

# NILES NEWS

[www.nilesschools.org](http://www.nilesschools.org)

June 2018

## POINTS OF PRIDE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

I recently submitted a guest column acknowledging our staff and students and the many accomplishments achieved this school year. In this edition of our Newsletter, building administrators are sharing their individual Points of Pride for 2017-18. Due to the overwhelming number of successes, it was hard for them to choose which to include. I invite you to join us next year at some of our showcase events so you can witness excellence in our students yourself. As always, I want to share my appreciation for the support of our community because our success and growth would not have been possible without you.

The year started strong with our students fundraising for national causes and

volunteering many hours of their time for community service. As the year went on, we enjoyed plays, musicals, games and concerts at all our schools and had the privilege of seeing how truly talented our students are. Our band continues to grow in numbers and our student clubs shined in regional and state competitions. It was also a great year for NCS athletics. Each sports season we had at least one team push to a district championship and beyond - with a couple of individual state finalists. However, we are most proud of the fact that five varsity teams were named Academic All-State and we celebrated 38 three-sport athletes.

We also saw our students speak up for what they believe in and have their voices heard.

In the middle of a trying year for schools across the country, our students, teachers and crisis team have stood strong and worked together with local law enforcement toward solutions for our entire community. These conversations continue in the months and years to come.

Our schools also welcomed local businesses, trade organizations, and community colleges into our classrooms to teach students about different careers, post-graduation options and the opportunities that exist right here at home.

We closed the school year strong with many activities to celebrate our graduating seniors. During the last week of May, seniors participated in a scholarship acceptance ceremony and a Senior Walk,

where they visited all their past schools in the district for a ceremonial walk-through. I am confident their experiences at NCS has prepared them for the variety of plans they have in store post-graduation.

Already, it's clear to see the 2018-19 school year is going to be full of opportunity for our students. As students prepare to enter a new grade, and for some a new school, I wish all Vikings a restful summer so they are ready to take on the next year's challenges on their next journey to excellence. Go Vikes!

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## NEWS AT NILES HIGH SCHOOL

*Principal Molly Brawley*

It seems like it was just a few months ago that the fall district newsletter was being developed and here we are, 8 months later ending another successful school year. The month of May was focused on Class of 2018. The senior class of 187 Vikings worked hard to complete their work (and avoid senioritis), but also had many opportunities to celebrate their accomplishments.

### Senior Athletic Banquet

Senior Athletes were recognized at our annual Athletic Boosters celebration. Ed Weede Athletes of the year were Austin Franco, who will continue his wrestling career at Michigan State University, and Bella Rasler, who will attend Grand Valley State University and play volleyball for the Lakers. The Joseph Whitwam Good Sportsmanship Awards went to seniors Robert Brown and Kailey Skarbek.

### Decision Day

Sponsored by the College and Career Center at Niles High School, the seniors celebrated their post-graduation plans. From four-year universities to community colleges, trade schools, and the military, all NHS graduates have plans for their future. Project

Graduation leaders were on hand to award prize. Seniors voted for Senior Superlatives and left with some words of wisdom to our underclassmen.

### Academic Excellence Luncheon

Niles, Brandywine and Buchanan Community Schools hosted the area's Top Ten seniors (by grade point average) and their parents at The Supper Club in Niles. The event, catered by the Niles High School Culinary Arts program, featured our top scholastic achievers. The Top Ten Seniors for Niles High School are as follows: Valedictorian Alec Janowski, Salutatorian Chris Baumgartner, Marcus Hurt, Justin Akey, Jared Hainey, Madeline Gattis, Conor McKiernan, Lindsay Eichenberg, Kimberly West, and Dayleigh Miller.

### Honors Reception

Ninety-four seniors graduated this year with academic honors. Students who received above a 3.0 cumulative GPA for four years were awarded a gold honor cord. Students who took four years of sequentially rigorous coursework in social studies, science, English and math, at least two years of foreign language, and scored at least a 1000 on the SAT were honored with the Board Scholar Gold Sash. National Honor Society members were

honored with light blue cords, and class and student council officers were awarded their respective cords. The ceremony, held at Niles High School on Sunday, May 20th, also recognized the honor students' chosen "Honored Teacher."

