



# TRIBUNE-COURIER

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## Richland County celebrates completion of four-year, debt-free courthouse renovation with ribbon cutting

Photos and Article By Traci Little

After four years of planning, construction, and upgrades across five floors, Richland County leaders are celebrating the completion of a major renovation project at the Richland County Administration Building and Courthouse — a transformation officials say will strengthen public service, improve safety, and better serve residents for decades to come.

The Richland County Board of Commissioners announced the project's completion this week, marking what they called a major milestone in the county's commitment to efficient government, public safety, and employee well-being.

Even more notable, commissioners emphasized, is that the entire renovation was completed with no debt incurred.

"Altogether, we spent over \$6 million and didn't borrow anything," said Richland County Commissioner Darrell Banks. "That's something that we were all proud of."

The project modernized critical public spaces, expanded courtroom capacity, and upgraded aging infrastructure — much of which had remained largely untouched since the building was constructed in 1968.

The renovations were celebrated Tuesday during a ribbon cutting ceremony, which highlighted one of the final components of the multi-year effort: the newly renovated Richland County Land Bank offices on the first floor.

### New courtroom expands public access by 33%

One of the most significant improvements came with the construction of a new 2,700-square-foot Common Pleas General Division courtroom, made possible after the Clerk of Courts relocated in fall 2024 to a new office space on Level L2.

County officials said the move provided staff with a more functional and efficient workspace to manage an estimated 6,000 cases each year, while also creating room for courtroom expansion.

The new courtroom — now the fourth available to the public — officially opened in September and includes modern finishes, new windows, custom furnishings, enhanced security, and a fully updated jury deliberation room equipped with improved technology and comfort.

County officials said the addition increases available courtroom space by 33%, helping reduce delays caused by limited trial and hearing availability.

### Modern updates to public spaces and restrooms

In addition to courtroom expansion, renovations included modernization of approximately 4,600 square feet of high-traffic common areas, including brighter finishes, new ceilings, energy-efficient lighting, and upgraded seating.

All 10 restrooms throughout the building were also fully renovated — the first full restroom overhaul since the courthouse opened

— featuring updated flooring, wall tile, new fixtures, and improved ADA accessibility.

Additional employee and visitor improvements include a new break room, upgraded employee fitness area, and a new training room for the Community Control department.

County officials said wellness funding also supported improvements to the fitness area, creating a more functional space to support both mental and physical health.

The renovated training room is intended to support professional development and expand training opportunities for staff involved in rehabilitation and positive community outcomes.

### Infrastructure and security upgrades for long-term sustainability

Commissioners said the project also addressed critical behind-the-scenes needs, including modernization of fire protection, electrical systems, HVAC and security technology. The updated systems are now equipped with advanced digital controls designed to improve efficiency, safety, and long-term sustainability.

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## Rep. John highlights school bus safety grant funding for local districts

State Representative Marilyn John (R-Richland County) has announced that numerous local school districts in Richland County were recently awarded funding from the Ohio School Bus Safety Grant Program — totaling more than \$126,420.

As part of the state operating budget, the Legislature provided \$10 million toward helping school districts offset the costs of upgrading their bus fleets with advanced safety equipment. Flexible guidelines allowed each school district to best utilize the funds to promote safety in their fleet.

The list of awardees in the 76th House District are Clear Fork Valley Local School District, \$21,399; Crestview Local School District, \$5,696; Lucas Local School District, \$36,658; Madison Local School District, \$24,743; Mansfield City School District, \$16,318; Plymouth-Shiloh Local School District, \$5,000; Shelby City School District, \$11,181; St. Clairsville-Richland City School District, \$5,426.

Every school district that applied for assistance with eligible equipment received an award. Schools may use the funds to incorporate safety enhancements in new buses or add safety technology to buses currently in service.

More information on the Ohio School Bus Safety Grant Program can be found at <https://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Finance-and-Funding/School-Transportation/School-Transportation-Safety/School-Bus-Safety-Grant-RFA>.



# Temple Christian: Small school, strong academics, lasting impact

By Traci Little

MANSFIELD — For many families, choosing a school is about more than academics. It's about environment, character development, and finding a place where children are known, supported, and encouraged to grow. At Temple Christian School, that kind of experience is not only possible — it's part of the school's foundation.

Temple Christian School, a small Christian school connected to Mansfield Baptist Temple, has built a reputation for offering strong academics in a family-centered atmosphere. For Josiah Custer — a Temple Christian School board member, Ohio State Highway Patrol sergeant, and deacon at Mansfield Baptist Temple — the school has been shaping lives for years, including his own.

"I can still remember walking through the halls of Temple Christian School on my first day of seventh grade," Josiah said. "I had just changed schools and didn't know any of the students there. However, I quickly noticed the friendly atmosphere and the caring spirit of the teachers."

That welcoming environment helped ease his transition, but it also left a lasting impact that he didn't fully recognize until years later.

"As I continued in my education, I didn't realize how the classes I took at Temple were beneficial to my future," he said. "As I look back, the speech classes and English classes were instrumental in preparing me for my job as a trooper."

Josiah graduated from Temple Christian School in 2014 without a clear plan for his future career. But through guidance from Christian mentors in his life, he felt led to pursue a career in law enforcement.

"Through some Christian men who God put in my life, I eventually decided to apply to be a state trooper," he said.

During the hiring process, Josiah underwent an extensive background investigation — a step that included interviews with people who knew him personally and academically.

"The investigator went to Temple to speak to the staff about my time there," Josiah said. "He also went to my friends and family. When it came time for the interview, he told me that everyone had only good things to say about me."

Josiah credits that feedback to a combination of faith, family upbringing, and the environment Temple Christian School provided.

"I attributed that to God, the way my parents raised me, and the environment at Temple Christian School," he said.

Josiah began the Ohio State Highway Patrol Academy in 2016 and completed training in 2017, when he was assigned to the Wooster Post. As his career progressed, he quickly realized that the communication and writing skills learned at Temple Christian School were essential in daily law enforcement responsibilities.

"As I began to work as a trooper, I realized how much paperwork that law enforcement does," he said. "Thankfully, my English and writing classes at Temple had more than prepared me for the many reports that I am required to write."

His professional achievements followed.

In 2018, during his first full year as a trooper, Josiah received the ACE Award for recovering six stolen vehicles. In 2022, he earned the Criminal Patrol Award after making 13 felony arrests. He was also recognized as Post Trooper of the Year in both 2020 and 2025.

Josiah began the promotional process in 2023, becoming eligible for advancement in early 2024. But the waiting period tested him.

"I found myself becoming impatient as others received promotions that I was eligible for," he said. "I believe that God was using this period of time to teach me some much-needed patience and reliance on Him."

That season ended with a phone call on Dec. 22, 2025, offering him a promotion to sergeant at the Bucyrus Post — a position he

(Continued on Page 4)



Josiah Custer



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# News Briefs

A special meeting of the Ontario Board of Education will be held in the Ontario High School Library, 467 Shelby-Ontario Rd., Ontario on Tuesday, Feb. 17, at 6 pm for a work session with Rockmill Financial to discuss the district's future financial plan and policy.

The Ontario Board of Education 2026 regular meeting dates will be held March 10, April 14, May 12, June 9, July 14, Aug. 11, Sept. 8, Oct. 13, Nov. 10 and Dec. 8. All meetings will be held in the Ontario High School Library, 467 Shelby-Ontario Rd., Ontario at 7 pm.

★

First English Lutheran Church, 53 Park Ave. West, Mansfield, will be celebrating Fastnacht (Fat Tuesday) on Tuesday, Feb. 17 beginning at 5 pm. Music will be provided by Damian Boyd's Redemption Jazz Band. Everyone is welcome to attend "Pancakes and Jazz" free to the community.

The church will celebrate Ash Wednesday, (the beginning of the holy and penitential season of Lent) on Feb. 18, with a soup supper at 6 pm and Holy Communion/Imposition of Ashes at 7 pm. All are encouraged and welcome. The following Wednesdays in Lent, the church will host "Eat and Teach" gatherings from 6-7:30 pm. For information call 419-522-0662.

★

All Souls Unitarian Universalist of Bellville, 25 Church St., Bellville, will welcome Josh Ghiloni on Sunday, Feb. 15, at 10:30 am. The subject will be "Know Reincarnation is Real, and I Didn't Even Have to Die to Prove It."

For information visit [www.allsoulsuuohio.org](http://www.allsoulsuuohio.org).

★

First Congregational Church, 640 Millsboro Rd., Mansfield, will host its annual pancake day on Tuesday, Feb. 17, from 4:30-7 pm. The Church Life Committee hosts the event in Blymyer Hall by donation only. All proceeds from the event will benefit Richard and Susan Schuller's 37-year-old daughter seeking medical treatment in Houston. She is fighting for her life and insurance will not cover any of the expense of treatment. Gluten free pancakes will be available upon request.

★

A recycling trailer will be in the parking lot at Ontario United Methodist Church, 3540 Park Avenue West, Feb. 28 and March 1. Acceptable items include steel and aluminum cans, crushed milk jugs, detergent bottles, plastic bottles with number 1 or 2 on the bottom, broken down cardboard, all papers included with the newspaper but no other magazines or paper. Please remove caps from bottles and rinse all containers well.

★

Richland County Mobility Management hosts Mobility Steps at the Ontario Center (previously Richland Mall) between 10 am and noon on the first and third Wednesday of every month (excluding holidays). Anyone that submits their steps at the walks is entered into a drawing for a \$10 gift card.

A special walking event will be held April 29, from 10 am to noon on the OSU-M campus, 1760 University Dr., Mansfield.

The walk starts at the campus recreation center and will be an easy walk through the campus while learning about local programs

and services from the Ohio District 5 Area Agency on Aging and Richland Mobility Management. No registration is required.

In the event of inclement weather, the walk will be held inside the recreation center. For information call Randy at 567-247-6483.

★

A Vietnam Wall, Korean War Memorial and WWII Memorial display will be at Freer Field, Ashland, Aug. 6-9.

The 13th Annual Veteran Appreciation Day Event will be Saturday, Aug. 8, at Freer Field, 1301 Park St., Ashland. The event is sponsored by Ashland County Veterans Appreciation Committee. For information visit [www.acvad.org](http://www.acvad.org).

★

The Lexington Area Senior Citizens Inc., invites those 55 and older to attend meetings the third Wednesday of every month at 11:30 am at Der Dutchman, Rt. 97, Bellville. Cost is \$17 for the meal, with an additional \$2 for pie.

The next meal will be Feb. 18, and will include chicken. The Strut Your Stuff dancers will perform and those attending are encouraged to wear red. For information visit the Facebook page at Lexington Area Senior Citizens (LASC). Dues are \$10 per year.

★

The Taylortown Community Church Blessing Closet & Food Pantry recently opened and is offering free clothing and food for those in need. Open Mondays, 9 am to 2 pm, as well as every third Saturday from 9 am to 3 pm, the closet is located at the church, 2656 Taylortown Rd., Shelby. Church volunteers also serve a free hot meal every third Thursday from 5:30-6:30 pm with the next being Jan. 15.

There are no income or residency requirements. All are welcome.

Those wishing to donate can drop-off items during open hours or call or text Lyndi Oakley 419-814-0372 or Tonja Barnett 419-571-3846 to set up a time outside of normal hours.

