

# THE **Kirtland** CONNECTION

A Quarterly Newsletter for Kirtland Local Schools

Winter 2024

## MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT



### Hello Kirtland Local Schools' Community,

We anticipate a great second semester at the Kirtland Local Schools! We are striving to keep the academic and extracurricular achievement moving forward in a positive manner. During the recent December Student Learning and

Achievement meeting, educators and administrators shared insights into the academic progress across all three levels during the first semester. At the midpoint of the school year, I am very proud of the overall academic growth that our students are making. For those who may be behind, we are dedicated to providing the support for their advancement. Meanwhile, for those who have met the standards, we are determined to further enhance their learning experience by delving deeper into the content.

We look forward to the winter extracurricular activities to watch our students grow and thrive outside the classroom. Please check our school website for the dates of upcoming events. I extend a special invitation to our senior citizens residing within the school district to mark their calendars for Thursday, April 25, 2024. Starting at 6 p.m., we will host a pizza/pasta dinner followed by an exciting school play (refer to page 6 for more details).

I will be hosting my third Coffee with the Superintendent on March 14 at 8 a.m. at Honey's Cafe in the plaza located next to the school campus. I will also be presenting the State of the Schools at the community center on March 14 at 1:30 p.m. I hope to see many of you there.

Thank you all for your continued support,

Chad VanArnhem, Superintendent



*Congratulations to our 2023  
State Champion Football Team!*

# THREE KIRTLAND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS COMMENDED AS NATIONAL MERIT SCHOLARS

Three Kirtland High School students were honored with the National Merit Scholar designation this past fall. Vincent Eveland, Adriana Freitas and Tabitha Blankenship were all recognized for being Commended National Merit Scholars.

Generally, the top 2%-3% of PSAT scorers receive commended student status. Adriana was also recognized for having a perfect ACT score. Tabitha was also recognized as she will graduate from Kent State University in the Spring of 2024 with a bachelors degree and participate in graduation the second week of May at the Geauga campus.



# KIRTLAND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS INDUCTED INTO NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY

On December 14, Kirtland High School inducted the newest members into their National Honor Society. The ceremony was held in the Kirtland Elementary School gymnasium and included a



The National Honor Society has a reputation for excellence among administrators, faculty members, students, parents, and residents of the school community. This reputation is the

welcome from President Will Bradshaw. Secretary Nora Withrow gave a brief history of the organization. Vice President Drew Duncan, Treasurer Nick Barisic, and Withrow and Bradshaw spoke to the students about the pillars of leadership, service, scholarship and character. In addition, Principal Victor Puskas and Superintendent Chad VanArnhem spoke and Parliamentarian Daniel Bak recited the pledge.

The presentation of inductees was done by teacher advisors Meriah Duncan and Sarah Poulson. Congratulations to the newest members: Elise Beinhardt Ainsley Borthwick, William Burt, Knox Crisci, Clare Davidson, Bo Garth Famularcano, Kiera Fortney, Samuele Gordon, Harper Hammond, Marin Haupt, Matthew Kahley, Sean Kats, Walter Knoop, Sean Lowery, Grace Mastrangelo, Maxwell Paul, Kyle Pilarczyk, Emily Ridgeway, and Niko Samac.

result of years of commitment on the part of everyone involved. Through NHS chapter service activities, members maintain and extend the qualities that won them selection.

“We could not be more proud of our 2023 National Honors Society inductees,” said Principal Victor Puskas. “These students have shown academic excellence through their achievement here at KHS. They’ve shown a love for service in helping others. They’ve shown strong character by the decisions they have made, especially when no one was watching. They’ve shown leadership amongst their peers and in the community, and have set a great example for others to follow. Now all that’s left for them to do is go out in the world and give their absolute best. Congratulations to all of our inductees and their families.”

