to be completed in May 2020.



Students Earn High School Credit While Becoming Digitally Responsible

By Sarah Slimm, Class of 2019

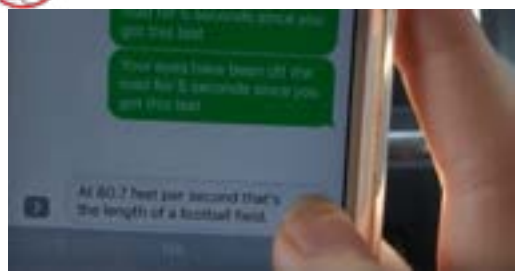
Technology is constantly evolving, and in the digital era we continue to be surrounded by advances in digital technology. Students of the digital age are social by nature; they text, post, share, chat and are in constant technological environments with each other. Digital connection and collaboration with others are essential not only in their personal life but for learning and their success in life in general.

"As educators," says Lincoln Principal Reid Gault, "we must teach students what digitally responsible communication practice entails and how they can put forth their best representation of who they are as individuals online as well as offline. That's what we are doing here at Lincoln."

Last school year, every LJHS student enrolled in a 30 minute a day, yearlong course that teaches them how to hone their digital communication skills in both their personal and professional lives. Seventh-graders complete the Digital Responsibility course and eighth-graders are enrolled in PCC, which stands for Preparing for College and Careers.

Gault says, "The course for eighth-graders addresses the knowledge, skills and behaviors all students need to be prepared for success in high school, college, career and life."

Assistant Principal Craig Hopple adds, "Students learn about national career clusters and Indiana's College and Career Pathways. They explore what pathways they want to pursue, review graduation plans and develop career plans." Plus, students earn high school credit upon successful completion of these two classes, which they carry with them to high school the following year.



Students Learn the Dangers of Texting Behind the Wheel

By Hannah Gibson, Class of 2020

Bob Garrity likes to make his course as engaging as possible for his eighth-graders. He is one of the Project Based Learning facilitators at the Innovation Academy @ LJH, teaching Integrated Chemistry-Physics (ICP).

One of the projects his students look forward to is a four-week unit on linear motion. "The unit involves several hands-on labs and traditional classroom activities," says Garrity. "But a major component is a group video public service announcement (PSA) known as the 'Don't Text and Drive ICP project.'" Students can use their cell phones, school-issued laptops or whatever digital tools they have access to for the video PSA. But their PSA has to contain proof that they understand linear motion.

"They must calculate how many feet per second a vehicle is traveling at different speeds, how long a text message would take to text and other factors we discuss in class," says Garrity.

Garrity has been teaching science for 35 years, but this is only the third year he has incorporated the "Don't Text and Drive" video element into his ICP class, and he says it likely will not be the last. "At the end of the unit, students present their PSA to the class," explains Garrity. "Most groups are proud of their videos. Not only are students learning about linear motion but also about the dangers of texting and driving, all before they are old enough to get behind the wheel."

Unique Olympic Themed Spirit Assembly Helps Define Happiness

By Dalton Leary, Class of 2019

Spirit assemblies are monthly school-wide events at Lincoln, but what made the January spirit assembly so unique is . . . well, pretty much everything!

"Angela Bronicki and I spearheaded the planning for this event with the help of our team of Innovation Academy facilitators and learners," says seventh-grade humanities facilitator Rachel Anders. "This entire event from start to finish used Project Based Learning within our humanities classrooms."

Humanities students centered their planning around the question, How can you increase happiness and the standard of living within your community? Learners picked an engaging assembly theme they thought the whole school could learn from and relate to: the televised XXIII Olympic Winter Games in South Korea.

On January 26, 2018, the Innovation Academy @ LJH hosted the first ever Olympics themed spirit assembly for all 500-plus students and staff in the gym. Competitions included luge, speed skating, curling, figure skating, snowboarding, hockey, ski jumping, bobsledding and skiing. This was also the first time that positive cheers from the crowd were part of overall scoring to determine who won the games.

According to Anders, "Students gained a better appreciation for what exactly defines happiness; it is not measured by money or possessions but by the experiences we encounter." Students determined they could improve the overall culture within LJHS by hosting an Olympic themed assembly that would include everyone; therefore the event could increase everyone's standard of living.