The biggest needs are non perishable food, coats, hats, gloves and kids clothing. Food is distributed quickly and will probably always be the greatest need. 100% of all donations go to filling the closet and pantry. Follow on Facebook at Taylortown Community Church Blessing Closet.

★

The Pioneer Career and Technology Center Board of Education will have its 2026-'27 Pioneer School Calendar available for public input on Friday, Feb. 13, from 8 am until 3 pm in the Pioneer CTC Board of Education office, Shelby.

★

First English Lutheran Church, 53 Park Avenue West will be offering senior boxes of non perishable food provided by the Greater Cleveland Food Bank from 10 am to 12 pm or until supplies run out.

This comes with a 30 lb. box of non-perishable food and a two lb. box of cheese. These items are free to those who qualify by age (60+) and low income guidelines. Recipients must have at least one person age 60 or older in the household. The minimum income begins at \$1,957 per month for a one-person household.

These items are available on the fourth Tuesday of each month, year round. The distribution is held in the South Mulberry Street parking lot. The next distribution is Tuesday, Feb. 24.

★

Johnsville Fire Department, 7478 Co. Rd. 242, Bellville, will host a breakfast Saturday, Feb. 14, from 7-10 am. Items include pancakes, biscuits and gravy, scrambled eggs and sausage.

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# •Temple Christian: Small school, strong academics, lasting impact

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accepted and began shortly after.

Today, Josiah and his wife Cassidy — his high school sweetheart — are raising their three children, Brady, Daxx, and Nash, with a strong commitment to faith and family. Their involvement at Mansfield Baptist Temple includes Josiah serving on the deacon board and as part of the church's security team.

And now, his connection to Temple Christian School continues through the next generation.

"Our children all currently attend Temple Christian School and we know that they will receive a great education through a faith-based curriculum," Josiah said.

As both a parent and board member, Josiah says he has seen firsthand what makes the school special — a place where academic excellence and Christian character are woven into everyday learning.

"I owe a great deal to the school, and I am forever grateful for my memories as a student and parent of students," he said.

In a time when many families are looking for both strong academics and a safe, values-driven environment, Temple Christian School continues to stand out as a close-knit Christian school where students are prepared for life — and where the impact of a caring education can be felt for decades.





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## Church Directory

### All Souls Unitarian Universalist

25 Church St., Bellville  
419-886-3497 • [www.allsoulsuohio.org](http://www.allsoulsuohio.org)  
10:30 am Service and Sunday School  
Adult RE Book Club (quarterly)

### First Congregational Church

640 Millsboro Rd., Mansfield  
419-756-3046 • [www.mansfieldfcc.com](http://www.mansfieldfcc.com)  
Pastor Brad Bunn  
8:30 am Chapel • 10:30 am Sanctuary  
10:30 am Sunday School (nursery-high school)  
10 am Monday Morning Bible Study

### Lexington Church of the Cross

236 Otterbein Dr., Lexington  
419-884-2150 • [Churchofthecrosslex.com](http://Churchofthecrosslex.com)  
Pastor-Rev. Dr. Edna Stahl  
Sunday Worship 9:30 am  
Junior Church for 10 and under • Wesley Class 10:45  
5th Sunday of the month-Do Something Sunday AA, Girl Scouts,  
Yoga, Knotty Ladies and Bible Study.

### Ontario United Methodist Church

3540 Park Avenue West., Ontario  
419-529-4345 • [ontarioumc.com](http://ontarioumc.com)  
Rev. J.P. Snyder  
9:30 am Grace & Eggs  
11 am Sunday Worship and Kingdom Kids

### St. John's United Church of Christ

2010 Park Avenue West, Mansfield  
(At Hope Lutheran Next to Drug Mart)  
419-522-2813 • [www.stjohnsmansfield.org](http://www.stjohnsmansfield.org)  
[contact@stjohnmansfield.org](mailto:contact@stjohnmansfield.org)  
Pastor Faith Proietti • 11 am Sunday Worship  
Office hours: Mon-Fri 9 am to 1 pm  
AA Meetings M & F 10 am & noon;  
Wed. noon Brown Bag and Sat. 6 pm

### Trinity Grace Fellowship

1592 Grace St., Mansfield  
419-589-5890 • [trinitygracefellowship.org](http://trinitygracefellowship.org)  
Pastor Larry Carnes  
9:30 am Sunday Worship • 11 am Sunday School  
Bible Study Mondays 2 pm

### G & M Body & Paint Shop

1689 West Fourth St., Ontario • 419-529-2747

### Wappner Funeral Home

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Photo By Mark Shutt

## Galentine's Night blends creativity and conservation at Kingwood Center Gardens

By Traci Little

**MANSFIELD** — Looking for a meaningful way to celebrate friendship this Valentine's season? A special Galentine's Day event at Kingwood Center Gardens invites guests to gather for an evening of creativity, connection, and conservation.

On Friday, Feb. 13, beginning at 5:30 pm, participants have the opportunity to create their own woodland-themed resin jewelry pendant during a guided workshop under the instruction of local artist Abigail Kent of Emerald Bee Creations. The hands-on experience is designed for all skill levels and offers a chance to craft a keepsake inspired by nature while enjoying a relaxed, social atmosphere.

In addition to the jewelry-making portion of the evening, attendees will hear a brief woodland stewardship talk focused on caring for Ohio's woodlands and natural resources. Light refreshments will be provided, making the event an easy and enjoyable night out with friends.

The \$40 registration fee includes all supplies, instruction, educational talk, and refreshments. Space is limited, and tickets must be purchased in advance.

The Galentine's Day event is presented through a collaboration among the Richland Soil and Water Conservation District, Kingwood Center Gardens, and North Central Ohio Women Owning Woodlands, organizations committed to conservation education and community engagement.

Organizers say the evening offers a perfect blend of creativity and purpose, allowing participants to celebrate friendship while learning more about woodland stewardship in a welcoming, inspiring setting.

For more information or to reserve a spot, register online through Richland Soil and Water Conservation District at [www.richland-swcd.net/event/galentines-day-conservation-creation-workshop/](http://www.richland-swcd.net/event/galentines-day-conservation-creation-workshop/)

## Vietnam Veterans recognition dinner will honor service and sacrifice

By Traci Little

**ASHLAND** — The Ashland area community is invited to come together this spring to honor local Vietnam Era veterans during the Ashland Area Vietnam Era Veterans Recognition Dinner, scheduled for Saturday, March 28.

The evening will take place from 5 to 8 pm at the Ashland Eagles, located at 400 Eastlake Drive, and will focus on recognizing the service, sacrifice, and stories of those who served during the Vietnam War era.

A highlight of the evening will be guest speaker Greg Gorrell, an Ashland native and combat veteran with the 9th Infantry Army Division. Gorrell is expected to share reflections from his military service, offering personal insight into the experiences of Vietnam veterans and the lasting impact of their service.

Organizers say the recognition dinner is intended not only as a time of remembrance, but also as an opportunity for the community to express gratitude to veterans whose service was often met with limited recognition upon their return home.

Tickets for the dinner are \$15 per person. Ticket pickup will be available after February 15 at DeSanto & Kellogg, located at 432 Center St., in Ashland. Seating is limited, and early ticket pickup is encouraged.

For additional information, community members may call 419-289-1454.

The March 28 event is expected to draw veterans, families and residents from across Ashland County and beyond, creating an evening centered on honor, reflection and appreciation for those who answered the call to serve.

### Obituary Listings for Wappner Funeral Directors

Patricia Ann Tanner, January 30

Jacqueline Ann Dunn, Feb. 2

Christos Romas, Feb. 2

Norma Angelyn Swank, Feb. 2

Norma Jean Crum, Feb. 3

Lois Irene Presley, Feb. 4

Elaine M. Chahulski, Feb. 7

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# •Richland County celebrates completion of four-year, debt-free courthouse renovation with ribbon cutting

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A new security system was also installed throughout the building, along with major upgrades to elevators — a costly but necessary improvement, officials noted.

Commissioners said two elevator upgrades alone totaled approximately \$700,000, underscoring why long-term capital planning is essential for government operations.

“There’s a reason why we save and put money in the capital,” Banks said during Tuesday’s remarks. “Nothing is cheap anymore.”

## Land Bank offices transformed from former jail space

Tuesday’s ribbon cutting also showcased the newly redesigned Land Bank offices — a space that was once cramped, outdated, and partially housed in a former jail area.

The renovation reimagined the area with new walls and doors, customized workspaces, improved public seating, and a modern boardroom equipped with updated technology.

Land Bank Director Amy Hamrick said the improved layout will make day-to-day operations far more functional.

“All of our board meetings were held in this room here, surrounded by desks and offices,” Hamrick said. “Everything was just one area, basically. The need to have a larger space was very evident when it came to some of our board meetings. Having it separate is going to be so much more professional and really benefit people.”

Richland County Treasurer Bart Hamilton, who also serves as chair of the Land Bank board, said the organization has played a vital role in revitalization efforts across the county — even if the public doesn’t always realize how much is happening behind the scenes.

“A lot of organizations want to go out and beat their own drum and all,” Hamilton said. “We’re not big drum beaters. We’d like to

just kind of get work done and keep moving.”

Hamilton said the Land Bank began 12 years ago as a small operation — and has since become a major driver of property cleanup, redevelopment support, and grant funding.

“We were nothing,” he said. “We were basically a desk and a chair in a cubicle.”

Today, Hamilton said the Land Bank has helped transfer more than 1,100 parcels back into private ownership and has secured more than \$17 million in grant funding since its inception.

The organization has also been involved in larger county redevelopment efforts, including the former Westinghouse site in Mansfield, and has recently secured \$1.3 million in state funding for homeowner lead remediation projects.

“We’re going to get more for that,” Hamilton said. “We’re going to get some leftover money that other people didn’t spend. The state wants us to spend it because we did a good job with it.”

Hamilton said some of the projects he is most proud of are those that support smaller communities facing major emergencies — including building collapses and hazardous property issues.

“Without a county Land Bank, I don’t know what those communities were going to do,” Hamilton said. “Those are the things I’m proud of... just being able to fill that role when there just wasn’t anyone.”

## A debt-free investment in Richland County’s future

Commissioners said the entire renovation project — estimated at more than \$6 million — was completed through careful fiscal planning, the use of ARPA funds, and county capital savings, avoiding interest costs associated with borrowing.

Commissioner Banks credited County Administrator Andrew Keller, building superintendent Josh Hicks, and multiple contractors and engineering partners for their work over the four-year project.

“This man seems like every time we turned around there was a new problem,” Banks said, referencing Hicks during the ceremony. “And through Josh’s dedication, expertise, and hard work, those problems were solved.”

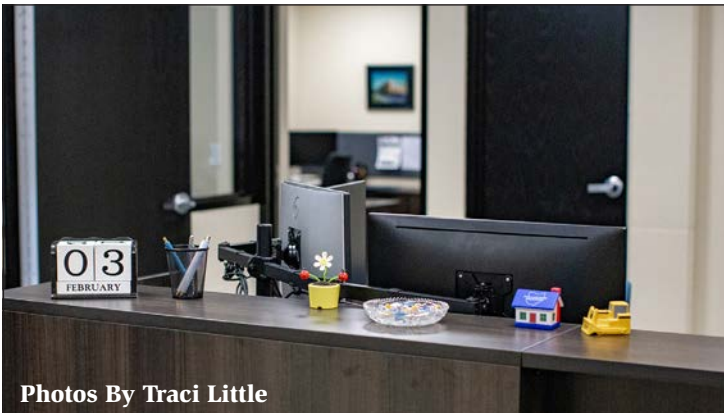
During the event, representatives from the Ohio Auditor of State’s Office and the Ohio Secretary of State’s Office also presented commendations recognizing the county’s responsible financial management and investment in infrastructure.