# KIRTLAND MIDDLE SCHOOL SALUTES NEWEST HONORS CLUB MEMBERS

The Kirtland Middle School (KMS) Honor Club models itself after the National Junior Honor Society and the very first KMS Honor Club Induction took place in 1974. In order to be invited to apply to KMS Honor Club, students must earn a 3.6 minimum GPA in their core classes, garner four character recommendations and write an application essay.



in the Kirtland schools, the larger Kirtland community and beyond. Congratulations to the 33 new Honor Club members... Elliana Allen, Corinne Ayers, Jacob Brandal, Ella Brown, Elle Ciavarelli, Daniel Corcoran, Gabriella

While academic excellence is the foundation of KMS Honor Club, volunteerism is a crucial component and expectation as members are required to complete a minimum of 16 volunteer hours over the course of each membership year. That volunteer work can be completed

D'Amato, Ioana Donca, Mairin Fini, Jordan Force, Sara Garvin, Ava Kostelnik, Grace Kostelnik, Gwyneth Kraft, Carmella Lozar, Holden Martinez, Rylan Martinez, Alivia Mason, Vivian Michaels, Nadija Mrva, Mark Nalepka, Chloe Nay, Cole Nowacki, Milan Paulic, Payton Phillips, Mary Potter, Michael Quinn, Annalin Sullivan, Michael Sullivan, Courtney Svoboda, Alaniz Tortorici, Evan Vickers, and Nicole Yarovitskiy.

## KIRTLAND MIDDLE SCHOOL LAUNCHES TUTORING AND HOMEWORK HELP THROUGH ACADEMIC ACADEMY

Seeking to provide academic assistance to any middle schoolers who need it, Kirtland Middle School recently debuted the Kirtland Academic Academy (KAA) program. Meeting every Thursday morning from 7:30-8:30 a.m. in the library, it offers free tutoring, homework guidance, and extra support.

Facilitated by library aide Patricia Saluan, the informal KAA sessions aim to help students in a judgment-free zone. "Whether kids are struggling with concepts, need accountability on missing work, or just want clarification before school, we're here for them," said Saluan. The program originated from Building Leadership Team discussions on supporting student success. Research shows missing assignments can profoundly impact

grades and comprehension. By providing a space to help students catch up, KAA empowers kids to get back on track.

And while open and optional for all middle schoolers, the KMS academic team reserves the right to mandate attendance for students chronically missing work. By getting them support, the school seeks to foster better outcomes.

KMS Principal Bob Race said, "With KAA now available, our message to students is clear: we'll provide every resource for you to thrive. Just show up, raise your hand, and let us help you meet your potential."



**"Whether kids are struggling with concepts, need accountability on missing work, or just want clarification before school, we're here for them."**

*Patricia Saluan, Library Aide, Kirtland Middle School*

## THIRD GRADERS IMMERSE THEMSELVES IN HUMAN BODY UNIT

The four third grade classes at Kirtland Elementary School recently wrapped up an engaging multi-disciplinary unit on the human body systems. The unit covered key topics like the skeletal, muscular, and nervous systems.

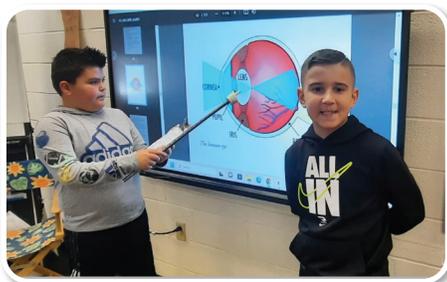
To kick things off, students made K-W-L charts to activate prior knowledge and generate curiosity about what they would be learning, answering three key questions—What do you Know about the topic? What do you Want to know? And What did you Learn? A highlight was when they played “Simon Says” to reinforce names of different bones and muscles.

The classes also read about how the eyes and ears take in sensory information which then gets sent to the brain for processing. Using diagrams, students outlined these

steps in their journals. They then got to take on the roles of audiologists and optometrists, presenting “lessons” in character to their classmates. Videos of these creative presentations were shared with families on Seesaw.

On top of all the interactive science learning, students also built essential literacy skills—from morphology and spelling to paragraph structure and grammar. Individuals regularly refined these “just-right” skills and strategies through the online platform Amplify Boost.

To celebrate all they learned, the third-grade classes gathered in Hornet Hall to watch the Magic School Bus episode “Inside Ralphie,” focused on the immune system. It was a fun culmination following weeks of meaningful interdisciplinary work.



## KIRTLAND MIDDLE SCHOOL ROBOTICS TEAMS ADVANCE TO DISTRICT TOURNAMENT

The Kirtland Middle School (KMS) FIRST LEGO Leagues (FLL) robotics teams competed at the Aurora competition on November 18. Both robotics teams were asked to create an innovation project, build and program a robot, and give a presentation on their teamwork.

