



# THE MESSENGER

## MHS Dance Team takes third place in State competition





# FROM REMOTE LEARNING TO IN-SCHOOL EDUCATION

## What's Inside:

At Mundelein High School we are dedicated to the pursuit of excellence, supporting our students' particular needs and interests, and developing the skills they need to succeed in life. Our faculty is dedicated to inspiring our students to grow into unique individuals.



## In this issue, learn how we...

- ◆ Insure the safety of our students, faculty and staff during the Covid-19 pandemic
- ◆ Celebrate our students, staff and alumni success
- ◆ Become inspired by the accomplishments of others
- ◆ Are grateful to our charitable community

We are proud of the rich tradition in our community.



Kevin Myers, PhD  
Superintendent  
Districts 75/120

US News &  
World Report  
Best High  
Schools  
2021  
Mundelein  
High School

Best College Prep  
or Public High  
School:  
#58 of 651

Best Public High  
School in Illinois  
#87 of 700

Most Diverse  
Public High  
School  
#82 of 939



## Superintendent's Message

**What a year this has been!** And through it all, we held together as a school district and a community in order to do what is best for our students.

As you read through this publication you will see what a wide range of accomplishments have been made by the students and adults in our school community. It's been a pleasure to see how many staff members and students have adjusted and made unique decisions to continue Mustang life as close to normal as they can. We've seen live and remote performances by our bands, choirs and theatre students. Many clubs and organizations have continued to thrive despite the difficult conditions they had to work in. Our coaches made many sacrifices in order to provide competition opportunities for our sports teams. Yes, when we work together we are able to do just about anything to ensure the success of our students in the classroom and in their extracurriculars.

We've also had many students and staff members stay the course and continue to provide meals, school supplies and other essentials to our families who are in need. It would be impossible to thank every single person who has kept us and our community together, but we offer our sincere "thanks" for everything they continue to do.

If there was one consistent outcome during this school year it was that we all came together as a school and community, watching out for each other and not letting our guard down. As we now look forward to Graduation and the beginning of summer vacation we can relax a bit, look forward to a more "normal" school year next year, and continue to work together for the sake of our students. We can do just about anything when we work together!

At this time I would also like to extend my deepest thanks to our School Resource Officer (SRO), Steve Balogh, who will be completing his four-year commitment to Mundelein High School at the end of May. Steve has been an invaluable resource for our students and staff and he will be greatly missed. He has recently been promoted to Investigations with the Mundelein Police Department and we wish him well in his new job.



The Mundelein Police Department will be providing a new SRO to begin work at the start of next school year.

**On the Cover: *The Mustang Dance Team Impressed everyone throughout the season and our girls' team placed third in state competition. Congratulations team and coaches!***

## Board of Education adopts historic Equity Policy

At its April 6 Board of Education meeting, the D120 Board passed Policy 7:12, Racial & Education Equity. In addition, the Board recognized two Mundelein High School students, Senior Trey Baker and Junior Jordyn Miller, for their work to engage the Board and school community in the



*Trey Baker, Dr. Kevin Myers, Jordyn Miller shortly after the Board of Education adopted the Equity Policy.*

creation of this policy. The students provided input from a student's perspective throughout the process. In addition, staff in-service days, under the leadership of Assistant Superintendent of Teaching/Learning, Stacey Gorman, focused on equity for nearly four years, eventually leading to the adoption of this policy.

Excerpts from the newly-adopted policy include the following:

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Mundelein and its surrounding communities offer a rich and compelling place to work, live and grow. At the core of Mundelein High School's mission is to provide each student the opportunity to understand and express their identity, cultivate a multitude of skills, build intellectualism within each area of study and develop criticality to advance their understanding of power, equity, anti-racism and other anti-oppressions. It is our expressed belief that a school district that values the racial and ethnic diversity of its students, contributes to successful outcomes for all students as well as for our community and for society.

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Elsewhere in the policies, we (Board of Education) capture our commitment to equality in education. It

is our commitment with this policy to address the systemic barriers to equity. Educational equality and equity are not the same principles. Equality means treating all students the same regardless of differences. Equity means the systemic fair treatment of people of all races and ethnicities that allows equitable outcomes. Once racial and ethnic inequities are eliminated, race and ethnicity are not factors in outcomes. Equity aims to remove barriers to provide each student the opportunity to benefit equally from

the high-quality educational experience and outcomes that Mundelein High School offers. In order to realize equitable opportunities and outcomes for everyone, equity must be applied across, including but not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, religion, national origin, foster status, housing circumstance, involvement with the juvenile justice system, IEP status, disability, learning differences, immigration status or spoken language.

"This policy is a significant step in our equity journey," said Districts 75/120 Superintendent Kevin Myers.

