

THE BLOTTER

Let Us Learn

Students join with local nonprofit aimed to help spread a healthy community

By Ela Kays

Let Us Learn's goal is to help families have access to healthy food through many different ways.

A greenhouse that helps with growing the food is here at NAHS, attached to the ELC building. During designated days, students can help plant and water the foods already growing in the greenhouse.

Let Us Learn is a nonprofit organization in Floyd County. They're in eight different schools in NAFCS including S. Ellen Jones, Fairmont, Mount Tabor, Georgetown, St. Mary's of the Knobs, Green Valley, NAHS, and they're going to be at Slate Run.

Senior Jesus Ortiz says he has had a passion for plants in recent years.

"Being able to come out here and just waste time, go around, and have fun and actually doing something, then thinking that's actually going to go somewhere; it's nice," Ortiz said.

A lot of kids like to help work out in the greenhouse at the ELC building, it's a chance to be able to step away to work in a garden and be able to learn how to share and take care of freshly grown vegetables and plants.

Junior Kaitlyn Caffee helps in the greenhouse, and said she has found enjoyment in taking care of plants.

"My favorite part [of working in the greenhouse] is learning to care for something other than myself," Caffee said. "Instead of caring for an animal or something, I'm caring for a living plant."

Let Us Learn has a veggie rescue program supported by Crossroads Community Church in New Albany where they



distribute food. Within the growing season between May and October, they glean. Gleaning is the process of gathering (leftover grain or other produce) after a harvest, according to Oxford language. Every school with a greenhouse that works with Let Us Learn helps support the veggie rescue by growing the food that's sold.

On Saturday mornings, during the growing season, they bring it to the church and line it up like it's a farmers market. Last year alone, Let Us Learn was able to donate over 5,000 pounds of healthy food to the community. It's a pay what you can so if you don't have the funds for it and it's donation-based where people can take home healthy, locally grown produce.

There is more than just food distribution, Let Us Learn has multiple classes to help educate people about food and growing healthy and nourishing foods.

Gina Brown, the founder and executive director for Let Us Learn, has been working with food for over 50 years and still finds joy in helping others through food.

"You learn about how to plant a tomato from seed from a literal tomato seed to the plant to when you are nurturing that plant and maintaining that plant until harvest time," Brown said. "You're never going to lose that knowledge right, you will always be able to do that."

They have after-school garden clubs they work with summertime veggie giveaways, veggie rescue, and a meal prep class where they offer a meal for free.

Heather Swinney is the program educator and runs the after-school garden clubs in Green Valley and Georgetown Elementary. She also does plant science lessons in



Senior Jesus Ortiz waters freshly potted plants. Ortiz and other ELC students are working with Let Us Learn to grow vegetables in the NAHS greenhouse.

some of the schools they work with.

"I have a lot of favorite memories of just getting to be the person who helps kids have experiences for the first time," Swinney said. "I've been with kids who taste cucumbers for the first time. A lot of kids [who are] tasting fresh pineapple for the first time in their life. Getting to help impact kids with healthy, good, new experiences."

Let Us Learn's programs work with a lot of different ages from elderly people donating and buying fresh plants to elementary students learning photosynthesis and how to keep growing vegetables strong.

On March 2, they're hosting an event of gratitude to celebrate their volunteers and community partners with activities and light snacks from 2-4pm in the ELC building and greenhouse.

Mental health matters

Four teachers awarded thousands of dollars in mental health grants

By Stella Klaus

Four NAHS teachers were awarded mental health grants from the New Albany Floyd County Education Foundation. They have awarded a total of \$47,000 to 18 NAFC teachers for mental health resources and materials at school. The Education Foundation is a non-profit organization, so they fund their projects through private donors, local grants, and local businesses.

“We work in partnership with the school corporation New Albany Floyd County Schools and we fundraise and then invest that money back into programming and initiatives that support NAFC students, teachers, and schools,” NAFC Education Foundation executive director Tyler Bliss said.

Bliss has been the executive director for more than 12 years, overseeing all of the countless activities of the organization. He also works with their volunteer led board of directors that oversees the work that the foundation does.

“We fundraise all year long and then that money in turn supports programs like Great Classroom Grants, Blessings in a Backpack, Imagination Library, Junior Achievement, elementary field trips, and new for us this year-our mental health grants,” Bliss said.

According to some surveying done by the directors of the foundation, many teachers and counselors believed that there is not enough access to mental health resources for students.

“There are more needs than they have resources. So the board of directors decided to budget this year in our first year \$50,000 to give out to educators in the district that would support mental health projects and mental health resources,” Bliss said.

After receiving an email about the opportunity, teachers were able to apply for the grant. With a volunteer-led committee that has experience in the mental health field the foundation made some projects more of a priority than others. The NAHS projects that were chosen include Mrs. Charbonneau, Mrs. Reiger, Mr. Upton, and Mrs. Gleibe.

Special Education Facilitator Kristi Charbonneau was awarded \$900 to buy products to help kids with sensory and anxiety issues here at NAHS.

“I know that mental health is a big deal, especially now, it just seems that mental health in teens continues to decrease and it concerns me a lot so anything I can do to help kids and to make life a little easier; that’s why I became a teacher,” Charbonneau said.

She used the \$900 to buy stress balls, calm strips, noise canceling earbuds, and even a breathing buddha to help calm students down. Although she is a special education facilitator, these materials are for anyone that needs mental health tools.

“I hope that [students] realize that this is a place they could go for support like a trusted adult. I can’t fix everything, but I have tools that can maybe make things just the tiniest bit better,” Charbonneau said.

Special Education teacher Grace

Reiger is creating a welcome packet for incoming freshmen with the \$1000 she was awarded.

“I want them to know that they’re welcome, we value them having chosen NAHS as their choice,” Reiger said.