### Citizenship Awards

The annual Student Council Awards Assembly saw six seniors recognized for four years of outstanding citizenship as awarded by members of the counseling and administrative team. Winners this year were Kelly Bickel, Kendall Whitelow, McKenzie Hall, Brian Patterson, Chad Barton and Kailey Skarbek.

### Scholarship Assembly

The community of Niles never fails to support the outstanding accomplishments of our senior class. At the annual assembly, close to \$70,000 was awarded to graduating seniors. The seniors underwent a rigorous application process to win these awards, and we were pleased with the number of winners. Thank you, Niles, for your support!

### The Senior Walk

A new tradition in only its second year, the seniors donned their caps and gowns and traveled to our elementary buildings to be recognized and inspire younger Vikings to graduate. They walked

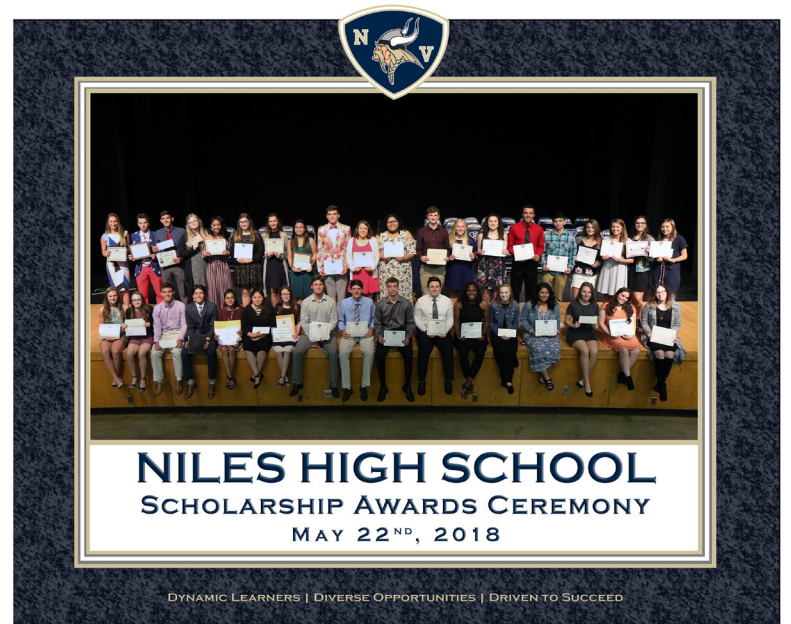
the halls and received letters of congratulations from even the youngest learners. This year, the seniors also distributed gold coins to their former teachers who made a difference in their educational journeys.

### The Senior Luncheon

On Graduation Day, seniors were treated to the annual Senior Cookout, sponsored by Project Graduation. During the cookout, every senior won a prize, including gift cards, microwaves, televisions, and other college or work necessities. Thank you to our community sponsors for all their donations!

### Graduation

After an ominous forecast, the skies cleared and the 156th class of Niles High School graduated under sunny skies and a nice breeze in front of a huge crowd. Featured student speakers were Kelly Bickel, Lindsay Eichenberg and Alec Janowski. Kimberly West, Carly Barton, Blake Sarratore and Hallie Corzine also participated in the ceremony. After the ceremony closed, the seniors hopped onto school busses to be whisked away to a night of celebrations.





## HISTORY COMES TO LIFE AT BALLARD

Jennifer Lyle

“Hello, and welcome to the 5th grade wax museum!” was a phrase ringing throughout the Ballard cafeteria on the afternoon of Friday, June 1st. More than one hundred 5th graders participated in the annual Animated Wax Museum by dressing up as a famous American of their choice, giving a speech to highlight the most important events in that person’s life, and decorating a project board to add interesting facts and visual aids to the display.