Congratulations to the Steel Stingers who won the Motivate Award. This award celebrates a team that embraces the culture of FIRST LEGO League through team building, team spirit and displayed enthusiasm.

The Hungry Hungry Hornets team won the Champion's Award. This award celebrates a team that embodies the FIRST LEGO League Challenge experience, by fully embracing the school's core values while achieving excellence and innovation in robot performance, robot design and the innovation project. This is the highest award at the competition and the first time a KMS team has earned this award.

Each team was selected to advance to the district tournament in January.



## KIRTLAND ELEMENTARY STUDENT LEADERS BUILD SKILLS WHILE GIVING BACK

The future leaders of Kirtland Elementary School (KES) have been hard at work this year. The KES Student Council, made up of ambitious third through fifth graders, meets monthly to discuss leadership skills and plan activities that will make a difference in their school and community.

Under the guidance of teachers Krista Eadeh and Kelly Dunn, these students dive into topics like effective leadership qualities and what it truly means to be a leader. Through self-reflection and group discussion, they are learning how applying these leadership principles can help create positive change.

The Student Council has already spearheaded several initiatives this school year. In November, they assisted with the district-wide canned food drive, working alongside the Kirtland Fire Department to load up food donations from the annual two-week collection drive.

As the year continues, this group of standout elementary school students has even more ideas in the works. After returning from the holiday break, the KES Student Council will be developing new community service projects and continuing to build leadership skills that will



serve them well both now and down the road. Through hands-on learning and civic participation, the future is looking bright for these young leaders.

## KIRTLAND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SHINES WITH PRESTIGIOUS PBIS GOLD AWARD

Kirtland Elementary School recently earned esteemed recognition for its exemplary school climate and culture efforts at the 2023 Ohio PBIS Showcase. Out of hundreds of schools, KES stood as 1 of just 41 to win Gold for Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports implementation.



The innovative PBIS framework provides the school community with shared expectations and structures for nurturing student growth. Preventative initiatives help every child feel welcome while data guides regular collaboration among staff on making KES supportive for all learning needs.

“We strive each day, through systems like PBIS, to make school a place students want to come - where they feel safe, involved, and uplifted,” shared KES Principal Katy Nagaj. She praised the efforts, sharing that behind the award lies regular meetings and input from staff, parents, and stakeholders.

By proactively addressing school climate and focusing supports around the children, this Gold award recognizes Kirtland Elementary as a leader in nurturing students socially, emotionally and academically.

# KIRTLAND STUDENT BROADCAST TEAM SCORES BIG WITH SPORTS COVERAGE

This fall, the Kirtland Media Group has been working overtime to deliver top-notch broadcasts to Hornet fans near and far. Their hard work came to a peak when they covered the hugely anticipated State Championship football game.

Led by technology director Greg Cosimi along with teachers Brian Harvey, JP Moran and Bob Lasecki, this team is made up of staff, alumni, and students representing all district grade levels. Knox Crisci and Nick Ritossa from the high school, Harper Lasecki from the middle school, and Oliver Pennza from the elementary school have all contributed their talents.

Since November 1, the Kirtland Media Group has produced over 50 broadcasts totaling more than 5,000 views across 11 countries and 48 states. Their most popular broadcasts include the State Championship live audio coverage, boys regional soccer playoffs, State Championship pregame show, and the morning elementary announcements show "The Buzz."

With top-notch equipment and an impressive roster of adolescent broadcasters at the helm, the Kirtland



Media Team continues wowing more than just their local community. Their stellar sports coverage this past fall scored major views well beyond the hometown crowd.



**Scan the QR Code to RSVP for Senior Citizen Appreciation Night Dinner and Play**



Kirtland Local School's Senior Citizen Appreciation Night

# PIZZA/ PASTA DINNER & PLAY

**K** THURSDAY, APRIL 25  
DINNER AT 6:00 P.M.  
Kirtland High School Cafeteria  
PLAY BEGINS AT 7:00PM

ALL SENIOR CITIZENS LIVING IN THE KIRTLAND LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT ARE INVITED!

Play: *Moriarty's Revenge*  
by Christopher Burruto

Dinner Cost: \$5 for pizza and pasta dinner. Payment can be dropped off at the Kirtland Community Center.

Checks should be made out to Kirtland Local Schools.

 Free admission to see the play with dinner purchase!