Bronicki concludes, "Students learned that oftentimes they must be the change they want to see in the world; our world begins at Lincoln."





Innovation Academy @ LJH Brings Home Chemistry Junior Award

Nearly 300 students in grades 3–12 from 50 schools across Michiana came together to show off their science skills at the annual Northern Indiana Regional Science and Engineering Fair at the University of Notre Dame this spring. Three groups of Innovation Academy @ LJHS seventh-graders were privileged to represent Lincoln Jr. High after they placed top of their class at the sixth annual Lincoln Jr. High science fair in January.

The top scoring pairs were:

- First place: Science project "Turn that Brown Upside Down" by Kasi Harner and Elaina McDonald, who studied the use of acids to prevent the oxidation of apples
- Second place: "Milk on the Moove" by Lauren Manges and Emma Rozycki, who tested fat content in whole, 2 percent, and skim milk
- Third place: Joana Jurado and Emily Hernandez, who found various reactions when using gas to blow up balloons

Kasi and Elaina were both awarded the Notre Dame Chemistry Junior Award for their "Turn that Brown Upside Down" project at this year's Northern Indiana Regional Science and Engineering Fair. Both students say their involvement in science this year has piqued their interest in pursuing a career in science or engineering.



Kasi Harner and Elaina McDonald

Learning and Connecting Beyond the Classroom

By Assistant Principal Ryan Welch

It's a given that learning takes place in the classroom setting every day. However, students at Riverside Intermediate School did something last year that allowed for learning to take place in a different setting. All 500-plus fifth- and sixth-graders had the opportunity to go to Miller's Merry Manor Assisted Living in Plymouth to spend time and connect with residents.



Residents at Miller's were also invited to Riverside programs throughout the school year. The idea behind partnership centered around giving back to the Plymouth community while allowing students to have a learning experience unlike one they can gain in the classroom.

While visiting Miller's, the students each took turns reading to residents. Each student spent three to five minutes reading a book, article or excerpt of their choice. Once each student in their group finished reading, there was time for discussion between students and resident. Some of the conversations were centered around what was read, the student's school day, the adult's experiences, career options and the changing community of Plymouth. The conversations were limitless.

Each group of students stayed at the assisted living complex for 30–45 minutes. The only negative comments from both students and residents seemed to be that the visits were too short. Students came back to school excited about what they had learned on their visit. In fact, many have requested a return visit.

With the success of last year's visits, Riverside is rethinking how we can continue to build our partnership with Miller's. These visits are not only for the students to learn by listening to the adults but also a way to practice some of the character traits that Riverside promotes throughout the school year:

- Perseverance
- Respect
- Integrity



- Discipline
- Empathy

On the visits students practice respect in a public setting with a person they don't know who is different from them. Empathy was an area of focus at Riverside last school year, and the students could practice that trait by hearing stories the residents shared. Students also built and felt self-worth and pride by doing something for someone else.

The trip went far beyond talking to and learning from valued members of our community. It built a connection to someone, while also developing skills that will help the students become positive citizens in our community.

Riverside Again a 'School to Watch'

Riverside Intermediate School received its second three-year renewal as an Indiana School to Watch (STW) this past May. The designation is awarded by both the Indiana Middle Level Education Association (IMLEA) and National Forum to Accelerate Middle Grades Reform. The renewal requires a yearlong review to make sure all four domains of the STW criteria are being met, with supporting evidence from a school's curriculum and schedule. The four domains are:

- Academic excellence
- Developmental responsiveness
- Social equity
- Organizational support

A school-wide celebration took place in May when an IMLEA representative from the state visited Riverside Intermediate School to officially deliver the news. Riverside was originally designated as a School to Watch in 2012. In 2015 the designation was renewed, and this past school year the designation was renewed for the second time.

PCSC Superintendent Andy Hartley says the second renewal designation is an honor for the school corporation. "The redesignation is based on a school's strengths and proof of showing continuous improvement. Our team of Riverside administrators and teachers should be proud that their ongoing dedication and efforts are being noticed and celebrated." Hartley says the biggest winners of the redesignation are the students who attend Riverside.

SLED Contributes to Riverside's Engaging Science Curriculum

By Paytyn Dodson, Class of 2019

Riverside Intermediate School is one of only 32 schools in Indiana that has a certified Science Learning through Engineering Design (SLED) program. Riverside became involved with SLED in 2010 when it was launched by Purdue University's colleges of Engineering, Science, Technology, and Education. The National Science Foundation provided a seven-year grant to increase science education by using an integrated, engineering design-based approach.