Reiger says this is important, especially for freshmen coming to a very big new school, because it can make everyone feel more included and feeling included can help students want to show up and be at school.

“Not only will it improve their mental health, their attendance, their behaviors, I think that it goes one step further and it makes us stand out in terms of where kids want to be,” Reiger said.

Theatre tech teacher Robert Upton will be hosting a few after school woodworking sessions in early May, teaching kids how to create bird houses, bird feeders, and other simple crafts.

“I have a lot of students who are affected by stress and anxiety and I find myself that when I’m working on some piece of scenery or something to do with building I forget all about my own stress,” Upton said.

Upton says he plans to create things like bird houses because they will be simple projects that can keep students’ minds off of the stress of school life or home life.

“I think if I have bird houses or feeders or something that kind of ties to nature that they can not only relax building it, but they can take it home and they can watch the birds nest in it or feed in it and they can just keep enjoying it,” Upton said.

Mental health is a concern in high school students especially after the isolations and lockdowns of Covid-19. The prevalence of anxiety and depression increased by 25% during the first

year of the pandemic, according to the World Health Organization. While these projects may not solve the whole issue, little things can go a long way.

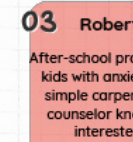
“\$50,000 in the scope of an entire school corporation with 11,500 students and 16 campuses is not enough to combat all the needs that exist,” Bliss said. “I know that the response has been very very positive from our first year of funding these grants but that there are greater needs that exist and so the board of directors I know will be evaluating the success of these projects in the future and looking at ways we can extend the program.”



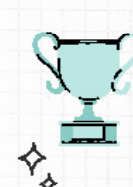
01 Kristi Charbonneau
Funds for special needs students with sensory or anxiety issues. Let your counselor know if you need these resources.



02 Grace Reiger
Creation of a school-wide freshman Welcome Packet/Outreach Program. Freshman will receive a packet at orientation in addition to a card each quarter starting next year.



03 Robert Upton
After-school program teaching kids with anxiety and stress simple carpentry. Let your counselor know if you are interested in this.



04 Shelby Gleibe
Mental performance coaching for high school girls through Andrew Grantz through Mindset Solutions.

Annual blood drive a success

By Isabella Kelly

For several years, as the spring comes in at full speed, the Red Cross affiliated blood drive has come to NAHS. It's chance for students to give back to their community, and is one of the most impactful things a student can do.

"This year we had a grand total - if you add the fall and the spring - of 181 [people] sign up, and of that 181 about 150 donated blood," organizer and senior counselor Eddie Bobbitt said. "Out of the 12 high schools in southern Indiana last year to hold blood drives, NAHS has the largest and most successful one."

Bobbitt, who runs a nonprofit for children with cancer, is the main organizer of the event. Before the school year starts, he communicates with the Red Cross when the blood drives will be, and helps set them up. After every blood drive is finished the Red Cross works to distribute the blood, both in Louisville and southern Indiana. Blood is especially needed because there has been a national shortage, particularly of rare blood types like AB- and AB+, according to *WHAS11*.

"I've been inspired by how many students who have donated for the first time and who have made comments about donating and being scared to donate," Bobbitt said. "However, they did so because they know it's the right thing to do. I find that very inspiring

that our students are already thinking like that, it's only going to help them as they move forward."

Bobbitt says this year's blood count at 87 units has been one of the most successful ones they've ever had. The amount of blood donated even compares to the competition that was held last year to donate blood between FCHS and NAHS to be rewarded the Lifesaver Trophy.

"[Donating blood] was honestly not that bad because I've had my blood drawn multiple times, so it is not that bad for me," junior Kaylinna Young said. "A lot of people mention that it hurts when they stick the needle in you, but I don't think it is that bad."

Young says that the process is very fast and it is also very welcoming. The nurses who take the blood are very warmhearted, and understand how the people might feel when extracting blood. Although it might hurt for some, people who have donated say it shouldn't deter a student from giving the life-saving blood. The process has made it so Young wants to donate it again, as she did with this blood drive, as she also did it in the fall.

"I know that donating blood goes to people who need it," senior Oliver Trueblood said. "So when I knew that there was a blood drive and I qualified to give blood, I was like, why not do it if it goes to help people?"

Among the students that donated blood this spring drive, Trueblood also mentions that it doesn't hurt, despite what many prospective donors seem to think.

According to him, it was a very positive experience to donate blood, and anything that is intimidating will pass. And, as he notes, it will go to people that desperately need the blood and wouldn't be able to live without it.

Math teacher Brookelyn Visker needed blood when she was going through chemotherapy in March 2019 while battling breast cancer. After having a life-threatening infection that affected her blood and platelets, she was desperately in need of blood. After all, she couldn't fight off the infection if she didn't receive the blood. The blood that New Albany students helped donate essentially saved her life, and shows just how vitally important the blood drive has been.

"I was in the hospital at this time and my mom kind of noticed that I was not



On February 5, NAHS hosted their annual spring blood drive. Along with the fall drive, there was a total count of 87 units of blood donated this year.

talking and was very pale, so she just kind of let the nurses know 'Hey, you might want to check her blood count'," Visker said. "Whenever I received it, I just got gradually better and then I started talking again, so you can feel a difference when you don't have blood in your body and all the platelets because your body needs blood to survive."

The next NAHS blood drive will be in the fall. However, the regional Red Cross Center at Louisville offers multiple dates a week to donate blood.

There are very few requirements to donate blood, like a donor has to be at least 17 - or 16 with parental consent - and a minimum weight for how tall someone is, according to the *Indiana Department of Health*.



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The Cost of a Good Time

As teens make plans for prom, the expenses add up

By Autumn Gullett

T-minus one month and 30 days until prom! Prom is the rave and the place to be in high school. The movies beef it up and make it out to be the most extravagant, perfect, and important event of being in high school. Yet, how do all the costs that come in real life but not the movies add up?