Students began the project in April by choosing an American historical figure to research and write a report about. The students each read at least one biography written

about their famous American, then continued to look for information in other books, encyclopedia articles, and various websites. Students learned how to organize their discoveries in an outline, and drafted a research report. After revising and editing with help from their teachers and peers, the students proudly published their final drafts. The 5th grade students then used the information from their reports to write a speech about their famous American from his/her point of view.

For the Animated Wax Museum, all students stand frozen like wax statues of famous Americans and wait for someone to come up and push the buttons on their displays. When this happens, the student statues come to life and recite their



speeches that tell all about their life and what they are known for. When they finish talking, the student statues turn back into wax figures and wait, frozen once again, for their next visitor.

The display boards provide extra information for the visitors at the wax museum: pictures of the famous Americans, dates of birth and death, what they are most known for, and famous quotes. The research report is displayed prominently for anyone to pick up and read, and the students have also provided a short autobiography and picture of themselves to let visitors learn more about them. Many of the students went above and beyond to make their display boards eye-catching and unique.

The Animated Wax Museum is an excellent cross-curricular project that our Ballard students look forward to participating in as 5th graders. Even though it takes a lot of time and effort, for the 5th grade students, teachers, and parents are always proud of their accomplishments and enjoy the compliments they receive from the wax museum’s many visitors. Who knew history could come alive and be so much fun? Wander the aisles of the Animated Wax Museum next year, and find out for yourselves!



## WHERE A GREAT EDUCATION BEGINS!

David Eichenberg, Principal

I became principal of Northside in the beginning of March this year. One of the first things I wanted to do was to survey the staff to determine the greatest strengths of the programs offered at Northside. This past school year, Northside offered preschool through the Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP), several Early Childhood Special Education Programs (ECSE), a Montessori classroom for preschool and kindergarten aged students, as well as a kindergarten-connections class and two kindergarten classrooms. Staff mentioned the variety of programs that service the various needs of our district’s young children as one of the greatest strengths of Northside.

Northside has many experienced teachers that care very much about children and are dedicated to providing an outstanding education for them. In addition to our teachers, we have an amazing support staff that assists the teachers and children on a daily basis. We are also blessed to have a great amount of parent involvement, which helps support, what we are doing at school. It also helps keep parents involved in their child’s learning.

Toward the end of the school year, the parents of all of the Northside students were asked to participate in an end of year survey. Over 100 parents responded. The majority of the families surveyed were very satisfied with what is happening at the Northside Child

Development Center. Below are a few of the questions, along with the percentage of parents who answered favorably.

1. What was your level of satisfaction with the programs provided this year? *87 % of parents were very satisfied.*
2. Do you feel that your child has been prepared for the 2018-19 school year? *96% of parents responded with yes.*
3. Did you feel welcome in your child’s classroom this year? *98% of parents said "yes."*

Parents also had the opportunity to share their own thoughts and comments on the survey. Below are some specific quotes from our Northside parents.

- “Wonderful, caring team of professionals!”

- “Teachers were very kind and understanding.”
- “Anything I had questions or concerns about, they were able to help.”
- “Had a great first experience with the GSRP program.”
- “I could not have asked for a better start to my child’s school journey.”

As you can tell from the comments of our staff and parents, Northside Child Development Center is a great place for a child to begin their education. Please help spread the word! We look forward to welcoming a new group of young learners into our hallways this fall.





# HOWARD-ELLIS' POINTS OF PRIDE

As the end of the school year draws near, we look back at how much we have learned and the fun we have had doing so. In September, Howard and Ellis students joined as one as we re-dedicated Howard-Ellis after extensive renovations which included nine new classrooms, a new gym, renovations of all classrooms and new ventilation, air conditioning, windows and security features. Our older students wasted no time in getting to know the younger students through Peer Mediation and Reading Buddies.

This year, we ended our daily announcements with the Viking Expectations: "I am respectful. I am responsible. I am resilient. I am a Niles Viking." When students displayed these behaviors they were celebrated with a Viking Shout Out or Caught You Being Good Coin. After spring break, students were able to earn Viking Bucks to be redeemed at the

school store. Thanks to United Federal Credit Union for donating checkbooks for our students to record their earnings.