"Staff and administration have also involved several students in the process. The board is fully invested which is seen in the development of this policy," Myers said.

"I'm beyond grateful and excited to announce that our collaboration with the D120 BOE and MHS administration and faculty came full circle by passing the first-ever D120 School Board policy on racial and educational equity," Baker said.

# COMMUNITY, SCHOOLS ARE HER FOCUS

## Volunteer supports schools and community in many ways

Mundelein resident, Veronica Villaseñor, has earned the Illinois State Board of Education Award of Meritorious Service for Community Volunteer, for the work she does for the Mundelein schools and community. She was nominated by three members of the MHS staff who work with her: Jamie DiCarlo, assistant superintendent of student services for districts 75 and 120; Stacey Gorman, assistant superintendent for teaching and learning, District 120; and Sol Cabachuela, parent liaison for District 120.

“Typically, we would have celebrated these accomplishments, along with those of many others, at our annual Teacher of the Year/Those Who Excel banquet in October,” said Dr. Carmen Ayala, state superintendent of education. “It is unfortunate that the COVID-19 pandemic forced the event to be canceled,” Ayala explained.

**“Veronica has worked tirelessly bringing relationships and communications between our bilingual families and the schools as her children have attended both District 75 and District 120 schools,” DiCarlo said.**

Villaseñor volunteers in a number of ways in the community including communications between bilingual families and the schools, being active in the Latino Police Academy in Mundelein, the Mundelein High School Parent Ambassadors, Universidad de Padres and the MHS Bilingual Parent Advisory Committee. “She serves on various panels and focus groups as well and is truly invested in increasing access and comfort levels of families when it comes to school,” Gorman explained.

Throughout the pandemic, Villaseñor has been at every food distribution event of every type, never missing an opportunity to support the community. This includes more than 30 food/supply/gift distribution events that she has been part of. Two to four days a week she volunteers to distribute breakfast and lunch at one of the MHS food distribution spots in Diamond Lake. “We are better because of her and we learn from her,” Cabachuela said. “She is selfless and patient and also hilarious and she really manages the whole crew at our volunteer events.”



**Veronica Villaseñor**

Prior to the onset of the pandemic, Villaseñor was instrumental in the organization of the District 120 Welcome Center and all of its events. “She volunteers weekly to organize new donations of food, clothing and supplies at the Welcome Center and facilitates families getting what they need,” Gorman said.

“You took on the challenges associated with an unprecedented pandemic with an unwavering determination that has been a shining example for all students of how to handle adversity. I truly admire you and your wonderful accomplishments and personally thank you for all you do for students in our great state,” Ayala concluded.



## District purchases equipment to sanitize school spaces

*It might seem like a futuristic apparatus to be used in a school, but Mundelein High School is using a procedure to ensure that students and staff are safe from the Corona Virus and other illnesses. This is the story broadcast by FOX 32 News Chicago:*

Ultraviolet technology is allowing Mundelein High School to zap the coronavirus with the flip of a switch. The tech is allowing the school to clean classrooms quickly and keep kids on campus.

"It's 99.9% effective on the coronavirus, MRSA, influenza, things like that," Mundelein High School facilities director Kevin Quinn said.

For decades, hospitals have been using ultraviolet light to sanitize labs and operating rooms. But now, a company out of San Francisco is putting it on wheels.

**"The technology has been around for a long time. Now it's housed inside of a portable unit geared specifically for schools, that's the advent of this product," Quinn said. He showed FOX 32 one of the five R-Zero units recently purchased for Mundelein High School, which is one of 75 schools around the country giving it a shot.**



Each night, custodians move the machines from classroom to classroom, office to office, placing them near the middle of the room. Then, they press a button which allows 30 seconds to leave the room before the ultraviolet lights activate, killing nearly all the germs and viruses in an 1100 square-foot area in just seven minutes.

"We've done lots of demonstrations and they feel really safe. Because it is such an amazing tool for the health and safety of our students and our staff," said Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning, Stacey Gorman.

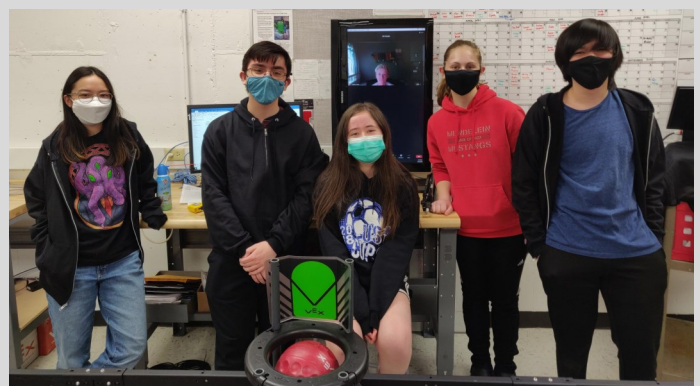
When the pandemic ends, the school plans to continue using the lights to keep a lid on other flus and colds bugs.