“On average a girl will spend about \$900-1000 on their big night,” according to Amarra. Some students can overlook the costs and focus on the fun.

“I could never exclude the dancing aspect of prom. It’s so fun to dance with all of my friends and get to enjoy the night together under the lights with all of us in sparkly dresses and nice suits,” senior Madyson Lee said. “It allows us to let loose and have fun. Dancing is definitely my favorite part of prom and I wouldn’t let the price of the ticket determine whether or not I enjoy those

moments because money always comes back but memories won’t be there unless you make them.”

Some would say much of the fun is getting ready and taking photos. It’s no secret that girls typically take a lot longer than guys to get ready.

“Most girls prepare months before, making appointments for hair, makeup, nails, tans, etc. On the actual day most girls spend all day getting ready, while guys don’t take but maybe up to two hours,” according to Quora.

“I would say I spend most of the day getting ready for prom,” Lee said. “As a girl, I have to worry about my hair, makeup, and nails. All of this is time consuming. And then when you add in the time spent for pictures and dinner, the day is pretty much booked with prepping for the night.”

Getting ready, going to dinner and having photos taken --all of these costs

begin to add up. Driving from appointments to appointments to destination to destination is also expensive since most places for services aren’t close to each other or where the prom venue is.

“Not only do these destinations cost money, but they also cost time, leaving many girls wondering if it’s even worth it with the rising costs of dresses. The costs of prom dresses have risen over the last decade with the average girl spending around \$300-600 on the perfect dress,” according to Lancelot.

“I do think that some prom expenses are outrageous because you shouldn’t have to be paying 400+ dollars to rent things like a tux for a school dance,” senior Brinna Daily said.

Some people have begun to change from getting their makeup and hair done to doing their own to save some money and even their time.

“Prom hair costs can range from \$30

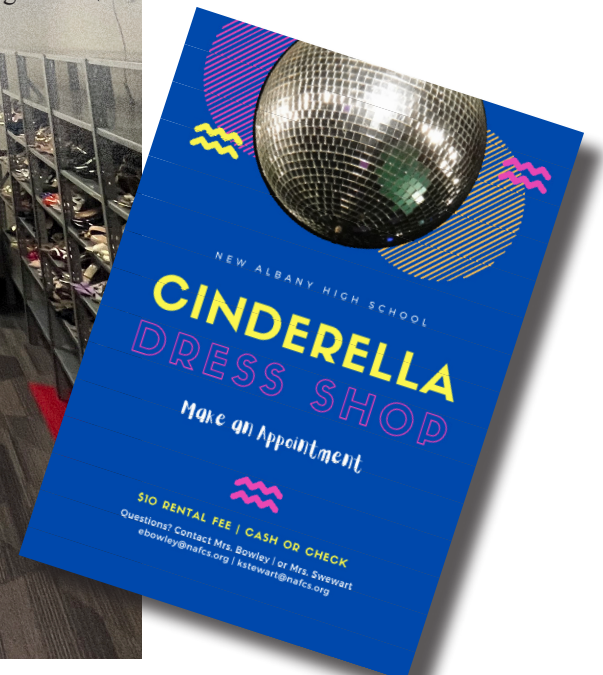
to 300,” according to HAIR by L’oreal.

“Personally, I do my own hair and makeup for prom because it is cheaper and I prefer doing it myself,” Lee said. “Hair and makeup can cost a lot of money so I would rather do that myself rather than not going out to dinner or buying the dress that I want.”

Even though costs can be outrageous there are still things that teens would rather spend the big dollars on than to get rid of it.

“When preparing for prom, I would rather spend the money than exclude making sure my hair is nice and was done how I wanted or going to dinner with my date or a group of friends we are going with,” senior Tavontea Johnson said.

This year’s prom will be held at The Refinery in Jeffersonville (formerly Kye’s) on April 27. Ticket information can be found in the announcements.



Targeting Teens

Vaping is advertised to help anxiety and depression, but research shows that is not the case

By Lucy Quillo

Every day for years vape companies have targeted teens to vape nicotine, one of the main claims is that it can help anxiety and everyday struggles, but research shows they are wrong.

By 2016, nearly four out of five middle and high school students, or more than 20 million youth, saw at least one e-cigarette advertisement, encouraging them to vape nicotine, according to Truth Initiative. Opposing messages are out there too.

"I see around four nicotine ads a day telling people to stop vaping. Majority around the school building, mainly outside of the restrooms. All of the ads are passive aggressive," senior Jenna Beard said.

Teens and young adults have been targeted for years and it is still continuing. They are targeted because companies know children have a higher risk rate to get addicted and keep buying.

Truth Initiative reports that 81% of people between the ages of 15 and 24 started vaping to help with stress and anxiety. Many false advertisements out there get people to believe it helps.

"I started vaping when I was around 12 years old, I started because growing up with my dad I was around drugs a lot, and it seemed normal to me," one senior said.

Numerous studies show troubling links between vaping nicotine and having worsened signs of anxiety and

depression, also according to Truth Initiative.

"A lot of students use vapes to cope with whatever is going on in their life, however on the other side there are a lot of students who just use it just to experiment," Assistant Principal Josh Nall said. "The access the kids have to it is unbelievable. The hope with the Our Place program is to help these kids get educated on what these vapes are doing to you."

Our Place is a local non-profit organization that helps provide education and services to people who need help with addiction. It is more than a vaping program but that is what most teens and young adults are having trouble with now.

When caught with a vaping device at NAHS you are given the help of The Early Intervention Program (more information to the right).

"Five years ago if you would have asked me, I didn't think children could get addicted to these, but now, yes, 100%, kids can get addicted," Nall said.