“This is absolutely incredible and really deserves to be commended,” said Tina Ludwig, Northeast Regional Liaison for Ohio Auditor of State Keith Faber’s office. “We love to hear how responsible a county is with their money. To be able to do a project such as this is absolutely incredible.”

Ludwig noted that Auditor Faber’s wife was born in Mansfield, adding a personal connection to the project’s celebration.

As county officials concluded the ribbon cutting, they encouraged residents to tour the newly renovated spaces, including the Clerk of Courts office, new courtroom, training rooms, and upgraded public areas.

For more information, visit: Richland County Board of Commissioners, 50 Park Ave. E., Mansfield, OH 44902. A renovation video can be viewed at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Py1ijgc4inA>



Photos By Traci Little

## KCCC’s JROTC to host 20th Anniversary Military Ball on Saturday, April 18

Knox County Career Center’s (KCCC) JROTC will host its 20th Anniversary Military Ball on Saturday, April 18, at The Gallagher Centre, 1451 Gambier Rd # 6, Mt. Vernon, at 6:30 pm.

The evening will begin with dinner at 6:30 pm, followed by the guest speaker, program and dancing. The featured guest speaker for the evening will be Amber Cox, U.S. Air Force Major and 2012 graduate of KCCC’s JROTC.

KCCC’s JROTC alumni are welcome to join the event by purchasing a ticket for the evening on a first-come, first-served basis. Tickets are \$30 and can be purchased by calling Mrs. Addair at KCCC at 740-397-5820 x2601.



# Bella's 220 offers heart, heritage and sweet Valentine's options

By Traci Little

ASHLAND — For more than a century, one Ashland restaurant has quietly built a legacy rooted in family, faith, and food made with love. Today, Bella's 220 continues that tradition—especially as Valentine's Day approaches.

Family owned and operated for over 100 years, Bella's 220 traces its roots back to Nardini's Italian Restaurant, once run by earlier generations of the same family. For the past 30 years, Bella's has carried that legacy forward, blending time-honored Italian recipes with a modern artisan bakery and deli approach that keeps customers coming back.

"We've always believed food should be made the way you'd serve it to your own family," the team at Bella's shares. "From scratch, with care, every single time."

Everything at Bella's 220 is prepared fresh in-house using locally sourced ingredients whenever possible, including organic products and free-range eggs from trusted local farmers. The menu offers something for everyone—slow-cooked meats prepared for up to 24 hours, comforting gluten-free soups, classic Italian dishes passed down through generations, house-made desserts, and convenient grab-and-go options for busy days.

As Valentine's Day nears, Bella's 220 is once again offering a lineup of sweet favorites and stress-free dining options designed to make celebrating easy.

Among the most popular offerings are their chocolate-covered long-stem strawberries, boxed and bowed and ready to gift. Strawberries are available in boxes of six for \$18 or twelve for \$35, with delivery available Thursday through Saturday—including free in-town delivery. Orders can be placed by texting 419-651-0103.

Additional Valentine's treats include cookie boxes, brownies, cup-

cakes, macarons, assorted chocolates, double caramel-dipped pretzels, and Bella's homemade caramel corn, available for \$9.75 and wrapped with a festive ribbon. Customers can also start with a \$39 Valentine's gift box and customize from there with help from Bella's staff to stay on budget.

For those looking to dine out, Bella's will offer Valentine's in-house dining on Feb. 13 and 14, featuring a special dinner menu. Carry-out Valentine's meals will also be available, with reservations required.

Bella's is also encouraging customers to support local businesses by pairing their Valentine's sweets with floral arrangements from Enjoy Floral & Gift, located just a few blocks away on West Main Street.

Beyond Valentine's Day, Bella's 220 remains deeply committed to the Ashland community. The restaurant serves as a donation drop-off location for Ashland Christian Health Center, which is currently accepting gently used Christmas décor and quality household items for its annual fundraiser. Donations are being collected now, even though the sale will take place in November 2026.

Bella's also offers full catering services for meetings, family gatherings, and celebrations of all sizes, bringing the same scratch-made quality and personal care found in their everyday menu.

Whether stopping in for lunch, picking up dessert, planning a catered event, or preparing for Valentine's Day, Bella's 220 continues to be a place where food, community, and tradition come together.

Bella's 220 is located at 121 Church Street in downtown Ashland. Hours are Tuesday through Friday from 9 am to 5:30 pm and Saturday from 9 am to 3:30 pm.

For more information or to place an order, visit [bellas220.com](http://bellas220.com) or call 419-651-0103.



## This Valentine's Day You Have Options!

### IN HOUSE DINING

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Special Dinner Menu  
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### BOXED TREAT BOX

2 Large Cupcakes 1 White Chocolate  
Macadamia Nut Cookie  
2 Brownie Bites 2 Raspberry Bites  
3 Decorated Cutout Cookies  
Assorted Chocolates  
1 Large Chocolate Bakery Cookie  
\*Or You Can Create Your Own!

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# Ohio State Reformatory announces Casino Night, Mom Prom

By Traci Little

Ohio State Reformatory will host two signature fundraising events this spring, offering community members two very different — but equally memorable — ways to support ongoing preservation and enhancement efforts at the historic site.

## Casino Night Fundraiser | March 28, 2026

The Reformatory's second annual fundraising gala will return on Saturday, March 28, with an evening of classic casino-style entertainment from 6 to 10 pm.

This year's Casino Night Fundraiser will feature gaming tables including blackjack, poker, craps, and roulette, along with a whiskey tasting, whiskey pull, and a silent auction. Tickets are \$80 per person and are available now.

Proceeds from the event will support the construction of a permanent outdoor stage on the Reformatory grounds — a project designed to enhance future programming while honoring the site's history. The stage is being built using salvaged trusses from the former steer barn that once operated as part of the Reformatory's Honor Farm, blending preservation with forward-looking development.

While primary sponsorships for the gala have already been secured, organizers note that gaming table sponsorships are still available. Additional details and tickets can be found at [ohiostatereformatory.org/gala](http://ohiostatereformatory.org/gala).

## Mom Prom | April 18, 2026

Following Casino Night, the Reformatory will host one of its most popular events — Mom Prom 2026 — on Saturday, April 18, from 6 to 10 pm.

This ladies-only fundraiser invites women to gather their

friends, dress up, and enjoy a carefree night of dancing inside one of Mansfield's most iconic venues. The theme for this year's event is "1990s – Kiss From a Rose," encouraging nostalgic fashion and throwback flair.

The evening will include appetizers, a cash bar, and several fun contests, including Prom Queen, Best Dressed, and Best Hair. Tickets are \$50 per person and will be released to the public on Feb. 13. Tickets for Mom Prom can be purchased at [ohiostatereformatory.org](http://ohiostatereformatory.org).



**A MOM PROM** event will be held April 18 at the Ohio State Reformatory. Missey Anderson and friends take a picture outside of Twisted Ivy before Mom Prom last year. Visit [ohiostatereformatory.org](http://ohiostatereformatory.org) for information on events.

2026 REFORMATORY SCHEDULE OF EVENTS	
3/28	CASINO NIGHT FUNDRAISER
4/18	MOM PROM
5/9 - 5/10	OHIO HAUNTER'S CONVENTION
5/15 - 5/17	PARAPSYCON
6/6 - 6/7	PARTY AT THE PEN
7/17 - 7/19	INKCARCERATION
8/15	SHAWSHANK HUSTLE
9/19	HIGH WALL CRUISE-IN
9/25 - 11/1	BLOOD PRISON

## March of Prayer schedule released

The Mansfield area's March of Prayer is a month-long, city-wide initiative centered on prayer, revival and collaboration.

It is one of the first major efforts under Godsfeld, a nonprofit created to help put "feet to the vision" of prayer for Mansfield by unifying local churches under the name of Jesus.

Throughout the month of March, 31 different churches will host one night of worship.

Momentum for the March of Prayer has been building since December, when seven Mansfield churches participated in consecutive revival services called Fan the Flame.

The schedule includes March 1, Freedom Church; 2, Grace Fellowship; 3, Holy Trinity Lutheran; 4, Journey Life; 5, TBD; 6, Fusion Lex; 7, First English Lutheran; 8, Fusion Madison; 9, TBD; 10, Kingdom Grace Fellowship; 11, Oasis of Love; 12, The Arc; 13, The Way (at Freedom Ridge); 14, Foursquare Gospel Church; 15, Potter's House; 16, Mansfield Alliance Church; 17, TBD; 18, Avenue Church; 19, The River Church; 20, Belmont Community; 21, First UMC/Jesus Outreach; 22, Open Bible; 23, Latter Rain; 24, Paradise; 25, Abundant Life; 26, TBD; 27, Gracepoint Lexington; 28, TBD; 29, MIMA; 30, Southside Christian; and 31, Welcome Home Fest.

The March of Prayer will conclude on March 31 with a collaborative worship gathering hosted by The Welcome Home Fest, a partner of Godsfeld. The location for that final night will be announced as plans are finalized. A full, updated calendar of host churches and locations is available online.

Organizers say the unity formed through Godsfeld is already bearing fruit. Monthly Brown Bag Lunches have resumed, bringing pastors and ministry leaders together on the fourth Thursday of each month to continue building relationships and encouraging collaboration.

Additional city-wide efforts are already in motion, including the National Day of Prayer Parade on May 7, followed by a large community worship gathering known as the Festival of Hope.

Those interested in learning more, participating, or staying up to date on upcoming events can visit [www.godsfeld.org](http://www.godsfeld.org) or follow Godsfeld Mansfield at [facebook.com/godsfeldmansfield](https://facebook.com/godsfeldmansfield).





Photo by Damon Callis

**Day Trippin' With Damon** – A trip to Lake Erie this time of year results in unique scenic views as the lake stills as it freezes. Among the places to visit is Bain Park in the City of Fairview. The park is 37.2-acres with nature trails, a picnic pavilion and a playground. Visit [www.fairviewparkohio.gov](http://www.fairviewparkohio.gov) for information.

## AARP Foundation offers free tax help, now available state-wide

Ohio residents can receive expert tax preparation help at no cost this tax season through AARP Foundation Tax-Aide, the nation's largest free, volunteer-based tax assistance and preparation program. Tax-Aide sites are now open across Ohio through April 15, offering several in-person and remote options depending on location.

During the 2025 tax season, 1,165 IRS-certified Tax-Aide volunteers served 72,614 Ohioans at 167 sites statewide, helping taxpayers claim more than \$56.8 million in state and federal refunds and credits, including over \$5.2 million in Earned Income Tax Credits (EITC).

"Tax-Aide puts real money back into Ohio households and local communities," said Jenny Carlson, State Director of AARP Ohio. "This free, IRS-certified service helps people claim the refunds and credits they've earned — without hidden fees. For many Ohioans, especially those living on fixed or modest incomes, that refund can make a meaningful difference in covering everyday expenses like food, utilities, and medicine."

AARP Foundation Tax-Aide focuses on assisting adults age 50 and older with low to moderate income, but the program is open to any eligible taxpayer, and AARP membership is not required. All Tax-Aide volunteers are trained and IRS-certified each year to ensure they understand the latest changes to the tax code.