One of the driving forces behind the SLED program at Riverside is fifth-grade STEM teacher Nikki Rumpler. She says fifth- and sixth-graders and teachers participate in numerous SLED projects throughout the year.

"Occasionally community members are involved as well," says Rumpler. "For example, in May my students participated in our last phase of designing a prosthetic leg. During the lesson, engineers from DePuy and Purdue, an orthopedic surgeon, a staff member who had double hip replacement surgery and a seventh-grade LJH student who has a prosthetic leg were all guests in our classroom."

Rumpler says Riverside teachers work SLED projects into their yearly curriculum. "The SLED design project tends to be one of our science students' favorites; students just seem to love it!"

Other SLED projects this year involved constructing a model roller coaster, a solar tracker, bottle racers, compost columns and a "better candy bag," just to name a few. By incorporating the SLED curriculum, Riverside Intermediate School has been recognized as one of Indiana's STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) certified schools.

Innovation Academy @ RIS Triples Participation in Relay For Life

By Zack Roach, Class of 2020

For the past seven years, the Innovation Academy @ Riverside (RIS) has been raising funds for the Marshall County American Cancer Society Relay For Life. Donations fund cancer research, education, critical patient care services and prevention initiatives.

Riverside humanities facilitator Zane Cooper says, "Giving back and becoming part of something larger than ourselves is the main takeaway and why we continue to raise funds for this cause."

According to Riverside math facilitator Vanessa Zook this is the second year students and staff have taken part in the actual relay event. "One of our major goals this year was to have more students volunteer at the Relay For Life, and we are excited to be able to say we accomplished that goal by three times!" Sixty-two students took part in this year's event.

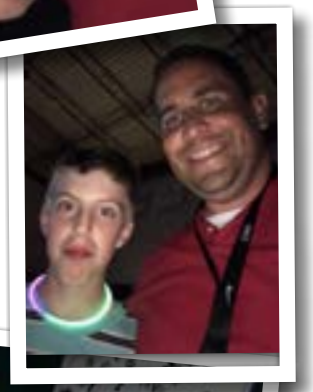
"Last year, our students raised $10,000," says Cooper. "This year, we fell short by $1,000 of tying last year; nevertheless, we're very proud of the outpouring of support students showed by participating."

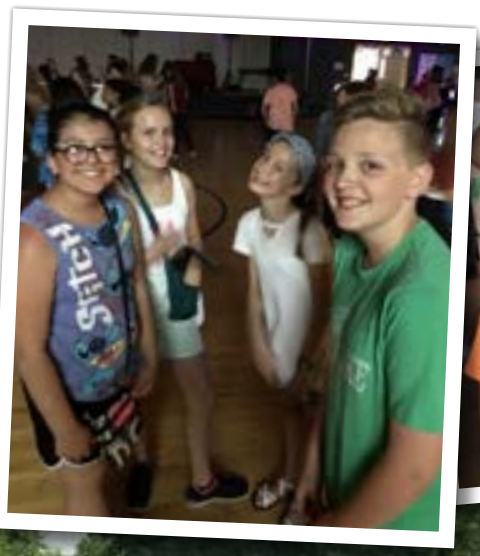
Each year, sixth-grade Innovation Academy @ RIS learners come up with fundraising ideas, then a team of facilitators helps guide students in planning and orchestrating each event. This year's fundraisers were:

- Movie night
- Multiple read-ins
- Spirit dress-up week
- A Renaissance fair
- Halloween haunted hallways
- End-of-the-school-year dance

"This is a great cause to teach our learners about the importance of community," says Cooper. "Teaching students to be more responsible, respectful and more active community members is just as important as the curriculum we teach in the classroom."















Back Row: Mannin Howard, Ethan O'Leary, Freddy Kallenber, Izabelle Hayn and Brandon Ganshorn
Front Row: Jonah Rich, Peyton Miller and Chance Miller

Jefferson's Robotics Club Among the World's Best

By Paytyn Dodson, Class of 2019

The Jefferson Elementary School Jet-iRobots team had an impressive school year, soaring all the way to the VEX IQ World Championship held in Louisville this past spring. The team was one of 400 elementary schools from across the world selected to compete. The nine students who made up the team brought home the VEX IQ Challenge Elementary School Chandra Division Judges' Award and their classmates and teachers could not be more proud of their season. On Friday, May 4, the whole school welcomed the team home in the school's gymnasium.