While one might argue that vaping does help in the

moment, feeling different, out of your body is not helpful. It causes you to feel a moment of fake happiness, to drop you back down lower than you were before each hit according to Truth Initiative.

The FDA says that nicotine exposure during adolescence can disrupt normal brain development, and the CDC says

younger people who use e-cigarettes are a lot more likely to start smoking cigarettes in the future.

"Kids have been ending up in the ER, with lung issues." Tobacco prevention and Cessation Coordinator Rhonda Alstott said.

"We try to give accurate information because there is so much misinformation out there, Alstott said. "Kids do not understand the seriousness of getting addicted to a substance. Nicotine is highly addictive, we give you protective factors. We show slides enduring what different drugs do to the brain."


Truth Initiative says that 56.1% of people who quit vaping do it for their health, whether it be mental or physical. More and more people are quitting due to health issues, but the people that still haven't had that effect will continue getting access to this product.

There is so much advertising that goes into these vapes saying they are good for you. Some of the tactics include scholarships over vaping essays, social media ads everywhere, or even sponsoring concerts. Vaping is everywhere whether you realize it or not the risk of vaping has always been there.

"We used to identify the youth by who is at risk, what we call social indicators, like who has low income, parents who use substances, put you at a greater risk," Alstott said. "If you have trauma it definitely puts you at risk for substance abuse disorders, but all youth today is at a risk. Students come in from all walks of life. I see students who struggle to get their credits in, and I also see students who are in all honors classes."

There is a lot of advertisement and also a lot of accessibility to vapes. Young adults and teens need to be

"Now that I am older, I have learned the effects of vaping and how it affects your body, when I started I knew nothing."
- Anonymous senior



OUR PLACE
Early Intervention Program

This program is to help children, teens, and adults to stop their drug, alcohol, and other substance abuse. There is an hour long meeting, that is once a week, for ten weeks. An intake is required at the beginning, another one is taken at the end to make sure you are doing better and getting the help you are there for. Any extra family members are welcome to come to the meetings as well, even just for knowledge on the subject.

taught that there are good long term ways to help your mental health. It is not the new cool thing to do, it is hurtful and you are killing your body, and not allowing your brain to work.

"It is unbelievable, I'm not sure there's many places out there that are carding, and the street access as well," Nall said.



Back to the...

2000s

As we dive deeper into 2024, more and more trends and items are getting popular and more 2000s items are getting lost with time, anywhere from Monster High Generation one dolls to Megamind and Cars. Here are some NAHS student's childhood favorites!

By Kaytlin Cahill



"One retro thing that I remember from my childhood is an American girl doll. This was important to my childhood because it was the only toy that I played with and was the only thing that entertained me."
Cali Kruer
Grade 9

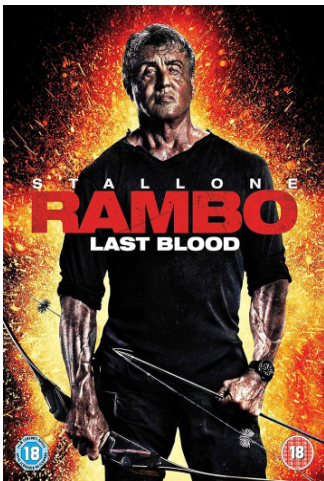


"Roller Skates. You get to go zooooom."
Ava Minich
Grade 11

"I watched Word World from 2007 when I was younger. It was my favorite show, it was about animals, places, plants, and a lot of other things made up of words. [Most of the episodes had morals including] because you're bad at one thing, you can be great at another. I remember it because it was my favorite show growing up. I liked the colorful characters and fun stories. I think this show is what got me into writing."
Grade 10
Cassi Bailey



"A few movies I used to watch a bunch of were Megamind or car but it has to be the first one, it's the best. I literally watched [Megamind] 2 thousand times, I would watch it every night when I was younger."
Ethan Stewart
Grade 12



"My little brother and my friend and I went to see the Rambo movie and it's one of my favorite movies. The 2019 one. That's the last one he's going to make and it's really sad."
Leonel Clara
Grade 12



"Monster high was all about being fabulous and how everyone has "freaky flaws" and how that's okay, that's a philosophy I think everyone should live by now!"
LE Blanchard
Grade 11

TIMELINE OF 2000 SNACKS

Scooby Fruit Snacks were popular in the 2000s and were known for their opaque blue Scooby Doo gummy. Customers said they would buy the gummies more if there was less artificial food coloring and flavoring in them so General Mills removed the coloring immediately to increase sales in 2015. They are still available now just with a different look. however, the opaque pale blue Scooby gummies aren't available.

2000



2002



Spongebob Popsicles are still available, they just do not have the jelly eye balls anymore, now having chocolate eyes instead. Trends on Tiktok show people finding the last few left on shelves around the world.

2004

Pringles made a bright red line in the summer of 2004. They were bright red but the flavor of the chips themselves were just regular plain chips.



2007



Pirate's Booty was a popular snack in 2007 and was a flavored popcorn. It was really popular in 2007 and still is today.

2010

Macarons were a popular sweet treat in 2010 and are still in extremely high demand today. These French cookies are extremely popular and are made with almond flour.



2017



Hershey's Gold Caramel and Pretzel Chocolate Bar was a really popular candy bar in the end of 2017. Hershey's Gold Bars were released December 1st, 2017 worldwide.

2024

Both Cheez Itz Snapped, Puffed, and Extra Crunchy, are popular in 2024. Food trends are constantly appearing, and Cheez Itz are always evolving.



Rebuilding the Band

By Charlie Bott

NAHS has had a band for more than a century, but after COVID, the band struggled to live up to its legacy. However, Band Director Mr. Nick Scroggins, has made it his goal to improve the band, making it into what it is today.