In addition to traditional in-person tax preparation, Tax-Aide offers several options designed to meet taxpayers where they are. Assistance types vary by location and are subject to change.

Available options may include in-person, drop-off, remote assistance and online coaching.

To find a nearby tax-aid site and see which services are available, visit [taxaide.aarpfoundation.org](http://taxaide.aarpfoundation.org) or call 1-888-AARPNOW (1-888-227-7669).

Tax-Aide services are available at 224 locations across communities in a majority of Ohio's counties.

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# Brain Health Starts with Daily Habits: Free online tool from Alzheimer's Association can help create a personalized plan

By Traci Little

Healthy habits don't just help people feel better day to day — they may also help protect memory and thinking as we age.

The Alzheimer's Association is encouraging individuals and families to take a proactive approach to brain health through its Brain Health Habit Builder, a free online tool designed to help people evaluate their current habits and create a personalized plan for improvement.

The Brain Health Habit Builder is available online at [alz.org/habitbuilder](https://alz.org/habitbuilder) and can be completed in just a few minutes. The tool asks users a short series of questions about their current lifestyle and health routines, then provides research-backed recommendations and tips for making positive changes.

"Brain health includes how well you think, learn and remember," according to key messages provided by the Alzheimer's Association. The organization emphasizes that it is never too early or too late to begin taking steps to protect brain health.

## A Simple Tool With Personalized Results

The Brain Health Habit Builder is designed to be easy to use and accessible for anyone interested in improving their long-term health.

After answering brief questions, participants receive personalized results that include suggested steps and brain-healthy strategies. The tool then helps users create an action plan they can save, print, and reference daily.

The Alzheimer's Association recommends printing the plan and placing it somewhere visible — such as on a refrigerator, mirror, or desk — since research shows that regularly seeing goals can help individuals stay committed and develop long-term healthy habits.

## Why Brain Health Matters

While brain health science continues to evolve, researchers have identified several lifestyle behaviors that may reduce the risk of cognitive decline and possibly dementia.

Growing evidence shows that addressing risk factors and promoting healthy behaviors can play a meaningful role in protecting memory and thinking over time.

The Alzheimer's Association highlighted the U.S. POINTER study, which found that a structured lifestyle program focused on nutrition, physical exercise, cognitive engagement, and health monitoring improved thinking and memory over a two-year period — suggesting lifestyle improvements may help protect the brain from decline.

## Sharing Tools and Building Community Awareness

The Alzheimer's Association encourages people not only to create their own plan, but also to share the Brain Health Habit Builder with

friends and family members.

The goal is to help more individuals across all communities access practical information and take meaningful action to improve their brain health.

The Association also continues to expand brain health education through its 10 Healthy Habits for Your Brain campaign and community programs such as Healthy Living for Your Brain and Body, offered through chapters across the country.

To take the Brain Health Habit Builder assessment and create a customized plan, visit [alz.org/habitbuilder](https://alz.org/habitbuilder).

"It's never too early or too late to take charge of your brain health," the Alzheimer's Association notes, encouraging individuals to begin building habits now that can support memory and thinking for years to come.



ONTARIO STINGEL FOURTH AND FIFTH grade Academic Challenge teams showed their brain power at the first meets of the year. Ontario High School students Parker Willis and Timo Wingham volunteered their time to read and keep time at the meets. Ontario Academic Boosters made the t-shirts for the team.



**Scan to take  
your Brain Health  
Habit Builder  
Assessment Now!**

[alz.org/habitbuilder](https://alz.org/habitbuilder)





# RICHLAND COUNTY HEALTHCARE SPOTLIGHT

Highlighting the People and Places That Keep Us Well

A Feature By Traci Little

## Nationwide offers tips during cold weather season

As winter weather settles in, parents are encouraged to take extra precautions to keep children safe — both during outdoor play and while traveling in the car. According to Dr. Leah Middelberg, an emergency medicine physician with Nationwide Children's Hospital, cold temperatures introduce unique risks that can be reduced with preparation, awareness, and smart habits.

### Dressing Kids for Outdoor Winter Play

One of the most important aspects of cold weather safety is proper clothing. Children should be dressed in warm layers to help retain body heat, from head to toe. Hats, gloves or mittens, warm socks, and insulated boots are especially important, as hands and feet are more vulnerable to cold-related injuries.

Keeping kids dry is key. If a child becomes wet while playing in the snow, they should be brought inside immediately, changed into dry clothes, and allowed to warm up before returning outdoors. Body temperature drops more quickly when clothing is wet, increasing the risk of frostbite and hypothermia.

Depending on the activity and time spent outside, parents may also want to include protective face coverings. Dressing in layers allows children to adjust their clothing as needed while staying warm and protected.

### Staying Safe During Winter Activities

Outdoor winter activities can be a fun and healthy way for kids to stay active, but they also come with specific risks. Helmets are recommended for activities such as sledding, skiing, and ice skating. Families should follow local guidance on whether outdoor ice is safe and avoid participating in winter activities alone.

Injuries can happen, even with precautions. Parents should know when to seek care and where to go. Minor injuries—such as small cuts, mild burns, or a possible uncomplicated broken bone—can often be treated at an urgent care facility. More serious injuries, including visibly deformed broken bones or burns that are extensive or involve the face, hands, or feet, should be evaluated in the emergency department.

If a child hits their head, parents should closely monitor for warning signs such as loss of consciousness, repeated vomiting, or behavior that seems unusual or not typical for the child.

### Car Seats and Winter Coats Don't Mix

Cold weather also brings important car safety considerations. Bulky winter coats should not be worn under car seat harnesses, as they can prevent the harness from fitting properly and reduce protection in a crash.

For infants and young children, a thin sweater or fleece jacket is recommended, along with a blanket placed over the harness after it is secured. Blankets should never be placed underneath the child or the harness straps and should be kept away from the face.

Older children using booster seats or seat belts should also have the belt snug against their body. Parents may have children unzip or remove bulky coats before buckling, using a blanket for warmth instead. The lap belt should sit under the coat and snug across the hips.

### Modeling Safe Behavior

Dr. Middelberg emphasizes that one of the most effective ways parents can teach safety is by modeling it themselves. Children closely observe adult behavior, making everyday moments powerful teaching opportunities.

Wearing helmets while sledding, dressing appropriately for cold weather, and explaining why these habits matter can help children learn to be proactive about their own safety. While it can feel intimidating to realize how closely kids are watching, it also offers parents a meaningful way to reinforce lifelong safety habits.

Leah Middelberg, MD is a Pediatric Emergency Medicine physician at Nationwide Children's Hospital and affiliate faculty with Nationwide Children's Abigail Wexner Research Institute Center for Injury Research and Policy. She has a research focus on pediatric injury and injury prevention.

## Community invited to celebrate the future of Westinghouse site

A landmark in Mansfield's history and landscape is entering a new phase after more than 30 years of quiet. The former Westinghouse site is officially moving forward and the Richland County Land Bank is inviting the community to celebrate the next chapter.

On Saturday, June 13, the Richland County Land Bank, in partnership with the Leadership Unlimited Class of 2026 and local leaders, will host A WestingHOUSE Party, a public event announcing the return of the former Westinghouse campus. Once a key driver of Mansfield's industrial economy, the site is now cleared, prepared, and ready for new development. This milestone is the result of years of coordinated work led by the Richland County Land Bank.

For generations, Westinghouse helped shape Mansfield and Richland County. When operations closed in 1990, the property entered a long pause. That began to change in 2022 when some of the campus's remaining structures came down, creating one of the region's most unique redevelopment opportunities. Today, the site is positioned for its next use — not as a reminder of the past, but as a significant asset for future growth.

A WestingHOUSE Party will include live music from bands like Shucking Bubba, food vendors, activities, a return of the Mansfield Family Festival, sports and fireworks. Updates will be shared at facebook.com/brandrichland and sponsorship information is available at <http://www.brandrichland.com/a-westinghouse-party>.



Leah Middelberg, MD



# Honor and Merit Rolls

## Madison Local Schools

### Second Grading Period

#### ALL A

**Third Grade** — Rashawn Alexander, Rayna Baker, Camden Barr, Liliann Brasted, Emmie Buhrts, Braxten Cabell, Avery Fissel, Kingston Hammond, Nicholas Harvey, Hayden Holmes, Evan Holt, Jamarah James, Silas Ogle, Lucas Ohl, Kenley Oslie, Charleigh Pennywitt, Lillian Rowland, Hayes Sauder and Jaxxon Swanciger

**Fourth Grade** — Karter Allen, Praxton Allen, Emily Allison, Zoe Baker, Evan Baldridge, Adalyn Carver, Lincoln Collins, Owen Elswick, Graciee Evans, Rayson Evans, Livia Foote, Beckham Gleason, Layla Harvey, Grayson Hoehn, Ryleigh Holmes, Lily Kegley, Oliver Kestner, Caleb King, Myles Klecka, Abram Kliewer, Brooklynn Koeller, Asher Larsen, Isiah Lykins, Jillian McMasters, Bailey McQuillen, Landon Mitchell, Stacey Montgomery, Emme Neron, Theron Ogle, Hayden Ohl, Madelyn Risinger, Ava Sigman, Evelyn Wake, Liam Wake and Averie Washington

**Fifth Grade** — Ania Carroll, Lyllian (Lyli) Chambers, Brantin David, Andrew Finley, Ember Fry, Ember Fry, Alexander (Alex) Holt, Alexander (Xander) Holt, Sawyer Howell, Teagan Kirsch, Weston Miller, Malika Mion, Lucas Perry, Gentry Robertshaw and Brynn Sauder

**Sixth Grade** — Ella Barr, Lincoln Bays, Isabelle (Belle) Beatty, Braxton Brandt, Skylar Carlson, Carter Clow, Madeline Dunlap, London Hamilton, Naomi Houston, Kendle Keirns, James Lang, Paxton Leo, Olivia Mason, Peyton Meek, Timothy (Tj) Mion, Baylee Mitchell, James Price, Tyler Salyers, Carter Shenberger, Hailey Snelling, Emily Spillman, Olivia St Clair, Avaya Stephens, Gabriel Utt and Chazlyn Zehner

**Seventh Grade** — Annalise Barber, Jacob Bond, William Bundesen, Amia Carol, Delaney Conway, Lily Eckenwiler, Hailey Hedrick, Roman Hipfl, Taelyn Kirsch, Kennadi Knipp, Parker Larsen, Abrianna Micallef, Gavin Moore, Dylan Pucci, Xavier Roberts, Damari (Mari) Roper, Hagen Sauder, Eleanor Sidwell, Lorelai Sly, Sadie Smith, Shawn Sydnor, Madelynn Thompson, Beckham White, Mackenzie Wiggins, Mckenzie Winger and Spencer Wynn

**Eighth Grade** — Liam Barr, Jaxxon Bennett, Abbigale Crist, Rylie Davidson, Ian Forbes, Jordan Jeffers, Emma Lewis, Carson Mcquillen, Olivia Morris, Kathryn Myers, Matthew (Matty) Risner, Natalie Smith and Jersie Yunker