## Robotics Club chosen for world competition

Mundelein High School's Robotics Team recently took part in the VEX Robotics State Championship where they earned rankings of 10<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup> and 35<sup>th</sup> in state. Because of those finishes, the Team 499 "Megamind" has been invited to compete in the VEX Robotics World Championship. This is a historical first for the MHS Robotics program.

"In a year of uncertainty and change, it feels nice to be able to appreciate the students and their ability to overcome adversity," said Andrew Hood who advises the club along with Manny Aldana and Tony Cho. "Their persistence and community support were vital to the team's impressive performance at the virtual championship last month."

The Robotics Education & Competition (REC) Foundation, a 501c3 nonprofit and VEX Robotics, is back to showcase the talent and skill of a range of student competitors by hosting the first-ever Live Remote VEX Robotics World Championship May 17-29, 2021. Leveraging the REC Foundation's Live Remote Tournament interface, teams from around the world will be able to compete in real-time tournaments or live skills matches to be



crowned champions.

During the live remote event, students in grades three through college will compete in timed robotics competition matches with their custom-built robots. Like in past world championships, competitors will have the opportunity to see familiar faces, activities and share in the excitement of the event. The REC mission is to increase student interest and involvement in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) by engaging students in hands-on, affordable and sustainable robotics engineering programs.

**Team members include: Eileen Jarrett, Caleb Beversdorf, Samantha Nevergall, Johnny Anno, Jill Kennicott and Freddy Song.**

# FOCUS ON STUDENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## MHS students earn first, second place in essay contest



Mundelein High School students took first and second place among Class III Americanism Essay Contest entries submitted to the Mundelein American Legion Auxiliary and Post.

Sophomores Matthew

Willis and Alica Brak wrote responses to the question, "How to Promote Old Fashioned Patriotism While Recognizing Where We Have Fallen Short?" Their responses earned first place for Willis and second for Brak with cash prizes of \$50 and \$25, respectively. Judges from Mundelein's American Legion Auxiliary #867 and Post #867 selected the winners.

Willis' essay is now competing against first place essays from Lake County high schools in the Legion's District 10 region. Results are anticipated in June.

## Student artists receive over a million dollars in college scholarships



The Illinois High School Art Exhibition (IHSAE) will host a virtual art exhibition Wednesday, April 7 through Sunday, April 11, where student artists may showcase their work and vie for top recognition awards of \$60,000,000.

Twelve Mundelein High School students have already earned more than \$1,406,000 in scholarship money. In addition, MHS has been recognized for being in the Top 20 high schools who were awarded more than a million dollars in collective student scholarships. The winners include Nadia Burek, Hannah Cho, Nick Gomez, Jodi Lawson, Brianna Martin, Abril Mata, Brenda Olayo, Karly Richlinski, Jeannette Rodriguez, Max Thompson, and Bridget Wunderlich. Additional recognition went to Burek for being in the top 25 students who received the most scholarships and to Shaltiel Jackson, a junior, on being awarded an Early College Scholarship.

## Senior earns full ride scholarship to NIU



Mundelein High School senior and AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) student Angelica Hernandez, has been awarded and accepted the Presidential Scholarship at Northern Illinois University (NIU). It is a full ride scholarship and she plans to study nursing.

"Our AVID family is very proud of her," said

MHS AVID and English instructor Kristen Behrens.

## Senior earns full tuition scholarship

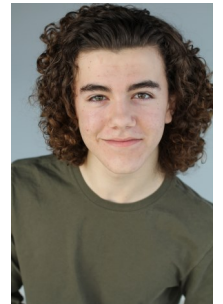


Mundelein High School Senior AVID student, Jillian Adams, has been offered and has accepted The Lighthouse Scholarship at North Park University. This is a full tuition scholarship. With grants and additional scholarships, she was offered a total of \$32,280 per year. She intends to study exercise

science.

## Senior selected for 2021 Illinois High School Theatre Festival

Mundelein Theatre senior, Matthew Callas, auditioned and was selected as part of the of the All-State cast of the 2021 Illinois High School Theatre Festival (IHSTF). Audiences may recognize Callas from his various roles on the Mundelein Theatre stage, such as Marius in *Les Miserables*, Eddie in *Sister Act*, John Merrick in *The Elephant Man* and most recently as Benedick in *Much Ado About Nothing*.