Freshman Dashawndre Wright

When starting high school this year, a different building wasn't the only difference for Wright. "High school band has been more advanced and a lot more engaging than middle school was," Wright said.

Although the trombone player is facing multiple challenges, Wright says band has still been very enjoyable.

"It's really fun to just play my instrument and be able to express myself while doing that," Wright said.

While enjoying band, Wright says he also has many goals he wishes to achieve.

"I want to get better at my instrument," Wright said. "Just to improve every day and just go a little bit further."

This current school year for the band has been going very well, so far, Wright says.

"In marching band we went to the SMS festival and we got a gold rating," Wright said.

For Wright, graduating is a long way away, however, he already has plans for what he wants to do when it comes to band after high school.

"I want to be inducted into Tri M (Ta music honors society) before I graduate," Wright said. "That's something I want to achieve."

Senior Ben Caufield

As the end of the school year is approaching, Caufield has been busy preparing to go to college for band.

"[Band is] a really fun experience," Caufield said. "There's been a lot of auditions for colleges and for all state bands."

Caufield has been accepted as an alternate for the State Band, the first from NAHS in the last 21 years.

"My goal for high school was to get into the state band," Caufield said. "I was a little disappointed that I didn't see my name on the list at first, but it's also very exciting."

Although Caufield's achievements have surpassed expectations, when it comes to band, he says he still has improvements he would like to make regarding his musical career.

"There are definitely a lot of concepts that I need to refine with my playing," Caufield said.

Caufield also says one of his goals he would like to achieve is to get into Jacobs School of Music at IU Bloomington, which he already has auditioned for.

"We have concerts coming up [in the next couple months] for jazz band and concert band and I'd like to get gold for those," Caufield said.

Band Director Nick Scroggins

Before teaching the NAHS band, Mr. Scroggins led the band at Parkview Middle School for seven years.

"It was an adjustment when I first got here because everyone knew how to play their instruments on day one," Mr. Scroggins said.

Mr. Scroggins says that high school and middle school are opposites when it comes to teaching band.

"Middle school is a lot more teaching and less rehearsing," Mr. Scroggins said, "while high school is a lot more rehearsal stuff and learning the music and preparing music."

However, when Mr. Scroggins came to NAHS in 2021, the band was very different from what it is today.

"We have ten kids going to state this year," Mr. Scroggins said. "Which is up from one going to state my first year here."

At state the band received a total of six golds and one silver. The NAHS band this year is very close to receiving a very special award.

"If we get a gold at the Jazz Festival in March and the concert one in April then we will get what's called the ISSMA all music award," Mr. Scroggins said. "I think it would be the first time NAHS had ever gotten that award."

Best Buddies Club promotes friendship, inclusivity

By Nicole Richert

This semester NAHS has started their own chapter of Best Buddies.

Best Buddies is a nonprofit intended to create opportunities for one-on-one friendship, leadership development and inclusive living for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

Their focus is ending the social, physical and economic isolation of the 200 million people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, according to *Best Buddies International*.

“My favorite thing is that it’s just an overall good time, we get to make friends, meet new people, play games and so much more but the thing I love the most is seeing everyone happy at the meetings,” junior Grace McBride said.

Club members don’t typically see one another on an average school day.

“My officer title gives me a sense of importance, it makes me a more responsible person with duties to perform, to be the treasurer this semester makes me proud of who I am as a person, knowing that I will do my best to make the position even better for future treasurers,” sophomore Jazhira Reyes said.

Reyes is also in Anchor Club, she says working with BB gives students a completely different set of community, skills

and mindsets.

The program empowers the special abilities of people with IDD by helping them form meaningful relationships with their peers, live independently, improve public speaking, self advocacy and communication skills.

“It’s a great program because of what it does,” senior Oliver Trueblood said. “This is kinda branching out to other people, some students don’t get to have those same extracurricular or social opportunities, so I think it’s just great to include everyone.”

Building these friendships between people with and without IDD and offering social mentoring will improve their quality of life and level of inclusion in society, according to Best Buddies International.

“I wanted to become an officer because I truly believe this club is important and



Seniors Addie Loesch and Charlotte Fisher talk with their buddies during Clubs Febuary 26.

I wanted to take the chance of being one of the first officers to see how well all of us could make the club go this year,” McBride said.

“I feel like I have high leadership skills and I know how to have fun which I feel is really important for this club,” senior Maliya Powell said.

Being part of the program encourages advocating for social inclusion and becoming a leader in the disability rights movement.

This can help create a significant impact in social inclusion by fostering a more inclusive school and community while educating peers and raising awareness.

“It brings people together, there are a lot of people in that club, students and students with IDD alike, that I don’t think see in my typical day to day so it’s just great for the high school atmosphere, good all around for everyone,” Trueblood said.

Best Buddies provides one-on-one training, resources and fun ideas to make sure that members and matches get to know each other in a natural way while having the space they need to create lifelong friendships.

“What I enjoy is that we can help those with IDD and have fun while doing so. Best Buddies is all about inclusivity, making new friends with our buddies and building strong friendships,” Reyes said.

Meet The Team

Best Buddies Club Officers



President
Oliver Trueblood // 12



Vice President
Maliya Powell // 12



Buddy Director
Nicole Richert // 12



Secretary
Grace McBride // 11



Treasurer
Jazhira Reyes // 10

It’s tournament time...

By Jeremiah Renner

The month of February is close to ending and that only means one thing: March Madness 2024. Every year there are upsets, buzzer-beaters, and Cinderella stories -- that’s what really makes up most of the fun even for just the casual fan. An estimated 60-100 million brackets get filled out every year.

Buzzer beaters are those last second shots that the team tries to win the game off of. More often than not, it’s a half court or deep three to tie or win. Usually they are scripted, drawn-up plays by the coach, but sometimes the players have to find the shot themselves. Unless you are the team they are

shooting against, everybody always loves them, especially in March.