**Freshmen** — Anna Ankrum, Abigail Anschutz, Jenna Bebout, Makena Berkshire, Lainey Binns, Carson Cook, Alexander Dillon, Hannah Evans, Jack Foster, Kordell Hardy, Arenal Hunsinger, Andrew Lowe, Brandon Maglott, Nyah Marcial, Abigail McWilliams, Gabriella Mickouma, Aryiah Miller, Lillian Miller, Mason Morrow, Gabriel Prater, Savannah Ransom, Avery Rust, Kallee Short, Kaysten Sly, Trenton Sweet, Mylee Temple, Sofia Thompson and Alden Washington

**Sophomores** — Zaylynn Ball, Kaley Bowman, Henry Brinley, James (Jr) Broyles, Layla Cushard, Carter Foley, Izaiah Gordon, Nathaniel Hansel, Owen Hendershott, Jounnee Jaranowski, Adalynn Jordan, Payton Kellner, Emma Myers, Khloe Sayre, Allie Shambaugh, Landon Stone, Maci Whitesel and Makenzie Wynn

**Juniors** — Alivia Adams, Kylie Carroll, Kinley Clow, Lariah Coble, Kaylea Cole, Destini Conrad, Brianna Coulter, Samantha Crist, Giovanna DiPuccio-Resendiz, Landyn Dodd, Claire Durbridge, Trenton Ford, Nicolas Gatten, Kaitlyn Haring, Autumn Haynes, Kennedy Hofer, Santanna Hoffman, Chloe Jeffers, Koree Kershner, Kirra Kiser, Kaiden Koch, Evan Larsen, Sophie Lowe, Joshua Maglott, Malachi Marsh, Kiya McConaughy, Taylor McKown, Tyler Medley, Avery O'Brien, Ravino Pena, Cadance Peters, Ellie Powell, Gage Ramey, Emily Saunders, Geraldo Sayre, Brayden Seymour, Jaxxon Shaffer, Lincoln Shepherd, Allie Shrader, Shiann Skeen, Hudson Stacy, Keeli Stewart, Hayden Stollings, Kristopher Sutton, Ariyah Tucker, Lyla Walker, Alaina Washington, Kyleigh Washington, Daniel Weightman and Knight Wolfe

**Seniors** — Lilliana Allen, Megan Bays, Madison Berry, Myla Blankenship, Julianna Boliantz, Helen Bricker, Scott Calderhead, James Cecil, Justin Cline, Aubrey Conn, Morgan Cook, Courtney Cyrus, Evan Cyrus, Timothy Ellis, Collin Faith, Emma Finley, Hannah Fultz, Hayden Hatfield, Aubrey Hendrickson, Maci Hergatt, Aaron Hughes, Kalayah Johnson, Kaylin Johnson, Amya Joplin, Campbell Kiser, Tauren Lindsey, Isabella Liviskie, Christopher (Chris) Lucas, Nicholas Maglott, Wyatt Martin, Jamelyn Mays, Deont'e McDaniel, Zoe McQuillen, Owen Morrow, Macy Mounts, Jalycia Nelson, Andrew Parish, Cruz Rachel, Raygen Reiter, Emma Reynolds, Jennah Richards, Zoey

Robinson, Aryana Rogers, Landon Simpson, Briana Smith, MaRhea Smith, Bryce Speelman, Grady Spurlock, Jaxin Stancombe, Esther Stanfield, Kaylee Stone, Liam Stone, Anthony Studer, Ashton Taylor, Alexander Thompson, Michael Truax, Ariyah Tufts, Jocelyn Turner and Savannah Utiss

#### HONOR ROLL

**Third Grade** — Cooper Allen, Brody Bautz, Cassius Bell, Makenzee Bond, Grayson Brewster, Aria Brooks, Layla Brown, Tabious Carter, Leanna Clarke, Dominic Clawson, Sloan Coey, Madilyn Collmar, Jeremiah Conway, Harley Corey, Rylee Dale, RaeLynn Davis, Braxton Day, Leanna Drugan, Stytan Duffner, Scarlett Edwards, Emily Foster, Zoe Gibson, Ben Graban, Caliece Grimes, Jaelynn Hamilton, Brantley Henderson, Asher Hill, Christopher Hill, Jerry Hofacker, Kasper Hooper, Alana Humphrey, Jaxxon Hunt, Holden Hunter, Kason Huss, Greyson Isley, Halo Johnson, Isabella Leadingham, Brylie Loucks, Landon Mathews, Zariyah McIntyre, Lucas Mckeehen, Johnny Melton, Brooks Miller, Kyslee-Ann Neighbors, Karmen Nixon, Maci Robinson, Delainey Salser, Lincoln Sapp, Ella Sawman, Connor Schnuerer, Kenzlee Schnuerer, Isabella Schultz, Mark Sims, Dominick Smollen, Kohen Stahl, Zoe Stevens, Mila Swigart, Zeniyah Theophile, Isabella Thoman, Kendall Turner, Ellis VanDriest, Xzavian VanWagner, Amaira Watson, Garrett Watson, Madalynn Webb, Tyler Williams, Blake Winger, Wyatt Wooten and Brody Zeigler

**Fourth Grade** — Lilyahna Adkins, Albara Alanani, Jaxxon Bebout, Robert Beck, Blaire Belcher, Jasper Blair, Kymber Bowen, Josiah Brammer, Lyla Bristow, Madilyn Bryant, Raylee Carmichael, Ruger Childress, Kiryn Clouse, Cayne Comisford, Mason Crego, Abel Dewitt, Jekhi Finley, Owen Frank, Harrison Greving, Crue Henry, Josephine Hill, Emma Horsley, Oliver Hubert, Dalton Hudson, Ammita Jackson, Zaniya Kelly, Scarlett Kindinger, Ellorie Lang, Ra'Mari Lee, Emeri Lewis, Luke Lewis, Malachi Lindsay, Ashton Longboat, Cobey McCoy, Lincoln Morrow, Edith Mount, Lincoln Myers, Dean Nantz, Juni Parker, Cameron Parsley, Mae Rhinebolt, Dennis Sawman, Aaron Shabbir, Jase Shiera, Braxton Shively, Divinity Shoaf, Karsyn Sigafoos, Marlee Smith, Novalene Smith, Paytin Snyder, Lannden Stamper, Luke Stantz, Jace Stout, Brendan Thomas, Jocelynn Tindal, Cassidy Wilson, Makenzie Woodhull, Olivia York and Brynlee Young

**Fifth Grade** — Preslee Barney, Chloe Bridges, Steven Burnell, Kyrie Byrd, Jayce Clark, Seth Clark, Mahlaya Davis, Natalie Debo, Daisy Denney-Dailey, Mason Edmiston, Mason Edmiston, Jayden Estes, Jayden Estes, Allie Fellure, Andrew Finley, Landon Hammond, Landon Hammond, Gracie Henderson, Abel Hensley, Bryson Holloway, Bryson Holloway, Ethan Hutchison, Harley Kindinger, Kinsey Kirkpatrick, Grace Kunz, Phoenix Lewis, Jase Little, Paige Mathie, Alaina Palmer, Ares Peters, Toby Ransom, Conner Slone, Logan Smith, Brennan Stephens, Noah Tuttle and Elysiah (Ellie) Vanwagner

**Sixth Grade** — Zella Ball, Aubree Baugh, Corinne Beal, Madalyn Best, Caysance Bradshaw, Benton Brandt, Lewis Brinley, Brynlee Brunk, Amir Byrd, Araina Charley, Wyatt Clark, Cade Deems, Layla Fix, Peyton Hager, Laila Henderson, Bryant Hughes, Abigail (Abby) Hunter, Zay'ana Johnson, Ingrid Keffer, Kaliyah Keith, Bentley Kershner, Liam Kiser, Myla Lewis, Isabella Loera, Zeke Markley, Leighton Mastin, Lily Morton, Clayton Mount, Kellen O'Brien, Alexis Pace, Jylian Ramey, Isaiah Reeves, Allison Risner, Joel Robertson, Mya Sellards, Isaiah Smith, Sophia Smith, Carter Smollen, Aubrey Spurlock, Jaxon Turner, Kristopher Washington, Hoyt Watson, Tyson Wendling, Kalani White, Michael Williams, Aamy Younger and Arianna Zeigler

**Seventh Grade** — Za'mya Ajan, Ashley Anschutz, Aaron (Aj) Baker, Faith Barney, Tanner Bays, Eli Bell, Mason Bennett, Jeffrey Brooks, Liam Cushard, Richard (Ricky) Davis, Lauren Foster, Johnnie Gorham, Asherah Marie Hapin, Klayton Hayes, Derek Johnson, Erin Johnson, Cody King, Branson Littleton, Milo Mccann, Wyatt Miller, Leila Myers, Brielle Owens, Rocky Owens, Christian (Chris) Pennington, Mason Putney, Railynn Rollison, Addisyn Ruckman, Bristol Salser, Elena Santiago, Harper Sasis, Kemonie Sims, Haden Sisson, Lillian Suttle, Seth Utt, Milla Wertz and Myla-Jayne Wilds

**Eighth Grade** — Karleigh Anderson, Zane Baker, Bella Blanton, Reagan Brooks, Ky-Lyn Byerly, Katrina Carson, Logan Chambers, Amelia Clayborn, Gannon Conway, Grady Davis, Rianne Davis, Karsyon Dravenstott, David Elliott, Alyse Emery, Daevon Endicott, Peyton Foote, Samara Gillespie, Mia Grossweiler, Camilla Hall, Savannah Hamilton, Dillon Herder, Laine Heston, Troy Horn, Izabella Kenner, Sophia Kershner, Gabrielle Kline, Kaleb Llamas, Declan Maddy, Aaron Makeever, Landon Mcfarland, Aziyah Mcknight, Faith Metcalf, Preston Patrick, Casey Rachel, Alissa Rush, Gabriel (Gabe) Salyers, Addisyn Shopbell, Kendal Shrader, Mariah Stacy, Jonas Stapleton,

(Continued on Page 13)



# •Honor and Merit Rolls

(Continued from Page 12)

Vincent (Vinny) Studer, Aiden Washington, Alexander Weightman, Brennen Wilson, Ethan Wingo and Coryell Wooden

**Freshmen** — Camden Adkins, Ava Bays, Elijah Benton, Jaylee Black, Tynley Cook, Lucas Eckenwiler, Gavin Faith, Bella Guardiola, Isabelle Hall, Shianna Harper, McKenna Haynes, Grady Hunt, Bryce Jacobs, Troy Kegley, Lily Ann Klecka, Madison Kliever, Kya Longood, Helena Martin, Donald McCurdy, Lillian Mutter, Jalyonna Nelson, Daniel Norris, Gweneth Pennington, April Perkins, Addyson Powell, Amari Rasch, Rylan Rush, Trace Schafer, Madilyn Shenberger, Mackynzie Smith, Garrett Spiess, Nevaeh Spurgeon, Cloe Taylor, Morgan Turney, Cameron Williams and Mickayla Wilson

**Sophomores** — Bryant Carroll, Caliyah Clapper, Jarrod Cyrus, Alec Day, Shiana Elliott, Rozilynn Evans, Ariel Foote, Lily Fox, Ryan Fox, Kendall Graham, Lovia Grove, Cadence Gushard, Anyla Hence, Alana Henriquez, Sarah Holt, Haylie Hutcheson, Alexander Jenkins, Camylle King, Alexander Maddy, Ayden McGlasson, Angel Montanez, Victoria Neal, Devin Peterson, Rachel Porter, Joseph Roberts, Gracie Schaade, Max Thomas, Destiny Thompson and Elle Washington