The club has grown exponentially since its start in 2014. Jefferson information literacy assistant and robotics coach Jenn Shidler says she is extremely proud of her team's performance all season but especially at the world competition. "The judges interviewed each team member and they were only able to choose one team from each division that stood out from the rest for selflessness, grit and determination. They chose our team to receive the award. Each of our nine team members explained how to program their robot and how they work as a team to continue to improve and stand united," says Shidler.

The Jet-iRobots team qualified for the world competition after coming in second at the state competition at Lucus Oil Stadium and first at the LaPorte competition.

Principal Angie Mills says the team would not have been able to travel to the world championship if it wasn't for the community's team effort. "We want our Jet-iRobots parents, Jefferson families and staff, PTO, and community businesses that donated funds to know that their donations made this victory possible for our robotics team. Thank you for your generosity!"

Jefferson Offers a Variety of Preschool Options

The years before kindergarten are crucial for young children. Statistics show that children who attend a high-quality preschool enter kindergarten with better prereading skills, stronger basic math skills and richer vocabularies.

Jefferson preschool programs address much more than academics. Our team of preschool teachers—Angela Hissong, Candace Hunter, Carolina Sanchez, and Elizabeth Schmitt and their six assistants—focus on providing all students with the building blocks necessary to develop social-emotional and cooperative skills. The types of preschools Plymouth schools offer are:

- **Title I:** high-quality instruction and support for students who are considered at risk as determined after on-site readiness screenings.
- **Title III:** high-quality instruction and support for students who have limited English proficiency, determined after on-site readiness screening. Instruction is provided in both Spanish and English by a bilingual certified teacher and assistant.
  - ***Title I and Title III preschool hours are Monday through Friday,*** 9 a.m.–1:30 p.m.
  - The tuition-free programs offer district students transportation to and from school with specialized buses equipped with built-in car seats. Students participate in the breakfast and lunch programs at school.
  - To enroll in preschool for the 2019–20 school year, parents and students must attend the annual preschool roundup night at Jefferson Elementary on April 16, 2019, and complete an application and screening.
  - Children must be between three and five years of age by August 1 to attend.
- ***Integrated Preschool:*** Provides high-quality, partial day, specialized instruction for students who are designated as developmentally delayed after comprehensive on-site evaluations alongside tuition students who serve as role models.
  - **Morning Program:** 8:30–11 a.m.
  - **Afternoon Program:** 12:15–2:45 p.m.
  - For ongoing enrollment, parents should contact Joint Educational Services in Special Education (JESSE) to schedule a classroom-based assessment. Students with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) receive transportation within the PCSC boundary.
  - Children must be between three and five years of age.



If you are interested in more information about our various programs, contact Jefferson Elementary and complete an online application on the PCSC registration website to be placed on the waiting list. Space is limited. The school year begins on Monday, Aug. 13, and ends Friday, May 24.

Community Circles Make a Big Impact at Jefferson



Jefferson social worker Brenda Lewis is sold on the power and importance of classroom community circles. Community circles were implemented this past school year, and Lewis has noticed that her Jefferson colleagues are sold as well.

"The model is built around a framework of core values, such as the dignity and worth of each person, respect, understanding, compassion, honesty, courage and trust," says Lewis, who researched the concept and proposed to Jefferson school administrators that teachers incorporate the model into their classrooms.

"The actual circles look a little different in each class. But no matter the shape, the activity is about building relationships when a class gathers in a circle setting," says Principal Angie Mills. The growth she has observed in both peer and student–staff relationships has been heartwarming and inspiring.

Third-grade teacher Geoff Scheetz says, "Our circle looks like a big oval made up of students plus me, speaking and listening to one another. The few minutes we take to gather each morning lets me strengthen relationships with students by learning more about them individually. Students sense that their opinions and ideas are valued. We also seek ways to resolve problems if students are dealing with some type of conflict."

According to second-grade teacher Erin Stidham, "Students love sharing how they are feeling or something personal about themselves. They can acknowledge the emotions they feel and why they are feeling that way. Talking about issues between students has really helped. They can use their words much easier after talking in our circle."