Throughout the year, Howard-Ellis students have been involved in several acts of service, including hosting a Veterans Day parade and ceremony and making placemats for the Veterans Day luncheon at Martin's Super Market. In February, students donated boxes upon boxes of canned food items to the Christian Service Center. Pet Refuge also received donations of food, toys and litter from Howard-Ellis students and over \$8,000 was raised through Jump Rope For Heart for the American Heart Association. Nine classrooms participated in Junior Achievement and learned financial literacy and entrepreneurship from local community members.

The Howard-Ellis PTO sponsored several "fun-raisers" in order to provide items or trips for our students. Events have included Family Skate Nights, Cookies and



Canvas, the Candy Land Dance and Penny Wars. These events have allowed the PTO to contribute to the school store, the library, Checkers Club, Science Olympiad, the D.A.R.E. program, and monthly publications for the classrooms, just to name a few.

Our love and dedication to literacy was highlighted in March as the Howard-Ellis community participated in One School, One

Book. Each child, staff member and bus driver were given copies of the book titled *A Cricket in Times Square*. Families were encouraged to read a chapter a night together for fifteen days. When we were done reading the book, we celebrated with a special themed lunch in the cafeteria.

It has been a wonderful and eventful year and we look forward to planning for the next!

## KEYS TO SUCCESS: PRIDE & POSITIVITY

Six years ago, when Eastside Connections re-opened as a magnet school, the ultimate goal was to grow into a full two section K-8 school with a focus on offering students an exciting and effective project and problem based learning environment. We are proud to announce that ECS has accomplished this goal and so much more! A meaningful character development program, high academic achievement, amazing parent volunteerism and a vast array of extracurricular opportunities, such as one of the largest STEM programs in the state of Michigan, Drama Club, Model United Nations Debate Teams, Middle School sports, Band, Choir and so much more. Putting your finger on just one reason ECS has experienced such rapid growth and success is difficult to do. However, one simple factor serves as the foundation in all that we do: POSITIVITY.

When we think about the teachers who made a difference in our lives, we quickly realize they were all positive. They offered a genuine smile every day, truly believed in

us, and always encouraged us to be our best. Years later, we often think about the impact these teachers had on our lives and it becomes clear that having a positive teacher made us enjoy our time in the classroom. The teachers and staff at Eastside Connections hold true to the belief that positive educators have the power to transform lives and inspire young minds to believe they can and will achieve at high levels. In this spirit, here are five ways that we have chosen to embrace the power of positivity in order to impact all who surround us each and every day:

**Be Positively Contagious**  
Research shows that emotions are contagious. Sincere smiles, kind words, encouragement and positive energy infect people in a positive way. We believe that when we make a conscious effort to have a positive attitude, it becomes contagious and has a real impact on our students, colleagues, and ultimately our school culture. We firmly believe that while students might not remember everything we say, they will always remember how we made them feel.

**Celebrate Success**  
One of the simplest, most powerful things we can do for ourselves and our students is to celebrate daily successes in a fun and positive way. By doing this, we look forward to creating more success tomorrow. Although we will be doing this at school on a daily basis, we encourage families to partake in this practice at home as often as possible. If each night children go to bed feeling like a success, they are more likely to wake up with the confidence to take on the day.

**Expect to Make a Difference**  
When the teachers at Eastside Connections walk into their classrooms they expect to make a difference in their students' lives. Making a difference is the very reason why they became teachers. ECS teachers come to school each day thinking of ways they can make a difference and expect that their actions and lessons will have a positive influence on their students.

**Develop Positive Relationships**  
ECS is built on the idea that relationships can be one of the most important factors in engaging students. To develop positive relationships, we focus on personal communication, building trust, listening to our students, making time for them, recognizing them, and showing them we care through our actions. We strongly feel that giving students our best will lead to the students giving us their best.