**Juniors** — Leo Atwell, Caden Bishop, Anna Blanton, Destiny Britt, Alexis Cameron, David Clayburn, Isabella Conway, Sophia Curry, Gage Cyrus, Lucas Davidson, Micah Finley, Jace Germann, Treyvin Glasser, Brady Gretzinger, Aliya Hall, Travis Hicks, Ashtyn Huffman, Chase Hunsinger, Mason Johnson, Layla Krizan, McKarley Lowe, Christopher Manley, Hayden Mapes, Darius Marsh, Jordan McWilliams, JulieAnna Miller, Camden Moysi, Cadence Mutter, Ashley Nikolaus, Sophia Palmer, Branson Porter, Sarah Ringer, Zackary Sanders Winters, Lena Sasis, Kylie Schaefer, Autumn Schroeder, Peyton Schulte, Zoi Sealey, Joseph Seibert, Kaydence Sharp, Colton Shaw, Isabella Smith, Jesper Szameitat, Gabriela Vega-Wieland, Izabel Wamsley, Evan Williams and Baylee Yost

**Seniors** — Bradley Baich, Payton Bartolomea, Elizabeth (Libby) Bekeleski, Nathan Bittman, Noah Blust, Brandi Bowles, Bryce Braden, Natalie Brandt, Isabella Brown, Paityn Butler, Ethan Cates, Aubrie Clark, Jaselle Clark, Micah Clark, Preston Coffman, Jackson Collins, John Collins, Caleigh Cook, Laykin Curry, Lillian DeLong, Hayley Derrenberger, Nathan Evans, Camryn Gowitzka, Ashley Gust, Emmalie Hall, Landon Harvey, Alyson Hoak, Nathan Hoffman, Randy Jamieson, Brennan Johnson, Drew Kepple, Izabela King, Estella Koppert-Smith, Bradlee Kotterman, Zachariah Loretta, Nathanael Marks, Ashton McGlasson, Jacob Miles, Bryce Muller, Olivia Penrod, William Saunders, Elizabeth Schwartz, Katie Smith, Taylor Steffey, Brianna Stephens, Morgan Steward, Lucas Swanger, Lillian Symsick, Kayzia Thornley, Bryce Tudor, Koltin Urban, Joseph Walker, Julius Walker, Elias White, Danielle Williams and Kenneth Wright

## Clear Fork High School

Second Grading Period

### ALL A

**Freshmen** — Gabriella Bailey, Katie Beck, Brea Bieri, Millie Chamberlain, Coralene Cline, Marlee Cromer, Morgan Crunkilton, Brock Douglas, Brody Douglas, Lincoln Ehrmantraut, Isabella Fenton, Kaitlyn Gerhart, Elijah Jones, Garrett Lane, Ian Lang, Lillian McCready, Elijah Molina and Joshua Snider

**Sophomores** — Matthew Anders, Nathaniel Buck, Adilynn Hickinbotham, Luke Keever, Maria Knight, McKenley Knuckles, Kylie Ludwig, Ethan McFerren, Karlynn Mortimer, Kendall Oswalt, Quentin Rinehart, Emma Shultz and Adelyn Snyder

**Juniors** — Asia Bechtel, Ava Boccio, Jadelyn Brokaw, Mackenzie Daniels, Layla Daugherty, Aubri D'Hondt, Benjamin Dudley, Jonathan Evans, Charles Granholm, Alaina Hawkins, Davis Hoefflich, Marcus Hoefflich, Brody McGregor, Hudson Schag, Ella Schmidt, Hailly Thrush, Arianna Vanhooose and Owen Weikle

**Seniors** — Piper Black, Jacob Brokaw, Alyssa Burger, Sabree Caudill, Mattie Colegrove, Kaiden Dettmer, Abigail Geary, Jasmine Johnson, Nicholas Martin, Austin McFerren, Bryar Ouseley, Bailee Riddle, Selena Ross, Faith Smith, Sophia Wilson and Ashtyn Wine

### HONOR ROLL

**Freshmen** — John Angelas, Jackson Brubaker, Lucas Colvin, Kolton Crunkilton, Ameena Dorner, Elizabeth Dudley, Violet Freeman, Jude Gailey, Ava Kime, Kaitlin Kline, Cierra Knecht, Riley Line, Makaelah

Mills, Logan Oswalt, Brody Pritchard, Eli Rinehart, Wyatt Scheid, Jakob Schmidt, Caylin Sellers, Karli Shultz, Raegan Sudol, Brody Thompson, Drayden Tschantz and Mason Weidemeyer

**Sophomores** — Elyza Baumgardner, Ian Black, Gunnar Dill, Broghan Gatton, Alyson Geary, Audrey Haring, Alyssa Johnson, Malayna Kehl, Jyllian Langer, Presley Lilly, Adelyn New, Braylen Peteri, Ashley Peterson, Caitlin Seward, Caleb Snyder, Zhoie Steagall, Quinn Stover, Alina Van Horn, Allison Walker, Malia Walker and Alexis Walters

**Juniors** — Taylor Bly, Wesley Bunnell, Grace Burgholder, Mariah Hatfield, Zachary Hill, Erika Hollar, Joseph Lykins, Isabella McKenna, Avery McWilliams, Katrina Neal, Alekai Price, Peyton Sickles, Deacon Sims, Wade Traxler and Austin Vanhouten

**Seniors** — Kenadee Muntain, Porter Schmidt, Hadley Slaughter and Liliana Trunzo

### MERIT ROLL

**Freshmen** — Kylee Bloomfield, Dean Bowman, Wyatt Coble, Aimee Greene, Wade Hamilton, Ethan Kline, Stella Lynn, Tyler Mack, Mya Meyers, Evelyn Morfin, Landon Palmer, Maissa Price, Paige Reece, Chloe Sherman, Tenli Shultz, Lacy Skaggs, Beckett Slaughter, Trey Swank, Troy Swank, Audrie Thompson, Lincoln Thrush, Jayden Weemhoff, Ridge Wendling and Braylee Wenger

**Sophomores** — Aiden Armstrong, Kendall Baughman, Wyatt Bunnell, Chesnei Flynn,

Madelynn Frontz, Olivia Hall, Brayden Hayes, Gage Hoffman, Ashlyn Inman, Keegan Lorentz, Katelyn Lucci, Aubryn Nickoli, Brody Oswalt, Madilynn Peters, Isaiah Police, Paige Raike, Sophia Schag, Ashley Smith, Payton Snyder, Addison Thrush and Barrett Walters

**Juniors** — Jonathan Annis, Morgan Armstrong, Ava Campbell, Jorge Canto, Carter Coole, Aiden Demoss, Tiegan Franta, Jakub Hamilton, Brinley Kirkpatrick, Broegan Lyon, Hayden Northrup, Marin Ocheltree, Rogan O'Leary, Mya Perry, Marley Pinkerton, Taylor Richmond, Ava Roberts, Isaac Ross, Alexander Schlosser, Chloe Steward, Addison Weikle and Adalyn Wise

**Seniors** — Tobin Amos, Clement Britton, Reece Cook, Hansen Dornbier, Delilah Henry, Gwyneth Jones, Jayden Kaylor, Trysten Kilgore, Cameron Lanker, Savannah Mazzola, Gannon O'Brien, Christopher Ransom, Rozalyn Stover, Sophia Wharton, Nathaniel Wine and Jacob Zack



Sutton Bank donated \$25,000 to The Domestic Violence Shelter for survivors and their families during the holiday season. The donation helped ensure families arriving in winter felt seen, supported and safe. For information about the center visit thedvshelter.com.



## Catholic Schools Week highlights faith, service and educational choice

By Traci Little

Catholic Schools across the country are celebrating Catholic Schools Week, an annual observance recognizing the value of Catholic education and the role it plays in forming students academically, spiritually, and socially.

Since 1974, Catholic Schools Week has been sponsored by the National Catholic Education Association and is traditionally observed during the last week of January. Each day of the week focuses on a different theme, celebrating Catholic schools' connections to their communities, students, faculty and staff, parishes, vocations, and the nation.

At St. Mary of the Snows Catholic School, Catholic Schools Week has become a meaningful tradition rooted in faith, service, and togetherness. For more than a decade, the school has kicked off the week with a family fun night at either the Ashland Kroc Center or the Mansfield YMCA, bringing students, parents, and staff together outside the classroom. Each year also includes an all-school service project, reinforcing the importance of giving back.

This year, students created Valentine's Day cards for Richland County Children's Services and collected personal care items for the Catholic Charities HOPE Pantry. The week typically concludes with the School and Parish Mass, followed by an Open House and the start of registration for the upcoming school year. While winter weather often brings the occasional snow days, this year's severe snowstorm and dangerously cold wind chills required the entire week's celebration to be rescheduled.

Catholic Schools Week coincides this year with National School Choice Week, a nationwide effort to raise awareness about the wide range of educational options available to families. National School Choice Week promotes the belief that every child deserves a quality education and that learning is not one-size-fits-all. Families are encouraged to explore options including public, private, charter, magnet, online, homeschool, and nontraditional learning environments.

In Ohio, school choice opportunities have expanded significantly over the past two decades. The Ohio EdChoice Scholarship has been available for more than 20 years, with universal eligibility introduced in 2023. Additional programs, including the Autism Scholarship and the Jon Peterson Special Needs Scholarship, have further opened doors for families seeking specialized educational settings for their children.

St. Mary of the Snows Catholic School participates in several of these programs, including the EdChoice Traditional Scholarship, EdChoice Expansion Scholarship, and the Jon Peterson Special Needs Scholarship. These options help make Catholic education accessible to a broader range of families throughout the region.

St. Mary School hosted an Open House on Sunday, Feb. 1, from noon to 1:30 pm, offering families an opportunity to tour the school,

meet staff, and learn more about academic programs and scholarship opportunities. If you missed it, consider scheduling an individual tour by calling the school office at 419-589-2114.

As Catholic Schools Week comes to a close, St. Mary of the Snows continues its mission of forming students in faith, knowledge, and service. Through strong academics, meaningful traditions, and a commitment to meeting families where they are, the school remains a place where students are known, supported, and encouraged to grow — not only as learners, but as compassionate members of the community.



**ONTARIO ACADEMIC BOOSTERS** provided Everbowl for our students who earned highest honors for the second quarter.

## 20th Annual Road Apple Run is March 7

The 20th Annual Road Apple Run 5K Road Race will be held Saturday, March 7, at Crestview Schools.

The Road Apple Run will be an out and back 5K race on a scenic country road in northern Richland County. Bordered by several Amish farms, the course is mostly flat with some slight upgrades. The biggest challenge will be avoiding the 'exhaust' from the frequent travel of the horse drawn vehicles.

The entry fee is \$25 and pre-registration by Feb. 20 will guarantee an event t-shirt. Race day registration begins at 8:30 am in the commons area of Crestview High School. The race begins at 10 am.

Online and printed registration forms can be found at <https://sites.google.com/site/roadapple5k/>

First and second place will be awarded in each male and female age class. Classes are 10 and under, 11-12, 13-15, 16-18, 19-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60-69 and 70 and older.

Crestview High School is located at 1575 St. Rt. 96, Ashland.

All proceeds will support the school's cross country and track teams. For information contact Amy McFarland at 419-895-1700 ext. 18105 or [roadapplerun@gmail.com](mailto:roadapplerun@gmail.com). Savannah Lions Club will be offering a breakfast, payable as a donation.