"Teachers facilitating community circles is a great way for educators to focus every day on their students' emotional and social learning," says Lewis. "This helps students better understand and express their feelings in and out of school."

To read more about how community circles are playing a role in Plymouth schools see page 11.

Every Day Is a Read Aloud Day

By Anna Hite, Class of 2018



Menominee second-grade teacher Allison Brubaker reads a chapter book aloud to the students.

Imagine for a moment students at Menominee Elementary School gathering in a spot on the carpet at the front of the room as second-grade teacher Allison Brubaker reads a chapter book that is not part of their regular required reading instruction.

"It's so exciting to see how much the students love this time of day. Many say it's their favorite part of our day," says Brubaker. Reading aloud is one of the most important things parents and teachers can do with children. It builds foundational skills; introduces vocabulary; provides a model of fluent, expressive reading; and helps children recognize what reading for pleasure is all about.

"We start by going over what we learned from the book the day before and talk about what they think happens next," says Brubaker. "Through our discussion, you can see just how much critical thinking is going on in their brains as they analyze what they are hearing."

Brubaker adds, "Taking time to help students develop a lifelong love of reading is the ultimate goal." And it's one of the main reasons she has incorporated the practice of reading aloud every day in her classroom.

This school year Brubaker will teach third grade at Menominee. She plans to include reading aloud in her new classroom as well.

'Growth Mindset' Transforms Menominee Classroom

By Dalton Leary, Class of 2019



Carla Knotts

Carla Knotts, third-grade teacher at Menominee, is a true believer in the impact that growth mindset has in the classroom. "When students believe they can get smarter, they put in extra time and effort, and that leads to higher achievement," says Knotts. It's a philosophy she incorporates into her classroom every day. "I'm constantly saying to my students, 'Have grit and don't quit!'"

Principal Steven Boyer brought the idea of growth mindset to his staff in 2014 when he introduced Mary Cay Ricci's book, *Mindsets in the Classroom*, which explains what a growth mindset means and looks like in classrooms.

Ever since Knotts learned about the growth mindset she has incorporated "the culture" into her classroom. "The culture is a belief system that asserts that intelligence is a malleable quality and can be developed," Knotts says. "Learners with a growth mindset believe they can learn just about anything. As a teacher, you believe that all students can demonstrate significant growth and all students deserve opportunities for challenge."

Knotts continues, "I make a point to teach that mistakes are a chance to grow and that their brain can be developed by making mistakes and learning from them. Students need to understand that their efforts and difficulties are paths, not roadblocks, to learning."

Menominee parent Pamela Christiansen, whose daughter Sarah was in Knotts's class last year, says the classroom culture encouraged and motivated her children. "Knotts also taught my son Jack two years ago. Third grade is the first year students take ISTEP+ (Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress Plus), so I know that having a teacher who instills this growth mindset is a great motivator for students."

The Power of Community Circles in the Classroom

Last year, Plymouth Community School Corporation (PCSC) social worker Brenda Lewis presented the idea of having community circles at the beginning of the day at both Washington Discovery Academy (WDA) and Jefferson Elementary. Both schools immediately implemented the concept.

Lewis, who has been a social worker at both K–4 schools for the past 16 years, says, "I was excited that the administration and teaching staff saw the immense value in adding community circles to their everyday routine." When used regularly, circle gatherings help young people:

- Develop appreciation of self and a sense of belonging
- Feel empathy with other class members
- Become empowered to use positive problem-solving behaviors



The circle process is a communication tool that can be extremely beneficial in building team morale. Lewis says, "It's a great way to focus on social and emotional learning every day. More students are coming to us lacking skills like how to handle stressful situations in their personal lives and at school."

Kristin Harter, second-grade facilitator at WDA, says, "Since we started doing circles in my room I've seen a change in how students interact and solve problems. They now have the tools to express their feelings in an appropriate way and solve their own problems."

WDA kindergarten facilitator Liz Holsopple says, "Incorporating community circles reinforces to students that teachers and peers care about their emotional well-being. It gives us a way to discuss very basic problem-solving skills."

According to WDA fourth-grade facilitator Bryan Kratzer, "Community circles set the tone for the day. Students can share thoughts and feelings in a safe environment before the rigorous school day begins."