**Show Families We Care**  
We have found that parents are very supportive when we communicate early and often about their child's progress. Sharing the positive moments is very important to our team. The most powerful way to connect is by showing how much we care. We know that positive school/family relationships have the power to transform students, families and schools when put into action.



## GIRLS ON THE RUN AT BALLARD

Marissa Newhouse

**G**irls On The Run is a nationwide program that helps girls in grades 3-5 learn the skills needed to develop lasting relationships, inspire self-confidence, and cope with difficult moments in their lives.

Ballard Elementary has offered this incredible program for the last eight years and has had over 200 girls participate. Parents, teachers, and administration have seen firsthand the positive impact this program has had on our girls. Ashley Neff, a Ballard parent, has been thrilled with the change that she has seen in her daughter, Amelia: "It is unbelievable how Amelia has gained enough confidence to come out of her shell. She is now willing to try



new things and make new friends. Girls On The Run has given her the skills to be able to do this."

At the end of the 12-week program, there is a celebration 5K race with every school in Berrien County that participated. This year, there were 485 girls throughout the county that participated. Along with the girls, community runners and running buddies showed their support by running alongside them, while others were cheering from

the sidelines. The 5K race for 2018 had over 1,000 runners! All of our Ballard girls in the program finished the 5K and had a great time with their new friends.

Girls on The Run is about having fun and creating new friendships, but it is also about pushing yourself and using exercise as a positive

coping skill. Ballard's own Kylie Conn finished in the top 10 of all runners who completing the 5K in 24 minutes. In addition, Ballard's own Hailey Boykin finished in the top 25 of runners! Congratulations to everyone who completed the program!



**Do you know someone that needs to register for the 2018-19 school year?  
Tell them to text 269-479-5559 to begin the registration process.**

## CEDAR LANE POINTS OF PRIDE

John Fonash

**T**his year, we celebrated our largest graduating class in seven years. Cedar Lane proudly awarded high school diplomas to 21 graduates in the Class of 2018.

Graduate Vinessa Snyder was our first ever student to complete a two-year Career and Technical Education program in cosmetology. She completed 1,500 hours of training and will sit for State Board testing to qualify for her Michigan cosmetology license.

At least three 2018 graduates are making plans to attend college next fall. Sydni Sweet is preparing to enroll at Lake Michigan College. Alexis Pennington and Savannah Brubaker will attend Southwestern Michigan College.

Two Cedar Lane graduates attended college this year on the first-ever Service Learning Scholarships awarded at Cedar Lane. Chloe Hossa and Labon Blankenship, 2017 graduates and participants in the Reaching for the Reins program, attended Southwestern Michigan College. The anonymous donor (who also funds the Reaching for the Reins program) provided the scholarship funds.

On April 19th, 35 Cedar Lane students and five staff members joined with volunteers from Niles businesses and organizations in the second annual Spring Clean Up of Riverfront Park. IGS Energy organized the service event. On May 8th, four students helped with summer preparations at Fernwood Botanical Garden and Nature Preserve. Students from the Reaching for the Reins service-learning program spruced up the children's garden, trails and stream.

From our Class of 2018 seniors, here are some parting comments that fill our hearts with pride:

"I appreciate Cedar Lane and the staff way more than I could express. I remember crying and being upset about leaving the High School. Cedar Lane then took me in and taught me more than just beating a due date. Cedar Lane became more like a family than just an alternative school."  
- Kerynn Boatright

"Cedar Lane, hands down, is the best high school. They gave me a second chance and helped me through work and faults. They helped me to graduate."  
- Savannah Brubaker



**Cedar Lane Class of 2018, from left to right:** Front row – Laurel Needham, Lilly Zulas, Micah Lamb, Jacob Mangold, Jordan Dunifin, Billie Baker. Middle row – Kayla Carnell, Sydni Sweet, Cristian Arana-Avila, Jordan Turnbow, Alexis Pennington. Back row – Noah Tunstill, Cameron Nixon, David Sharrer, Matthew Nyikos, Benito Avila, Ivan Avila.