Because of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the 2021 IHSTF was canceled. "Though the in-person festival was called off, the festival committee worked diligently to bring many of the elements of the event virtually to the high school students and teachers of Illinois," said Jonathan Meier, Mundelein Theatre Director.

## Sophomore chosen for Science Olympiad Committee



Mundelein High School sophomore, Ciara West, has been selected for the Illinois Science Olympiad Youth Advisory Committee. The committee will help bring youth voice to state efforts, create recommendations for teams throughout the state and develop leadership and professional skills.

"Ciara was selected because she demonstrates leadership experience and skills on their Science Olympiad team, school and community," said Joe Maxwell, one of the MHS Science Olympiad coaches.

## Band students chosen for state ensembles



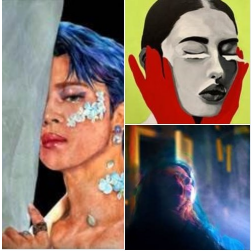
Three Mundelein High School band students have been chosen to

represent Illinois Music Education Association District 7 (ILMEA) as members of the 2021 ILMEA All State ensembles. The students chosen include Junior Natalie Altenhoff, bassoonist and Sophomore Leila Moon, clarinetist in the All State Concert Band. Senior Isabel Sioson, guitarist, was chosen for the All State Jazz Band.



# FOCUS ON STUDENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## Student artists earn awards



"MHS students continue to excel across the board winning multiple awards and affirming Mundelein as one of the top art programs in the state," said Jonathan Pruc, MHS art instructor.

Junior Jamie Ketchum is one of six students of 500 submissions to win

the IHSAE Social Justice Award "The Art of Influence: Breaking Criminal Traditions Exhibition." Her work will appear on the BCT website. She has also won Silver in the Drawing Category for the Northern Regional Exhibition Senior Bri Martin won Bronze in the Senior Scholarship Exhibition

Senior Nadia Burek was awarded \$256,000 in scholarship offers putting her in the top 25 student recipient award winners in the Senior Scholarship Exhibition.

## Sophomore gains national recognition for COVID-19 research



Hussain Razvi, a sophomore in Mundelein High School's Project Lead the Way (PLTW)-Honors Principles of Engineering course, was recognized in Samsung's recent "Solve for Tomorrow"

competition. Thanks to Razvi, Mundelein High School was one of only two high schools from Illinois to be recognized in this nationwide contest designed to boost interest and proficiency in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM). "Congratulations to Hussain Razvi and his Project Lead the Way teacher, Manny Aldana – proving once again, 'It's a Great Day to be a Mustang!'," said Larry Calhoun, fine and applied arts department chair at MHS.

## 2021 graduates plan to enlist in the armed services

**United States Army**  
Joel Duarte Arcos  
Charlie Dennis

**United States Marine Corps**  
Anthony Flores  
Angel Hernandez Portillo  
Isaac Onyise  
Bohdan Sharay  
Osvaldo Vazquez Garcia

**United States Navy**  
Genevieve Rector  
Ilya Sulima

**United States Air Force:** Cyle Weisberg



## MHS student leader receives praise from former president



Mundelein High School senior, Trey Baker, was recently honored by former president, Barack Obama, for his school and community volunteer work. Baker has been active as an executive board member of the MHS Black Student Union, and organizer for the Stronger Together movement, supporter of Black Lives Matter and a volunteer in distributing food to Mundelein residents since the pandemic began.

Recently he chaired a 5K race, Mundelein Race Against Gun Violence, which raised funds and helped raise awareness and funds for more than 50 community organizations working for a more peaceful Chicago where all can thrive, free from the fear of gun violence. The event was also backed by the My Brother's Keeper (MBK) organization launched in 2014 by former president Barack Obama to address persistent opportunity gaps facing young men and women of color and to ensure all youth can reach their full potential.

"I was surprised today with a package sent to my house from the Obama Foundation offices in Washington D.C.," Baker said. The package was a copy of President Obama's recent book *A Promised Land* along with a note from President Obama and the former President of the Obama Foundation Wally Adeyemo now the Deputy Secretary of the Treasury for President Joe Biden.

Baker went on to thank several MHS staff members who have supported his many efforts during his MHS career: Superintendent Kevin Myers, Principal Anthony Kroll, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching/Learning Stacey Gorman, Director of Building and Grounds Kevin Quinn, Parent Liaison Sol Cabachuela, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services, Jamie DiCarlo and Public Information Officer Ron Girard. "I wanted to share this with you because I am extremely appreciative of the love and support you all have showered me with on this journey toward a more hopeful and just society. I've said it before but I'm going to say it again...thank you for believing in me from day one to lead these efforts, and for giving me the capacity to embark towards real change in our community."



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