Lewis adds, "I've always felt strongly that we need to educate students academically but also address social and emotional skills. Using community circles gives us the environment to do so."

PCSC is working to incorporate the concept of community circles at every level this school year.

School Garden a Great Place to Grow Learning

The school garden at Washington Discovery Academy (WDA) has been bearing produce and educational learning opportunities for the past four years. WDA Principal Lauren Cooper says each year the garden is rich in endless hands-on options for her K–4 staff and their learners.

What they plant varies from year to year. "This year we had strawberries and a variety of vegetables that you would find in a garden salad," Cooper explains. "Students also planted various flowers, so last fall some of our staff and students enjoyed fresh cut flowers in their classrooms."



WDA second-grade facilitator Kristin Harter says her students used the garden to learn about a plant's life cycle. "They also discovered how bees and butterflies help plants and the environment," says Harter. "We then watched classroom caterpillars turn into butterflies. We researched



what types of flowers attract butterflies, planted those and then released the butterflies into the garden."

Kindergarten students also put their green thumbs to work. Cooper invites WDA students and their parents to visit the garden. She says, "They can pick produce for home use or donate to a local food pantry."



Fourth Grade Learns About Civil War by Creating Barn Quilts

By Alissa Knapp, Class of 2019

Barn quilts help tell stories and celebrate history about families and culture. This year, for the third consecutive year, all 90 fourth-graders at Washington Discovery Academy (WDA) got the opportunity to make their own barn quilts.

Amanda Dreibelbis, a WDA fourth-grade teacher, says, "The purpose of this project was to teach students about the Civil War and how slaves used quilts to relay messages to other escaping slaves. We wanted students to make a connection between quilts of that time and the barn quilts they see around Marshall County."

Teacher Kim Riddle explains that learning about the Civil War is a fourth-grade state standard. "The hands-on barn quilt element allows the material they are learning to stay with them," she says. "Students created their own barn quilt to honor someone special to them or to convey a message they wanted to leave for others.



Sydney Manuwal proudly holds up her barn quilt.



Kim Riddle's fourth-grade class proudly displays the barn quilts they made.

The quilts were made on a one-foot-square piece of plywood. Students drafted their design on the plywood and then painted their masterpiece. This year students got to take their barn quilts home.



WDA Third Grade
'Floods the Park with Color'

By Yessica Renteria, Class of 2019

The third-grade class at Washington Discovery Academy (WDA) has been hosting a 5K run for the past three years. The event takes place during May in Plymouth's Centennial Park and proceeds go to a good cause. Last year, the third grade raised $1,400 to benefit U.S military members. This year's Flood the Park with Color 5K raised the same amount.

The race is planned and executed from beginning to end by the third-grade class. WDA third-grade facilitator Alyssa Mentz says, "This year, 75 third-graders from three classrooms collaborated to make our Flood the Park with Color 5K a success."

"In February the flood hit the Plymouth community hard," says WDA third-grade facilitator Beth Corbett. "When we were able to come back to school our third-graders decided that the 5K proceeds this year would go to the Plymouth Park Department's flood relief fund. The third-graders came up with the name and selected one of their peer's designs as the winning artwork that was printed on this year's 5K T-shirts.





Hundreds Tour Webster 'Wax Museum'

By Zack Roach, Class of 2020

Inventors, sports stars, civil rights icons and dozens of other celebrities gathered in the Webster Elementary School gymnasium on a Friday in April. Hundreds of students, parents and teachers stopped by throughout the day to learn more about the famous people on hand. How did this happen?

The celebrities weren't the actual people; they were 70 second-graders from three combined classrooms, dressed in character and presenting a "live wax museum" for parents and classmates. This is the fifth year the second-grade class has done this project.

Each student selected a historical figure or someone who has made an impact on the world, past or present. Teacher Carrie Swain says, "Students extensively researched the person and his or her life accomplishments. Then the second-graders created a PowerPoint presentation, wrote a paper, presented their material and dressed as that person."

"The main purpose was to better prepare the second-graders for the research and presentation process," says teacher Susan Szucs. "The students worked really hard on their projects, and during the actual event students just came alive."

"Older students love to tour the live wax museum and see the presentations because they remember doing this activity themselves and can relate to the nervousness and excitement," says Swain. Overall, the museum presentation challenges student independence, creativity, research and presentation skills and is many students' favorite project of the year.