"Without Cedar Lane, I honestly don't think I would be graduating today."  
- Jacob Mangold

"I was never really good at school. I never had any motivation. I always got bullied, and that made me give up. I honestly didn't think I would ever graduate. Cedar Lane gave me that hope back. The staff is so unbelievably caring and kind. They make me feel wanted. I now have confidence in who I am and what I can do."  
- Sydni Sweet

"Cedar Lane is the land of opportunity. A place that gives you that second

chance to graduate. The teachers out here care about you and want to see you do great things in life."  
- Noah Tunstill

"You all mean so much to me. You taught me discipline and work ethic. You fed us, clothed us, supported and loved us. When home was hectic, school was a solace...No group of teachers and staff have ever made such an effort to know me, to know my life and my struggles and help me. So yeah, you're all great. Thanks."  
- Lilly Zulas.



## RING LARDNER MIDDLE SCHOOL REPORTS



It's hard to believe that it is already June and we are closing out another successful year at Ring Lardner Middle School. This year has been a year of prideful moments for both students and staff. From building a welcoming and collaborative culture as we welcomed the 6th graders to Ring Lardner for their first year, to an end of the year, health focused Field Day, the 2017-2018 school year was truly a memorable one.

This year we have celebrated several academic and curricular accomplishments at Ring Lardner. Teachers have put in endless hours working in professional learning communities, diving deep into their curriculum, and strengthening their expertise. The hard work has paid off, as Ring Lardner has increased their NWEA scores in math this year. Additionally, ninety percent of Ring Lardner 8th grade students

who applied for enrollment in the Berrien County Math & Science Center were accepted.

For the first time in several years, Ring Lardner has been able to offer an integrated health curriculum to all 6th, 7th, and 8th graders. The purchase of the Michigan Model for Health Curriculum was made possible through the IHSPA grant. This grant has funded not only the curriculum but also many fun activities that promote healthy living. One memorable experience was when Food Network star, Chef Jet, put on cooking demonstrations for all Ring Lardner students. This was truly a memorable experience!

This year, our National Junior Honor Society inducted 30 new members. They have been very active in their philanthropic endeavors, with one of their greatest being "Free Little Libraries" that will be popping

up through the community soon. These libraries aim to inspire a love of reading, build community, and spark creativity by fostering neighborhood book exchanges around and within the community.

Our talented musicians at Ring Lardner have participated in several community performances. The band and choir performed at several locations throughout the year, including the inaugural "Jazz on the River", MSBOA Festival, and Solo and Ensemble contest, where individual competitors earned medals for all 50 events entered.

Outside of the classroom, Ring Lardner was able to offer various clubs and activities that met the needs and interests of all students. For the first time, Ring Lardner formed a robotics team, which offered hands on, mechanical construction of competition bots. The club participated successfully

at several competitions throughout the state.

Mr. Morgan, our art teacher, was fortunate enough to receive a grant that supported our brand new graphic design club. Students in the club have been able to put their digital artistic talents on display. The quality of work that our art clubs have produced is nothing sort of amazing! Ring Lardner even had a 7th grade student, Cheyne Cheney, earn first place at the countywide Community Student Art Exhibition.

As the end of the school year offers time for reflection and closure, it brings lots of preparation for the year ahead. We are thankful for the work that has been done with all of our families. We look forward to an even more successful 2018-2019 school year. Have a great summer!

## NILES EXTENDED SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Niles Extended School Community, as a part of Niles Community Schools, is reaching out to produce dynamic learners, provide diverse opportunities, and offer courses that drive students to succeed in the big picture of their lives. The classes that NESC (Niles Extended School Community) offers provide an alternate option for elective courses to be taken by any student enrolled in the Niles Community School District. NESC begins with virtual instruction to eliminate any boundaries of time and location. It then provides a student-driven opportunity to dig deeper and pair

up with a community expert of their choice.

"Dynamic" is defined by Merriam-Webster as "marked by usually continuous and productive activity or change." The students who use NESC are dynamic. They are continuously looking for ways to learn that are filled with productive activity. These students are not afraid to change their way of learning. They understand that innovation requires a constant change and adaptation. Some of our students tap into experts through the Math and Science Center. Some choose to learn from

experience, scheduling time to work with business professionals or university professors. Some choose a more classical approach to learning through memorization.