RSVP: <https://www.kirtlandcommunity.com/event-details/dinner-and-a-play-with-kirtland-schools>

# FALL SPORTS SHORTS

Kirtland's fall sports season ended with the Hornets winning a seventh state football championship, but that wasn't the only highlight of the season.



The Hornets won four Chagrin Valley Conference championships and landed dozens of athletes on the all-conference teams.

Clinching league titles were the girls' cross country team, football

team, and boys' soccer team, and the volleyball team won a share of the CVC Valley Division crown.

The girls' cross country team was dominant in winning its fourth straight conference title as the Hornets secured the top three individual places, five of the top 10, and had all nine runners finish among the top 23.



Junior Ainsley Borthwick was named the league's Most Valuable Runner after winning the Valley Division race in 19:46. Borthwick went on to place 53rd at the state cross country meet in 19:52.44. Sophomore Izzie Copeland and junior Syliva Vosicky

finished second and third in 20:56 and 21:09, respectively. Junior Grace Mastrangelo and sophomore Megan Urbanick also finished among the top 10. Mastrangelo placed eighth in 22:30 and Urbanick was 10th in 22:48. Seniors Jessie Jackson and Stephanie Drazetic finished 13th and 16th in 23:10 and 23:40, respectively. Sophomore Kaitlyn D'Amato placed 20th in 24:19 and senior Claire Dumstorff finished 23rd in 25:03.

On the boys' side, freshman Joey Ciavarelli capped off an impressive debut season with first team all-conference honors. Ben Brandal and Daniel Booth earned honorable mentions.

Kirtland's football team was nearly perfect in its run to a seventh state championship in Division VI. The Hornets opened the season with a win at Dalton, who went on to finish as the state runner-up in Division VII. A win over Lutheran West followed, but then Perry handed the Hornets a rare regular season loss in Week 3. After that, Kirtland reeled off 13 straight wins, including seven shutouts and a convincing 32-15 win over Versailles in the state championship game.

Senior running back/linebacker Rocco Alfieri was named the Ohio Division VI Defensive Player of the Year and a small-town All-American.

Will Beers, Gino Blasini, Matthew Kahley, Will Bates, MacGuire Boyd, and Will Sayle joined Alfieri as first-team All-Ohioans. Jake LaVerde, Brady Burich, and Aaron Fortuna were named second-team All-Ohio.

Kirtland's boys' soccer team finished the season 16-4 overall and 5-0 in winning the CVC Valley Division title.

The Hornets then put together impressive postseason wins that included sectional and district titles before falling 3-1 to eventual state champion Andrews-Osborne Academy in a regional semifinal.



Senior Nick Barisic was named the league's MVP and Vince Carriero, Anand Sundararajan, and Daniel Bak joined him on the All-CVC first-team. Drew Duncan, Luca Oroz, and Jack Green were named All-CVC second team, and Will Bradshaw and Aiden Whited were named honorable mention.

Kirtland's girls' soccer team finished 6-7-4 overall and 1-2-2 in league play.

Stephanie Drazetic, Lily Whitaker, and Brynn Bradac each earned first-team all-conference honors and Clare Davidson was named honorable mention.

Kirtland's volleyball team, led by head coach Ricky Sanders, claimed a fourth straight sectional championship and fourth straight league title, sharing the Valley Division crown with Berkshire.



The Hornets finished the season 16-9 overall and 9-1 in league play. Senior Nina Loncar was named Co-MVP of the Valley Division and Katie Reynolds joined her on the first team. Alexis Schaffer was a second-team all-conference selection and

Nina Alfieri and Keely Young were honorable mention selections.

Kirtland freshman Nick Nead earned first-team All-CVC honors in boys' golf while teammate Knox Crisci was a second team selection. Ryan Green and Danny Shafer earned honorable mention honors.



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## UPCOMING EVENTS

- February 19 - Presidents' Day - NO SCHOOL
- February 27 - ACT for Juniors
- March 7 - KES Bingo Night
- March 8 - NHS Kids' Night Out
- March 8 - Quarter 3 Ends
- March 11 - NO SCHOOL for elementary students
- March 12 - PTA Meeting
- March 14 - Winter Sports Recognition
- March 19 - PSAT for Sophomores
- March 25 - April 1 - SPRING BREAK

\*\*\*\*\*ECRWSSSEDDM\*\*\*\*\*  
**RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMER**  
**KIRTLAND, OH 44094**

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