## News Briefs in Education

Addie Lamb of Lexington was among students from Miami University who received degrees during the fall commencement Dec 12. She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree, majoring in Zoology.

The university is located in Oxford, OH.



Kendall Nolen of Mansfield was named to the Mississippi State University Fall 2025 President's List.

Students on the list achieved a 3.80 or better GPA, based on a 4.0 scale, while completing at least 12 semester hours of coursework with no incomplete grades or grades lower than a C.





# Richland Newhope welcomes four new board members

The Richland County Board of Developmental Disabilities (Richland Newhope) has announced the appointment of four new members to its board: Angela Tagg, Melissa Tommelleo, Mike Bichsel and Dan Barwick.

Angela Tagg and Melissa Tommelleo were appointed by Judge Kelly Badnell, while Mike Bichsel and Dan Barwick were appointed by the Richland County Commissioners. Board members are eligible to serve up to three four-year terms. Each new member brings valuable professional experience, strong community ties and a personal commitment to supporting people with developmental disabilities.

Angela Tagg joins the Richland Newhope Board, bringing both professional and personal experience in supporting people with disabilities. A retired educator with 34 years of service, she worked with students in kindergarten through eighth grade, including typical learners and students with disabilities. She holds a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education from Grove City College and a master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction: Intervention Specialist from Ashland University.

Tagg is active in her community through Crossroads Church and Grace Church in Ashland, volunteering with several local ministries, including the Tim Tebow Foundation's Night to Shine. In her free time, she enjoys reading, baking, golfing, spending time with family, and traveling with her husband and son.

"Richland Newhope's mission of supporting people to be valued members of their community and to live the life they desire reflects the same goals our family has for our son and others in the disability community," Tagg shared. "I am passionate about promoting independence, choice, and inclusion, and I am honored to serve in a role that aligns so closely with those values."

Melissa Tommelleo is a lifetime resident of Richland County and a partner at Weldon, Huston & Keyser, LLP. She graduated from Mansfield Senior High School in 1997, earned her undergraduate degree from Ashland University in 2001 and received her law degree from Capital University Law School in 2005.



Melissa Tommelleo, Judge Kelly Badnell and Angela Tagg



Commissioner Darrell Banks, Dan Barwick and Mike Bichsel

Tommelleo has a strong history of civic engagement, having served on the boards of Big Brothers Big Sisters of North Central Ohio and Third Street Family Health Services. She has also been an active member of the Richland County Bar Association Executive Committee since 2009, serving as President for two terms (2011-'12 and 2021-'22). She is married with three children and enjoys traveling with her family.

"I am very excited and honored to be appointed to the Board of the organization where I began my professional career in 2001 as a Resource Specialist," said Tommelleo. "It is meaningful to return and serve in this capacity."

Mike Bichsel is a New Philadelphia native who has called Richland County home for the past 20 years. He is employed with OhioHealth Mansfield Hospital in the Cardiac Rehabilitation Program. Mike holds a bachelor's degree in Exercise Physiology from Kent State University and a master's degree from Adelphi University.

Bichsel has three children: Allison, Patrick and Gavin. His decision to move to the area was strongly influenced by the availability of essential services for his daughter, who has disabilities. Mike is deeply involved in the community, volunteering with organizations such as Resurrection Parish, scouting programs, ILCNCO, and local youth leagues. He also coaches cross country and track and field at Lucas High School.

"I am thrilled to join the Richland County Board of Developmental Disabilities," said Bichsel. "A mission of my life has been dedicated to caring for my daughter, which has fueled my drive to improve the lives of people with developmental disabilities. I look forward to using my life experiences to advocate for the youth and adults we serve."

Dan Barwick is a lifelong Richland County resident who lives in Mansfield with his family. He graduated from Mansfield Senior High School and The Ohio State University and currently works as a Commercial Loan Officer with Mechanics Bank.

In addition to serving on the Richland Newhope Board, Barwick is Treasurer of the Richland County Historical Society Board and a member of the Mansfield Historic Preservation Commission. Outside of work and community service, he enjoys spending time with family and friends, playing and listening to music, cheering on the Ohio State Buckeyes, and, by his own admission, lamenting the Cleveland Browns.

"I love this community, and serving on the Board is especially meaningful to me as a parent of a child receiving services from Richland Newhope," Barwick said. "I am excited to contribute to its success and help improve the lives of the people it serves."

## GoFundMe account created for family

Mansfield's Michael and Tammie Wilson, owners of Wilson's Tax Services, are seeking help after an uninsured vehicle crashed into their home, causing significant structural damage to the foundation and basement.

The GoFundMe, organized by Britney Mehl, is intended to cover critical home repairs and replace damaged household items as the couple works to make their home safe again.

Life has been especially challenging for the couple over the past few years. Three years ago, Michael was struck by a car while helping a victim of a crash in front of their home. The impact threw him into the air, resulting in a broken leg and other serious injuries that led to his medical separation from employment.

Recently, their lives were turned upside down again when a car crashed into their home. The damage wasn't just to the living room wall where the car crashed — the impact caused significant structural damage to the foundation of the home. The basement walls are now buckled, and there is so much more that needs to be repaired throughout the house. To make matters worse, the driver was uninsured, and it was a group of juveniles involved in the accident.

The donations raised will go directly toward repairing the overwhelming amount of damage to their home, including the foundation and basement.

The gofundme page can be found at <https://www.gofundme.com/f/help-michael-tammie-wilson-rebuild-home>





**MANSFIELD CHRISTIAN'S** fourth, fifth and sixth grade students took center stage for a talent show on Jan. 30 at The Ohio State University at Mansfield Founders Auditorium, performing before a full house. The evening featured an impressive variety of acts, highlighting the students' creativity, confidence, and hard work. From start to finish, the performances captivated the audience and made for a memorable night. Special thanks go to Mr. Hostetler, Mr. Williams, and Mr. and Mrs. Guined for their dedication in organizing and bringing the event to life.



Photos By Traci Little



## OSU-M to host art exhibit that explores the effects of Incarceration

A group of artists who have been directly impacted by incarceration are sharing their artwork and ideas during a new exhibit at Ohio State Mansfield's Pearl Conard Art Gallery.

The exhibit is called "Blood, Sweat, and Tears Too" and features artwork by members of The Returning Artists Guild – a group of artists that includes current and former inmates of the penal system.

The artists use a range of artistic materials and approaches to reflect on loss, time, resilience, care and survival.

The exhibit will remain open through March 13.

"Through their artwork, these individuals explore both individual and societal effects of incarceration," said Kate Shannon, associate professor of art at Ohio State Mansfield. "This opens a dialog about how existing systems shape lived experience and how they might be reimagined with greater care."

Aimee Wissman, co-founder of the Returning Artists Guild, said the group is excited to showcase their work in a collegiate setting.

"Our paradigm as a guild is informed by the belief that artists are always at the forefront of social change and our artists are uniquely positioned to imagine what the free future could look like," she said. "They are the experts in the room when it comes to thoughtful critiques of the carceral state."

Shannon is Ohio State's Artist Laureate and said the exhibit is another way for students and the public to encounter a broad range of perspectives and viewpoints.

"People who are currently incarcerated aren't able to easily share their perspectives, so for the gallery to create space for voices that are sometimes stifled or muted is really impactful," she said.

A similar exhibit is also on display at The Ohio State University at Newark. The exhibit is made possible by a Spark Grant from the Mellon Foundation and the Ohio Prison Education Exchange Project.

The exhibit is free to attend at the Pearl Conard Art Gallery, Room 156 of Ovalwood Hall, at 1680 University Dr., Mansfield. For more information, Kate Shannon is available at [shannon.112@osu.edu](mailto:shannon.112@osu.edu).



**Terri Voss, Boo Boo, Hand-sewn bear made from "states", 2023**



**ONTARIO HIGH SCHOOL** sophomores went to Pioneer Career & Technology Center to see the facilities and opportunities available to them next year.



**ONTARIO WARRIOR LEADERSHIP COUNCIL** freshmen decorated the February bulletin board at the high school.



**TWO YOUNG CRESTED** geckos were donated to Ontario High School by Exotic Pet Paradise. Their names are Ember and Ash. Geckos allow the biology students to see Van der Waals forces in action — the weak intermolecular forces that allow geckos to climb up surfaces.



## Tribune-Courier Sports Highlights

## Madison seniors honored as Rams take 54-35 win

Photos and Article By Traci Little

**MADISON TOWNSHIP** — The Madison Comprehensive High School Rams celebrated senior night with big win over Dover.

In the girls varsity basketball game on Feb. 4, the Rams defeated the Dover Crimson Tornadoes 54-35, capping off a memorable night that honored the program's seniors.

Before the tip-off, three standout players were recognized for their dedication and contributions to the team: #11 Maddie Berry, #13 Grace Speelman and #14 Morgan Cook. Their leadership on and off the court has helped guide the Rams through a season of growth and resilience.

The victory over Dover adds to a season that has already seen the Rams overcome challenges and raise expectations under the guidance of head coach Doug Rickert.

Taking over the reigns in late June, Rickert became the third coach in four years, promising to instill accountability, build a winning culture and elevate the program's standards.

Despite a tough loss to Ashland on Jan. 28 that ended their run at the Ohio Cardinal Conference title, Madison has regained excitement and momentum in girls basketball. "We are second in a very tough league," Rickert added. "That is pretty darn good. We have to be happy with that considering where we came from. People didn't expect us to do any of that, but I love how hard they have worked to get here."

With the regular season winding down, the Rams now turn their focus to the postseason. Key matchups ahead will test their resilience, but with senior leadership and a coach committed to raising the bar, Madison looks poised to make a strong tournament run.





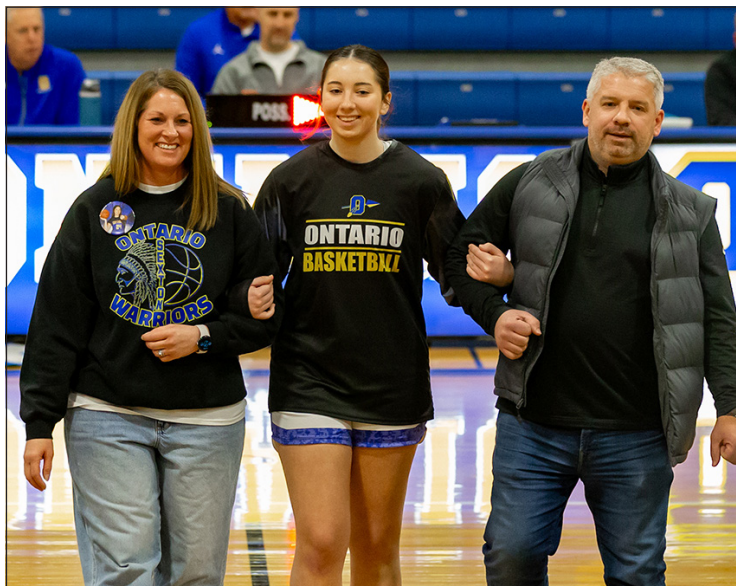
# Tribune-Courier Sports Highlights

## MADISON VS DOVER GIRLS VARSITY BASKETBALL · PHOTOS BY TRACI LITTLE





## Tribune-Courier Sports Highlights



## Ontario edges River Valley on senior night, 52-49

Photos and Article By Traci Little

ONTARIO — Ontario found a way to get past a familiar hurdle last Thursday night, holding off Caledonia River Valley for a hard-fought 52-49 victory in Ohio girls basketball action on Feb. 5.