Cinderella stories are always the big focus of the early rounds. Usually it’s a 12 seed or lower that unexpectedly gets past the favorite. Most people write them off early, but because March Madness is a single elimination tournament, all it takes is for one team to gather up their best game of the season and give it all they got against the top seed.

Selection Sunday is March 17. Follow us on Instagram @na_publications to see my predictions.

Wanna Go Out ? Hanging out in-person with friends can be difficult for this generation

By Keerah Turner

Hey, what are your plans after school? Do you want to hang out, maybe we could go bowling or to an arcade? Oh, you're broke and don't have a way to get there. Well that's okay, we can walk to the local park or basketball court. You don't feel like it today? Awe that sucks, maybe another time.

Why aren't as many people our age going out and doing things as often? It can vary from person to person. It's difficult to find time when everyone is free, find the money to spend while you are out, figure out where to go, and find a way to get there. You look at media about the generations before you, or even hear your parents talk about how they grew up and it's hard to relate.

It hasn't always been like this, people definitely end up getting busy as they get older, but scheduling something fun on your days off sometimes just seems difficult because it's just easier to relax. Most people need people though, so when you couldn't just send someone a text, people had a lot more fun going on adventures with their friends.

Culinary teacher Kiya Stewart says she spent most of her younger years hanging out with friends.

"On Friday nights me and my friends would go down to the Phoenix Theater on Charlestown Road and that big lobby that's usually completely empty today would literally be packed shoulder-to-shoulder with people who weren't even going to see a movie, just there to hang out," Stewart said.

It's almost hard to imagine on just a Friday night every single person in your town just hanging out.

"It's vastly different, for example in the movie *Fear Street* the more popular

places to hang out people were extremely crowded and acted really friendly towards each other, when in real life it's usually the exact opposite," freshmen Ryan Hanes said

For the record, even though it may seem like it sometimes, Gen Z is not a bunch of antisocial weirdos. We might socialize even more with our peers because the majority of us have constant access to speak to each other online and we definitely take advantage for our relationships. Not saying we all prefer to speak to each other on the phone just because, for example, senior Kayla Ashworth says she enjoys meeting up with her best friend and her friend group, but it doesn't always work out.

"I talk more with them on the phone or texting over in person for the simple fact that I'm busy but if my best friend lived closer maybe I'd see her. And I talk to my friends that go to NAHS in class, but me and my four-person friend group find it hard to make time because we are all separately busy. For example, I work after school and I usually study after work and before classes," Ashworth said.

Not only is it hard to find the time, but hanging out with friends now can be expensive. After asking around the students and teachers how much they spend(or spent as kids) when they went out with their friends the answers from teachers was zero to ten dollars. However, the answers from students were anywhere between \$20-100 spent in a day out.

History teacher Eric Burres who grew up in the late 80s and early 90s says he spent a ton of his time out with friends.

"I didn't spend much money because I didn't have a lot; we didn't really go places to buy things, it was more to hang out. But you used to be able to get two

cheeseburgers, a fry and a coke for two bucks," Burres said.

With those prices, going out was easier. A local hang out is RecBar. You can't really show up to Recbar with a handful of quarters and a couple dollars for food today. Most meals cost at least \$10 and the ATM near the token machine won't let you take out any less than another twenty dollars, so if you didn't bring cash with you, you're leaving having spent a bit. Junior Avon Repine-King has had similar experiences in other places.

"Me, my partner at the time, and my friends used to hang out and go to Strike and Spare a lot but now it's so much money, and it was over \$100 for my group of friends to hang out there last time we went, so we decided not to go anymore. But now it's hard to find places where we can all have fun," Repine-King said.

Many establishments don't see teens as the ideal patrons; they expect them to be loud, rude or destructive.

"Most of the time my friends go to the movie theaters and when I know the people there I feel welcome, that's because I go a lot. But when I go to other places that I like to hang out at but I don't go as often I feel like the adults don't want me because they think teens are just too reckless to be around," Haynes said.

Restaurants want to serve as many

people as possible for the biggest profit. It makes meeting up regularly at a restaurant for a meal and a long hangout with friends a lot more unattainable.

Freshman Leah Keith says she does go out a lot, she likes being out in public with friends, and she usually feels welcome in public spaces.

"I do feel welcome, but I feel when we go eat waiters are always really impatient with teenagers because they want us to leave sooner," Keith said.

"If I'm in a restaurant and I'm hanging out with friends and we're still talking and already finished our food I feel rushed to leave. And when I'm in stores with friends I feel rushed to leave because I think the employees think I'm going to steal, because a teenage girl stealing seems to be a stereotype," Ashworth said.

Another key difference between generations is that the generations before ours were a lot more likely to just walk or bike to their friend's house because all of their school friends lived in the same town and then just went somewhere. Now when we want to hang out with friends, if we can't drive you to text or call someone and they're more likely to say no because they're already comfy at home or busy with something. Sometimes planning is hard.



Behind the camera: The issue with family vlogging on social media

By Crimson Baker

From channels like The Labrant Family on Youtube to TikTokers like The Dougherty Dozen, videos of families showing their lives have taken the internet by storm.

These families take to social media to share their daily routines, fun things they do in their lives, meals, and personal stories. These aren't just harmless accounts of adults sharing interesting facts, though.

These accounts include a heavy focus on the kids in the family. Whether it's the parent showing how they get their kid ready for school, or telling an uncomfortable story of why they're grounded, these channels thrive off of centering their accounts around their small children.

A lot of Gen Z kids grew up watching these types of content creators. Bratayley, The Ace Family, The Ohana Family, it's nothing new. But in recent years, with the popularization of TikTok, it's gotten so much worse, with viewing time for family vloggers increasing by 90% in 2017 and still increasing to this day, according to The Science Survey.