Our dynamic learners come from traditional full-time schools, private schools and homeschool, but they all have one thing in common: they wanted change. Some chose one class and others chose several, but all benefit from a dynamic NESC course. The goal every course is competency. Students are required to set goals for themselves and then are asked to look back and determine if they have met their

expectations. If a goal isn't met, they step back and determine if the goals need to change, or what they need to change in themselves to meet their goals.

Cole, a homeschooler, failed to meet his goal last year at the Cloverleaf Spelling Competition, but that did not blindside him. This year he competed again to finish in 4th place. While this was not one of our courses, this determination is an example of the dynamicism we encourage at Niles Extended School Community.

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Cole learns best in a one-on-one environment, so homeschooling is ideal for his core education. NESC provides a resource for electives that are a great fit for his homeschool schedule.

Kierstyn, a traditional student, chose to take a NESC virtual music course, in which she paired up with a talented community expert in piano. She was able to take virtual lessons and get live, hands-on experience, too.

NESC courses provide a technology component designed to prepare students for college and the ever-evolving world in which they live. We provide opportunities for students to learn skills like collaboration, virtual communication, and personal accountability. From grades K-12, students who used NESC courses, were required to meet deadlines, use virtual interfaces, and collaborate with other students and instructors to create an end product for which they could be proud.

One group, made up of traditional and homeschool students, used their virtual course in critical thinking to collaborate with a local expert in robotics. The experience also taught them coding, engineering, and teamwork. They even built a robot that took them to a worldwide competition in China in July.

For one of our critical thinking courses, a group of students chose to work with a corporate computer specialist (voted Mentor of the Year at the National Team America Rocketry Challenge 2018) to build a rocket and enter it in a national competition with students from high schools across the country. They won national 1st place honors in the presentation competition.

Aniya, a non-public school student, took her virtual physical education class while studying with a gymnastics coach. She was able to display her skills at a competition this year, where she placed first on floor routine, second on bars, third on beams and first on vault.

Our electives are designed to either spark interest in a new concept, or provide a student with support to reach a higher level of competency. Learning is not limited to a class; our courses are designed to inspire students to take what they learn in a class and apply it to other areas of their lives.

The students who built a rocket together visited the offices of Senators Stabenow and Peters to discuss educational opportunities in Michigan and present their aerospace projects, taking their learning outside of the the classroom in an effort to make education better for the entire state.

The robotics students used their courses to drive them to a new level of expertise. For some, it was not their first year working on robots, but it was a year of learning new concepts and building on the groundwork of what they had already learned.

Olivia, a homeschool student, chose to adopt a classical approach this year. It was a harder way of learning for her, but she set goals and achieved them. She then applied these method to other areas of her education. She earned a Memory Master award for all her hard work. Olivia is an example of our dynamic learners who choose to set goals and run with them. Olivia took virtual classes in P.E. and art and supplemented them with work at the Buchanan Art Center and the YMCA to create a deeper and broader learning experience.



NESC strives to be a point of pride for Niles Community Schools. We make our motto—"Dynamic Learners, Diverse Opportunities, Driven to Succeed"—a driving factor in building our program.



## Niles NEW TECH NEWS

Entrepreneurial Academy

Many people are familiar with TED Talks, the short, inspiring speeches given by influential people and experts in specific fields. These talks are meant to inspire and, more importantly, lead people to action.

This year, we have begun our own version of TED Talks, which we call Inspire Speeches. Learners have the opportunity to present a talk to the entire New Tech student body on a topic of their choosing. These speeches must meet a certain criteria: they need to inspire, demonstrate personal integrity, and be about a topic that requires action. We have begun this practice because we believe a well-rounded education develops the whole learner and not just his or her academic needs.