The win carried extra meaning as the Lady Warriors celebrated Senior Night, honoring four players before tipoff: Elaina Owens (#2), Addi Pittman (#10), Hayden Sexton (#24), and Morgan Pearson (#32). Each senior was recognized for her dedication and contributions to the program, setting an emotional tone for the evening.

Once the ball went up, the matchup delivered exactly what fans have come to expect when these two teams meet — a tight, physical contest that came down to the final moments. Ontario and River Valley traded baskets throughout the night, with neither team able to create much separation.

Ontario responded with poise, executing offensively and coming up with key defensive stops late to preserve the three-point win. Ontario's ability to stay composed in a pressure-filled finish proved to be the difference.

Ontario will look to build on the momentum as postseason play approaches, while River Valley aims to regroup after another closely contested conference battle.





## Tribune-Courier Sports Highlights

**ONTARIO VS RIVER VALLEY GIRLS VARSITY BASKETBALL • PHOTOS BY TRACI LITTLE**





# Tribune-Courier Sports Highlights

## OHSAA renames track and field state championships after Jesse Owens

The Ohio High School Athletic Association has announced that its annual track and field state championships in early June will be named after track and field legend and pioneer Jesse Owens and unveiled the schedule and format for this year's event with the expansion to five divisions.

The OHSAA Board of Directors unanimously accepted a proposal from OHSAA Executive Director Doug Ute that, effective immediately, the event be renamed the OHSAA Jesse Owens Track and Field State Championships.

Besides recognizing Owens, who demonstrated excellence, resilience, integrity and courage throughout his lifetime, the change is part of the 'Jesse Owens Initiative', "Beyond the Finish Line." Created by 'The Soul of Philanthropy Cleveland', it helps resurrect the legacy of one of America's greatest heroes, empower the next generation and unite people from all backgrounds to pursue their highest potential. Joined by The Ohio State University and The Jesse Owens Foundation, this change at this time aligns OHSAA with the work of The Ohio 250 Commission, dedicated to recognizing Ohio's significant contributions in celebrating the 250th anniversary of the United States.

Kevin Johnson, one of four founders of The Soul of Philanthropy Cleveland, said "the idea to rename the championships grew from a belief that Jesse Owens' legacy should be permanently honored in Ohio; that Jesse Owens' legacy should be visible, permanent and rooted in Ohio. We are very grateful to the OHSAA, along with our partners and supporters for embracing the idea, and we're committed to honoring Jesse Owens not only as a global icon, but as a proud son of Cleveland whose story continues to inspire generations of Ohioans and beyond."

This year, 2026, is the 90th anniversary of the historic 1936 Olympics, after which Jesse Owens was nicknamed "Superman" for his unprecedented accomplishments under intense scrutiny and at a time of significant global uncertainty.

"We are extremely excited to honor Jesse Owens in this way," said Ute. "His name and accomplishments speak for themselves, and having their picture taken in front of his statue during the state championships is the goal of every track and field athlete in Ohio. Renaming the state tournament after Jesse Owens is a natural and will continue to lift up his legacy for everything he meant to Ohio and our country – on and off the track."

The state tournament will be held over four days at Jesse Owens Memorial Stadium on the campus of The Ohio State University June 4-7. The full schedule is posted at <https://ohsaaweb.blob.core.windows.net/files/Sports/Track-Field/2026/2026StateMeetSchedule.pdf>

Competing for Cleveland East Tech High School, Owens won nine OHSAA state track and field tournament events, including four as both a junior and senior in 1932 and 1933, and set seven state records. At the national interscholastic meet in Chicago during his senior year, he set a world record, tied a world record and set a national high school mark. Owens then enrolled at Ohio State, where he performed one of the greatest feats in athletic history at the Big Ten Championships held in Ann Arbor, Mich., on May 25, 1935. Uncertain that he would even participate after recently falling down a flight of steps, Owens set world records in the 220, 220 low hurdles and the long jump and tied the world mark in the 100, all in a span of about 45 minutes.

In 1936, Owens qualified for the Olympic Games that were held in Nazi Germany and became the first American track and field athlete to capture four gold medals in a single Olympiad, winning the 100, 200, long jump and 4x100 relay. While showcasing his excellence on a global stage, his victories provided a powerful rebuke to Adolf Hitler's racist ideology, cementing his status as a legendary figure who symbolizing perseverance and breaking barriers, with his achievements setting a standard for future generations of athletes. Owens died on March 31, 1980.



**AIDEN OHL**, son of Monty and Jeanette OHL, will be wrestling for Ohio University in the fall of 2026. He recently signed a Letter of Intent at Ontario High School.

## Shelby defeats Ontario 55-46 in Mid-Ohio Athletic Conference battle

By Kris Leiter

Two sayings that describe last week's game when Shelby's varsity basketball team hosted the Ontario Warriors are "Never assume" (especially in the world of sports) and "No matter the records, that's why we play the games."

These two schools have not slowed down since the football season of 2023! Over the past two years, both teams have scrapped in both the pigskin of the gridiron as well as the basketball court.

In the Shelby gymnasium, security was tight and emotions were high as this was a game to see!

Based on the records of both teams (Warriors 14-5, 8-4, second MOAC) and (Whippets 11-5, 8-4 third MOAC), you would assume the Warriors would be loaded and ready to blaze a trail.

During the first half, Ontario was leading 15-13, holding true to their phenomenal season so far.

The Warriors would sizzle the nets in the second quarter and would outscore Shelby in the second quarter 15-8!

At the halftime horn, the Warriors were holding a comfortable lead of 30-21. The Warriors could be on their way to notch another victory unless Shelby's Coach Greg Galloway could utilize the likes of his team and get the dogs fired up!

As they say, "Who let the dogs out!" The Warriors were about to find out...Coach Galloway and the Whippets were about to make their presence known and it was time to "flip-the-script!"

Senior, 6', Landon Foltz was once a Warrior but is now on the Shelby roster. He put up 23 points against his former team.

Shelby outscored the Warriors 34-16 in the third-quarter alone. The score was now tied 37-37 going into the fourth and final quarter. What a game! And it isn't over yet!

Another 18 points were added in the fourth quarter by the Whippets and the Warriors would only score nine, thanks to Shelby's tough defense. The final tally would have the Whippets landing the victory of 55-46!

Shelby's Foltz had the game's high, scoring 23 points, and Brayden Devito contributed seventeen.

Ontario has had three losses in the past three games. Scoring for the Warriors were sophomore Triston Flenoury with 16 and sophomore Cardae Brown, with eight. Cam Powers notched six points, Zane Curry had four and senior Remington Schroeder had two.



## Tribune-Courier Sports Highlights

### ONTARIO HIGH SCHOOL AT ASHLAND WRESTLING • FEB. 2





## Tribune-Courier Sports Highlights

CLEAR FORK VS CARDINGTON VARSITY GIRLS BASKETBALL SENIOR NIGHT • FEB. 7  
PHOTOS BY JEFF HOFFER

## Senior players recognized during Clear Fork game

Clear Fork's senior night for the girls basketball team was held Feb. 7. To kick-off the recognitions, two honorary captains, Jamison Geifer and Kerri Gottfried, were honored.

Jamison Giefer has been the Clear Fork Athletic Trainer for the past 11 years, having spent the past 36 years in the profession.

Kerri (Barr) Gottfried graduated from Clear Fork High School in 1989. She went on to be a 4-year letter winner in softball at Ashland University. During her time at Clear Fork as a player, she accumulated a record of 135-54 in volleyball, basketball and softball. As a coach she is 587-280 between her time with the basketball and softball programs.

With a record of 722-334 as both a player and a coach, which is over 1,000 contests, Gottfried is the all-time winningest individual in Clear Fork history.

The varsity girls basketball seniors were then recognized.

Eliana Pelkey (#30) was escorted by her parents Angel and Micah Pelkey as well as her sisters Brooklyn and Jalyn and her brother Micah. Her high school activities included three years of varsity track as well as her three years of varsity basketball.

Eliana's future plans are to go to college and become a pediatric radiology technician. Her favorite basketball memories are getting to practice and having a gift exchange with the mini Colts, the bus ride back from winning districts and winning the MOAC this season. Ashtyn Wine (#22) was escorted by her parents Shannon and Ryan Wine as well as her sisters Avary and Ayla.

Ashtyn's high school activities included girls soccer, student council, Spanish club, NHS and girls basketball. Her plans after high school are to attend Ashland University and obtain a degree in the exercise science field. Her favorite basketball memories were doing the murph on Memorial Day every year and getting breakfast afterwards, riding the bus home after winning districts and winning the MOAC this season.

Brinley Barnett (#25) was escorted by her parents Ashley and Jonathan Barnett as well as her sister Brooke. Brinley's high school activities included four years of varsity soccer as well as four years of varsity basketball.

Brinley's future plans are to continue her academic and athletic careers at Capital University while also playing soccer. Her favorite basketball memories include practicing with the mini Colts and having a gift exchange with them, the bus ride back from winning districts and beating Shelby while winning the MOAC this season.





## Tribune-Courier Sports Highlights

**CLEAR FORK VS CARDINGTON VARSITY GIRLS BASKETBALL SENIOR NIGHT • FEB. 7**  
**PHOTOS BY JEFF HOFFER**



**CLEAR FORK VS CARDINGTON JUNIOR VARSITY GIRLS BASKETBALL**  
**FEB. 7 • COLTS WIN 38-9 • PHOTOS BY JEFF HOFFER**





## CLASSIFIEDS

## Ontario High School Winter Dance

CITY OF ONTARIO 2026 WATER  
MAIN LOOPING  
AND REPLACEMENT

Separate sealed bids for the 2026 Water Main Looping & Replacement in the City of Ontario, Ohio will be received by Michael Morton, Service-Safety Director, at 555 Stumbo Road, Ontario, Ohio 44906 until 10:00 AM, local time Thursday March 5, 2026, and then, at said office, publicly opened and read aloud.

The project includes the installation of approximately 2,300 LF of 8-inch ductile iron water main. The project also includes the replacement of 4 fire hydrants and 30 service lines. The estimated cost of construction is \$650,460.00.

The Instructions to Bidders, Form of Bid, Form of Contract, Plans, Specifications, and other contract documents may be examined at KE McCartney & Associates, 52 North Diamond Street, Mansfield, Ohio 44902 between the hours of 8:00 AM and 4:00 PM.

In order to be a plan holder of record and eligible to submit a bid, bidders will be required to purchase and download an electronic set of plans and bid documents via the KEM Web Site by visiting <https://kemccartney.com/project-bids/>. All documents become the property of the prospective bidder, with no portion of the payment being refunded.

Michael Morton  
Safety-Service Director  
City of Ontario, Ohio  
(T-C 2-12, 19 2026) 39L



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Lisa Anderson  
NMLS 618735



MRS. SUNNUCKS FIRST GRADE CLASS at Ontario worked in small groups to problem solve how to make cubes and pyramids out of paper. They had a chance to explore faces, vertices and edges. Jonah Stevens and Ana Snyder-Tyrrell display their creations.

## Downtown Ashland – 126 E Main Street



- ✓ Protein Shakes
- ✓ Energy Drinks
- ✓ Wellness Boosters
- ✓ Immunity Tea

## Inside Whoopsie Daisy Bowtique

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Thursday – Friday (6:30 am – 5 pm) | Saturday (8 am – 3 pm)