We've heard our whole lives that the internet is forever, but a lot of these creators don't grasp that. These videos of young kids will be on the internet forever, they will always have that digital footprint. People will always be able to do whatever they want with them, and the kids have no say in any of it.

A three-year-old cannot fully com-

prehend the impact that the internet has and what being on the internet will mean. Who can, though? The parents, who are posting the three year old.

Are all kids of these social media stars this young? No, but most kids in general won't grasp the full reality of being on the internet regardless.

Both young kids and teenagers can be seen on accounts like this, but even kids in the older group, like teenagers, can be victims of the negative outcomes and exploitation.

The parents are the ones responsible for making sure that their kids know the impact of it all when they have the choice to use it however they want.

The parents of these kids aren't stupid. Whether you grew up with it or not, we all know how dangerous the internet can be.

500,000 predators are a daily threat to kids on the internet, according to

Safes Parental Control. People may not know these exact numbers, but they know that these types of dangers exist with it.

You teach your kids internet safety so they can do their best to avoid these

situations, or deal with them, but you're taking that away from kids entirely when you post them so frequently so young.

You're subjecting them to all these horrible things so early when it's entirely avoidable. Yes, there are people like that in the real world, but you can avoid putting your kids in front of them by just not posting them on the internet like they're circus monkey's for strangers' entertainment.

There is no "not knowing" for the parents in this situation. We have this information at our fingertips all the time, it takes 10 seconds to find all of that out.

There are so many horror stories on these types of channels, and so many

kids who grew up in that environment have spoken out against this type of content.

8 Passengers was a channel of a big religious family with 2.5 million subscribers. The mom would post all kinds of videos of things the kids were doing, videos about their religion, and experiences with their family relationships. She would also post insanely inappropriate information about her underaged children, and detailed stories of how she punished them. The case itself has too many horrific and graphic details to go into it any deeper, but the mom was recently entered court in December for an incident involving her two youngest children, as well as other instances of child abuse that the children suffered from. She was sentenced on February 20th.

Yes, not all family accounts are this awful, but they're all this public.

The court case, as well as the real time abuse the kids suffered, was public information for the whole world to see. These kids don't get any privacy, and they never will. The detailed information of their personal trauma will be on the internet forever.

They aren't the ones who posted those videos, or shared that information. They're the ones who have to deal with it, even the teenagers.

It's possible to keep kids safe from this, people just aren't doing it. Parents can leave the videos of their kids and the personal stories for grandma, and come up with new content for their pages. It's not difficult.

Good family focused accounts to follow

@mommacusses



@Shawnathemom

@Toriphantom



@Lindseygurk

2023-2024
Blotter Staff

Crimson Baker
Charlie Bott
Kaytlin Cahill
Autumn Gullett

Tj Hardin
Ela Kays
Isabella Kelly
Stella Klaus

Jack Moutardier
Jeremiah Renner
Nicole Richert
Rylan Schrink

Keerah Turner
Christina Faulkner
Adviser

Popular west coast sport makes a breakthrough in the midwest

By Tj Hardin

Girls volleyball gains a ton of traction at NAHS, as the student section is packed with fans of the team performing insane cheers and chants throughout the games. However, our boys team doesn't get that same recognition. Why?

There are around 42,000 high schools in the US. However, only around 2,000 of those have a boys volleyball team, which is roughly 5% of all schools. Prominent places where boys volleyball is popular include California, New York, and New Jersey, according to the Oklahoma Boys Volleyball Association. If you haven't noticed, these states are either on the west coast or in the northeast. The midwest has barely seen a spark in boys volleyball.

The Indiana High School Athletics Association has recently recognized boys volleyball as an emerging sport along with girls wrestling for 2024. An emerging sport is defined by the NCAA as a "women's sport that is recognized by the NCAA to help provide more athletic opportunities for girls in high school." The NCAA further explains that sports for boys are added to the emerging sport list once they get taken to their headquarters.

Boys volleyball is packed with the same excitement as a women's game would be. Hard hitters, defenders diving all over the court, serves that seem impossible to pass. It's all the same, but there's a greater traction

to women's volleyball in the midwest. Why is that?

Boys dominate many traditional sports, such as basketball, football, and baseball. The media coverage of these sports and fan engagement may contribute to the inequality, as they are the top three favorite men's sports in the US. Football is the most popular high school sport for boys in Indiana, with an average of 20,000, players according to the AAA State of Play. There is also an absence of high profile professional leagues for men's volleyball in the United States, as the men's national team is one of the only professional teams for boys.

Another reason boys volleyball took so long to get introduced to midwestern high schools is that there is no complementary girls sport for the fall season. The high school girls volleyball season runs at the same time the boys football season in the fall. The boys volleyball season runs during the spring, at the same time as girls softball. IHSAA's introduction of girls wrestling may have changed the fact that there isn't a complementary girls sport, but schools we have to play from neighboring states don't have the same option.

One of the most redeeming qualities about boys volleyball is that the skills players learn are transferable into any other sport. They have soccer players on their team who constantly think outside of the box and use their feet to save a ball that's about to hit the ground. Last year, they had a basketball player

whose skills allowed him to hit the ball anywhere on the court. Even in cases where the point seemed impossible, he got the point. This display often amazes the audience of other teams as well as our own.

This will be the club's first year being recognized as a varsity sport for the Bulldogs. We've been a club since 2021, meaning we've been playing for three years and have barely gained any recognition from students and teachers around the school. We tried to get the club out there; their coach, Ryan Woosley, got their games on the announcements last year. Even with this type of promotion, the typical fans consist of players' parents and the girls volleyball players that help coach our team.

This season is big for us, as over 100 teams will compete across the state. To make matters even better, we have common rivals with the football and basketball teams as Jeffersonville and Floyd Central fill our schedule with exciting games. This is another great opportunity for students at NAHS to compete for and represent our school on the court.