Nearly two dozen students this year stood before their peers to delve into tough topics. Freshman Yadia Underwood spoke about personal strength and never giving up. Noah Vogl, another freshman, spoke on perseverance. Sophomore Jenaysha Warren talked about racial equality, while learners Zoie Lytle and Caitlyn Anderson encouraged others to see differences as a way to make our society stronger instead of dividing it. Freshmen Hayden Beckwith and Santonio Williams spoke about the benefits of listening first rather than talking. Sophomores Bekka Benjamin, Kaylee Thompson, Cori Simpson, and Erin Thomas spoke about

the power of being respectful of others. Junior Allie Robinson and freshman Ashton Hiles confronted the tough topic of bullying, and fellow freshman Chase Andres highlighted the benefits of believing in yourself. Sophomore Nickolas Nasstrom discussed being a good person and his personal definition of "good." Juniors David Heiser and Lexi Ziebarth explored the impact of attitude, sophomore Jacob Purvis conveyed that choices matter, freshman Cade Vota challenged learners to make their own "worlds" a better place, and junior Amaya Jacobs talked about preparing for the future. Each of these learners inspired their peers and had the courage to speak in front of hundreds.

When asked why she gave an Ignite Speech, Yadia Underwood said, "I wanted to prove to my peers that no matter what has happened in your past, you can make a difference in your future." Allie Robinson added, "Few people stand up anymore, because they are scared to do so. My partner and I said, 'It's okay to stand up out of the crowd.'"

The speeches were a success this year and offered the learners a voice and a venue. After all, we want them to be change-makers and positive lights in our community. We look forward to continuing Ignite Speeches next year and encouraging young adults to consider how they can make our world a better place.







# "WAY" TO SUCCESS

What an exciting year we have had in the WAY program! We are even more excited as we anticipate our 70th graduate this summer. Since the WAY program started in Niles Community Schools, we have seen many success stories. These stories may not have unfolded if it wasn't for the second chances that these students have received.

We are very appreciative of the district for allowing us to serve these students. We also appreciate Niles providing the resources these students need to be successful.

One of our success stories is that of Hunter Horton, one of our graduates. Hunter strived to meet his goal to graduate this year, and he reached it this month. Hunter never complained about his workload and always came to class with a smile on his face. He quickly became a part of our family, and we are so excited to see him walk and receive that diploma!

We are a yearround school and we do have summer sessions in lab, along with the flexibility to be able to work from home all summer. We are enrolling students each month, with limited enrollment

dates throughout the summer. We would love to meet you and see if the WAY program is a good fit for your student. Please contact our office at (269) 684-1532 to learn we have to offer.



## NILES ADULT EDUCATION

*John Fonash, Director*

At our graduation ceremony this year, we were proud to recognize the perseverance and accomplishment of our amazing adult students. In the Class of 2018, seven students earned high school diplomas and eleven earned GEDs. Lake Michigan College awarded an \$800 scholarship to student Matthew Grimm.

We are making progress in our efforts to create pathways to vocational training that leads to industry recognized certifications. A summer Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) program is currently in development. We are collaborating with Michigan Works!/Kinexus to connect current adult education students and recent graduates with workforce programs that will pay for and support their training.

Fall enrollment opens August 20th. For more information, contact:

Niles Adult Education  
111 Spruce Street  
Niles, MI 49120  
(269) 684-4480.

## WHAT'S NEW AT SOUTHSIDE SCHOOL

**Earth Day**  
On April 20th Southside students and staff participated in Earth Day activities by cleaning up the schoolyard and also yards of some of Southside's neighbors. Our neighborhood friends were also given flowers for this occasion.

**Prom**  
Southside pre-vocational students had their prom on May 5th. The prom is held every two years, when the Elks Lodge #1322 generously offers their facility and provides a buffet for this occasion. The students and staff are very appreciative of the Elks and all they do for our students!

**Graduation Activities**  
The Southside staff honored our 2018 graduates with a graduation breakfast on May 23rd. The staff prepared breakfast and the Elks Lodge #1322 provided gifts. The Commencement ceremony was held on May 25th in the Southside gym.