Revamped VIP Day Makes Room for More Guests

Hundreds of parents, grandparents and other very important people made special arrangements to attend Webster Elementary School's revamped VIP day last fall. Principal Carrie McGuire says, "It was very touching to witness the joy VIPs bring to our students by simply walking in the door!"

In years past, Webster has presented an hour-long, school-wide K–4 music program in the gym on VIP Day. Because of gym capacity limits, however, McGuire and the staff decided to test a new format last year. "We staggered the schedule for guests to arrive based on grade levels," she says. "Instead of a performance in the gym, VIPs spent an hour with their special student in the classroom to see where they learn, to meet their teacher and to spend quality time together."



Hundreds of VIPs enjoy the day with Webster students.



Larry McCollough and fourth-grade grandson Reed Selner enjoy VIP day together at Webster.

Students planned a jam-packed agenda for their guests that included a small snack, interactive games and a tour of the annual book fair in the library. Retired Plymouth High School agriculture teacher Larry McCollough says, "It's been years since I've been in an elementary school; I really enjoyed spending the day with my grandson, Reed Selner."

McCollough was impressed with the flexible furniture at Webster and the personalized learning style teachers and students use daily. Reed says he was most excited to explore the book fair with his grandpa and show him what he was learning in fourth grade.

The new format was such a success, McGuire says Webster will continue to host future VIP days the same way.

Webster Warriors Keep JA Trophy

Fundraising efforts for the past two years have won the Warriors the right for two back-to-back years to display the Marshall County Junior Achievement (JA) traveling trophy at Webster Elementary School!

Webster raised $746 this past school year, and during 2016–17 the Warriors raised $1,200. Both years Webster came in first for the most donations collected out of all the teams that participated in the annual Marshall County Junior Achievement Achieve-A-Bowl fundraiser.

Webster staff and students found out they were the front-runners on May 1 while at the Achieve-A-Bowl event at Quick's Lanes in Plymouth. Principal Carrie McGuire says, "Both years we raised funds the same way. Students had a Pajama and Slipper Day. Any Warrior who made a $2 donation got their name entered into a drawing to be on the Webster student bowling team at the grand finale Achieve-A-Bowl event."



Joel Elekani, Dante Silva, Taylonna Shankle, Ella Glaub, and Destiny Hernandez



McGuire says the Webster staff also raised money the same way both years. "We allowed the staff to wear jeans for an entire week, and they came through both years for this great cause."

The Junior Achievement nonprofit organization is funded by the local business community, foundations, individuals and special events. Achieve-A-Bowl is one of JA's biggest yearly fundraisers. Volunteers provide education each year for more than 2,200 students in Marshall County.

McGuire says, "We're extremely appreciative of all the local businesses, community leaders and parents who year after year donate their time working in partnership to allow Webster students to benefit from JA educational programs.



Where Are They Now?

PHS Matthew Gidley, Class of 1999

By Anna Hite, Class of 2018

Matthew Gidley graduated from Plymouth High School (PHS) in 1999. He earned a BS in management/business administration from the United States Air Force Academy where he was selected to be a pilot for the U.S. Air Force. Gidley holds the title of Lieutenant Colonel and is currently the CV-22 Director of Operations and Engineering at the V-22 Joint Program Office at Naval Air Station Patuxent River, Maryland.

He acts as the Air Force Special Operations Command's aircraft subject matter expert/liaison for the United States Marine Corp, Navy, Special Operations Command, and Air Force Life Cycle Management Center. He also directs a staff of 18 joint military, civilian and contractors that prioritize the workload for 487 government engineers working in support of the annual $7.3 billion program.



Lt. Col. Matthew Gidley and his family

Gidley has been deployed seven times throughout his military career and currently has more than 2,300 flight hours, 544 of which are combat hours. He also has qualified as a U.S. military M-4 Carbine and M-9 Pistol weapons expert. Gidley has been awarded nine Air Medals. The medal, created in 1942, is awarded for single acts of heroism or meritorious achievement while participating in aerial flight.

In 2015, Gidley was nominated by Air Force Special Operations Command for the Cheney Award for a Special Operations mission in eastern Africa. In 2017, he was awarded the American Helicopter Society Frederick L. Feinberg Award, which is presented to the pilot/crew of a vertical flight aircraft who demonstrates outstanding skill or achievement during the preceding year.