With that being said, having a student section is important to the team. It's exciting to hear the audience cheer every time we get a kill or make a save. The game becomes more lively when we can hear the cheers from the crowd. If you have the time, please consider going to our games this year and help us in making our passion a sport that people around the entire state love to watch, and hopefully influence other states to do the same. Your support would mean the absolute most to us and we will NOT disappoint.

This season, there will be over 100 teams competing in boys volleyball across the state. Starting in 2025, it will officially be a school-sanctioned sport in Indiana.



Boys' Volleyball Home Games 2024 Season



4/2 vs. Jeffersonville

Huge team rivalry dating back to the club's beginning. Be respectful, but make sure to cheer louder than the devils.

4/10 vs. Scottsburg

Wednesday games are always perfect times to let off some built up mid-week steam, help us take down the Warriors.

4/23 vs. Silver Creek

Another rival of ours, come out and help us take down the Dragons so we become the rulers of the castle.

4/30 vs. Floyd Central

Ah, Floyd Central, another rival of ours. Make sure to come out to this one and cheer louder than them.

5/2 vs. Rock Creek

Our last game vs. the Lions. Make sure to show up. You don't want to miss our last home game of the season.



Individual athletes excel under pressure

By Jack Moutardier
& Rylan Schrink

Individual sports can be a challenge for high school athletes as they compete for an individual score, increasing the pressure to perform well. Sports such as swimming, diving, golf and wrestling are some of these sports.

Senior Colin Kruer is a standout diver in the area, qualifying for State all four years. Kruer broke the conference record, the Jeffersonville pool record and New Albany record, his score was 559.86 which occurred with 11 dives. He also broke the New Albany 6 dive record with a score of 294.05.

“Going from swimming to diving, I focus on one race or dive at a time,” he said.

Kruer plans to continue his diving career at The University of Louisville.

Senior Sam Jagers has had a successful high school swimming career.

“I started swimming when I was just ten years old,” Jagers said. “I’ve competed in a variety of events throughout my life. Club swimming required that I specialize in every event, but in high-school I was able to specialize in the 500 freestyle, 200 freestyle, 200 IM and 100 Butterfly.”

This year was a big year for Jagers.

“My goals for this season were to break both the 100 backstroke, and 200 freestyle records,” Jagers said. “The 100 record was the only goal I didn’t achieve.”

To reach this level of success took a lot of training.

“Training for me consisted of 11 workouts a week, three weightlifting sessions, eight swimming sessions,” Jagers said. “Weightlifting and two of

the swimming sessions were conducted from the hours of 5:30am-6:45am.”

The challenge of individuality is one that Jagers faced.

“Being a part of a competition individually creates an environment where excuses didn’t exist,” Jagers said. “Knowing that one’s shortcomings are their own and they cannot blame their teammates encouraged swimmers to work to the best of their ability.”

Jagers goes through steps to win his events.

“You can only control your own abilities, and the key to improving those is listening to your coaches, working as hard as you can, and not succumbing to a mindset revolving around short-term gratification.”

Overall, throughout this journey, Jagers favorite moments haven’t been the success, but the journey itself.

“My favorite accomplishment was being viewed as an effective leader by both my peers and coaches,” Jagers said. “I’m proud of my accomplishments in the pool, but knowing I was able to inspire others is worth far more than any school record.”

Junior Thomas Nguyen had a record-setting year.

“I started wrestling my freshman year,” Nguyen said. “So, this is my third year now.”

Nguyen has consistently been in the same class for a while now.

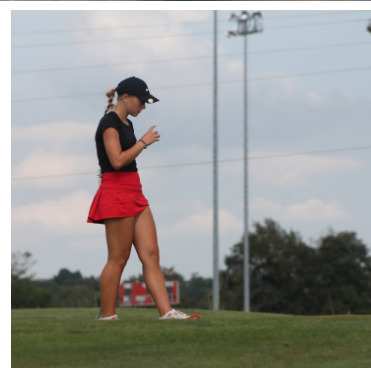
“My weight class is 113 and has been that for the past three years, since Freshman year.”

Nguyen has had an abundance of achievements and moments in his career.

Thomas Nguyen // 11



Colin Kruer // 12



Abby Reavis // 11

“My favorite accomplishment so far is breaking the single season takedown record in school history.”

The old record was 97, Nguyen has had 133 take-downs thus far. To stay in the same class, while gaining strength and ability is a challenge that Nguyen has had to fight for.

“I train by doing the same moves over and over until I master them, and I do a lot of conditioning as well,” Nguyen said. “I plan on making it into 106 for weight next year.”

When in a match, Nguyen says he has to focus to succeed.

“My key to winning matches is to do what I practice,” Nguyen said. “Perform the things I train for all week and nothing else different.”

Nguyen prides himself on the individuality of the sport and responsibility of it, but understands the importance of team.

“Competing individually really represents yourself and how you make improvements on yourself,” Nguyen said. “But, it is still a team sport, and



Sam Jagers // 12

you can’t get better without a team to train with.”

Nguyen says he loves wearing the red and black and representing the school to its fullest every time he steps out on the mat.

“It feels good representing New Albany,” Nguyen said. “In the past we have been very good, I hope to help set the pace for a good future for New Albany.”

Golf is also a prominent mental individual grueling and challenging sport. Junior golfer Abby Reavis excels at taking on the challenge.

“It’s a lot of mental pressure, but also relieving because you don’t have to necessarily rely on your team to qualify farther,” Reavis said.

Prior to a match, she says warmup is crucial.

“Basically before I go out and play, I have a whole warm up session with like 10 steps,” Reavis, a medalist this year, said. “Mindset wise I just try and listen to music to calm myself down but also just take it step by step.”