Gidley's wife, Lisa, is a PHS 2000 graduate. They have three children, Madeline, 6; Albin, 3; and a newborn son, Rhys.

Where Are They Now?

Ladene I. Mendoza, Class of 2007

By Erik Galindo-Zelaya, Class of 2019

Ladene I. Mendoza, Class of 2007, received her bachelor's in psychology from Indiana University. She earned her JD, cum laude, and a corporate and commercial law graduate certificate from the IU Robert H. McKinney School of Law. She was awarded the faculty prize as the most outstanding graduate for scholarship, leadership and service.



Mendoza is an associate attorney in the Barnes & Thornburg LLP Indianapolis office and a member of the Litigation Department. She was born and raised in Plymouth and attended Plymouth schools for her entire K–12 education.

"I've wanted to be an attorney since second grade," says Mendoza. But it wasn't until high school that she realized she had the potential to excel in school and make her dream reality. "Both my parents are immigrant factory workers, and we never discussed the idea of college. My 10th-grade science teacher completely changed my life. Lori McClellan thought I was smarter than I was, and all it took was for one person to see that I had potential for me to see it in myself."

After that, she applied herself. Her grade point average skyrocketed and she was quickly enrolled in several honors classes at PHS. Mendoza says, "Eventually I graduated with honors and was the first in my family to attend college."

Her advice to current students is, "Be proud of where you come from, and don't let your circumstances define how far you can go." Mendoza is passionate about mentoring and speaking to minority students about education. She is married to 2007 Plymouth grad Joe Scott. They travel back to Plymouth often to see family and friends.

PHS Student Raises Funds and Awareness for Special Olympics Indiana

CeCe Robinson, a soon-to-be senior at Plymouth High School, was nominated and selected to be a member of the Indiana High School Athletic Association Student Advisory Committee. The committee is made up of 18 high school athletes from across Indiana who represent more than 160,000 student-athletes in the Hoosier state. The committee's goal is to raise money and awareness for Special Olympics Indiana, as well as plan a student leadership conference held each summer, and work state finals for all sports. Throughout the year, CeCe raised awareness as well as $2,000 for Special Olympics Indiana.

CeCe says, "I met my fundraising goal thanks to our students, staff, and community. Sometime this fall when school resumes I will be able to bring home the Champions Together Unified School Banner for Plymouth High School for the very first time. The banner is a symbol of inclusion and unity within a school."

Plymouth High School Principal Jim Condon says, "We are very proud of what CeCe was able to accomplish this past school year. She not only helped educate our students about Special Olympics Indiana, but she educated our staff and the community as well."

CeCe worked with PCSC administration and staff members were allowed to wear jeans for an entire week with a donation of $10. She also held a Special Olympics basketball clinic in December for students and the community. Champions Together is a collaborative partnership between the IHSAA and Special Olympics Indiana that promotes servant leadership among student-athletes while changing their lives as well as the lives of those with intellectual and physical disabilities.





School Board:

Todd Samuelson, President
Larry Holloway, Vice-President
Melissa Christiansen, Secretary
Larry Pinkerton, Member
Robin Cupka, Member

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(L-R) Larry Holloway, Larry Pinkerton, Robin Cupka, Melissa Christiansen and Todd Samuelson

Mission Statement

Plymouth schools commit to doing whatever it takes to maximize the academic and social achievement of every individual as measured by state and community standards.

Core Values

Commitment to Students

- We see that decisions are based on what is best for students.
- We do whatever it takes.
- We utilize strategies that work.

Caring

- We respect and nurture one another.
- We value individual diversity.
- We demonstrate compassion, empathy and tolerance.

High Expectations

- We have a challenging curriculum.
- We differentiate instruction.
- We communicate expectations.
- We prepare students to compete globally.

Team Player

- We make time to collaborate.
- We work cooperatively for the good of the whole.
- We help others in times of need.
- We embrace diverse thoughts and ideas.
- We build positive relationships.

Integrity

- We follow through (walk the talk).
- We are accountable / dependable.
- We are honest with one another.
- We behave honorably.

Enjoyment

- We celebrate success.
- We actively engage students in the classroom.
- We provide positive feedback.
- We promote a sense of belonging.

2018-2019

