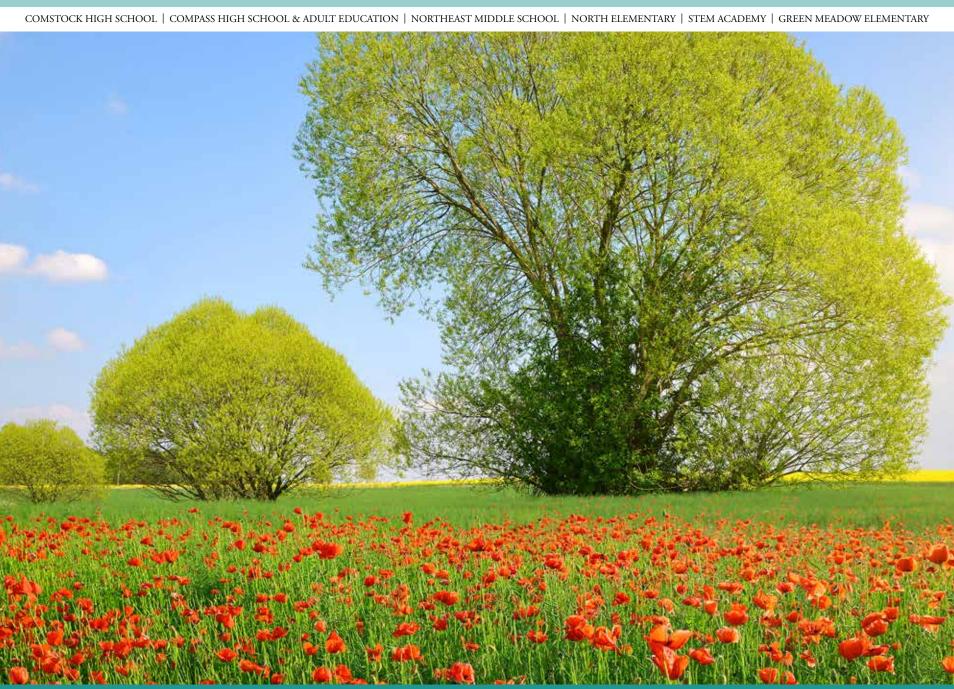
The Comstock Communicator



ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS

From the Superintendent pages 2 & 3

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News from the Athletic Dept page 12 School Calendar page 13 Comstock Library News pages 13 & 14

MORE NEWS

Turn over to read

Center Point

A newsletter about the

Comstock

Community Center

From the Superintendent



Dear Comstock Schools Community,

This past year, over an eight-month period from March to November, 2016, the Board of Education developed a strategic plan

for the district. The process involved staff and community members meeting multiple times to give input and develop the various components of the plan. In November, the Board adopted new mission, vision, and belief statements, and also identified five major goal areas for the district. The following are the details of the Comstock Public Schools' Strategic Plan for 2016-2020.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Comstock Public Schools is to serve our community by supporting, inspiring, and challenging every person within the school district to reach his/her full potential through education.

VISION STATEMENT

The vision of Comstock Public Schools is to be an educational community where every person is empowered to reach his/her full potential.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

We Believe:

All students have the ability to learn.

We prepare students for their future and foster lifelong learning.

In evidenced-based decision making.

We can meet the needs of each student.

Education is a community effort.

Diversity is valuable.

Goal Area 1: Academics & Programs

Goal Statement: Comstock Public Schools will improve educational outcomes for all students through the efficient and effective use of student data, academic programming, and school calendars.

First Year Objectives:

• Academic Data Warehouse will be uploaded, and staff will be trained on how to use it.

• State assessment proficiency will increase by 20 percent.

Goal Area 2: Learning Environment & Culture Goal Statement: Comstock Public Schools will develop a school community that supports the whole student through active learning, leadership, academics, healthy lifestyles, and the arts.

First Year Objectives:

- Identify universal support systems in all buildings. (i.e. Leader in Me)
- Reduce out-of-school suspensions.

Goal Area 3: Operations

Goal Statement: Comstock Public Schools will develop a comprehensive, proactive, prioritized building and equipment maintenance program including funding, staffing and technology.

First Year Objectives:

- Communicate bond-funded building improvements.
- Address facility needs not included in current bond projects.
- Technology replacement schedule.
- Bus replacement schedule.

Goal Area 4: Personnel & Leadership

Goal Statement: Comstock Public Schools will develop and implement an ongoing process to review and update personnel policies, practices and funding allocations to support recruitment, retention and development of high quality staff.

First Year Objectives:

- Document and communicate responsibilities for HR staff.
- Implement employee handbook.
- Create and communicate compensation philosophy and policy.
- Budgeting process develop a five-year forecasting plan.

Goal Area 5: Communication & Community Engagement

Goal Statement: Comstock Public Schools will develop and implement a plan to actively communicate through a variety of venues, media

Continued on page 3



COMSTOCK PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A SCHOOL DISTRICT DEDICATED TO KIDS www.comstockps.org

> Todd Mora Superintendent

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Brandy Brown, President Shirley Amos, Vice-President Richard Hathaway, Secretary Pamela Dickinson, Treasurer Karen Howes, Trustee Matthew Schreiner, Trustee Jeff Van Goeye, Trustee

Paula Johnson, Appointed Treasurer Faye Goldner, Appointed Recording Secretary

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Comstock Public Schools is to serve our community by supporting, inspiring, and challenging every person within the school district to reach his/her full potential through education.

VISION STATEMENT

The vision of Comstock Public Schools is to be an educational community where every person is empowered to reach his/her full potential.

QUESTIONS?

If you have questions concerning your schools, the answer is only a telephone call away: 269-250-8907

STORIES OR INFORMATION

The Comstock Communicator is published by Comstock Public Schools. Information may be sent to Todd Mora at morat@comstockps.org or by fax at 250-8908. It may also be e-mailed to Phyllis Rose at phyllisarose@aol.com.



@comstockps.org

From the Superintendent Continued from page 2

and systems across the district, community and county positively and effectively.

First Year Objectives:

- Marketing plan is established and includes positive monthly press featured on Mlive and TV.
- Survey results show 20 percent increase in communication satisfaction.
- Increase IC portal/notification parent and student users by 20 percent.

To help ensure success in implementing our mission, vision, beliefs, and goals, our district

- Align the Strategic Plan with the District/School Improvement Plans.
- Align the Strategic Plan with the 2016-17 Budget and beyond.
- Develop and implement a reporting/Board monitoring calendar.
- Develop and implement an internal/external

communications plan.

- Develop and implement action plans for each identified objective.
- Create opportunities for stakeholder involvement.
- Schedule a One-Year Renewal with the original planning team participants.

Throughout the future, I will be providing the Board and the community with updates on the district's progress on achieving these goals. I will provide those updates online at www.comstockps. org/District/Strategicplan and via quarterly updates at board meetings. Please feel free to contact me if you have questions.

With Colt Pride! Todd D. Mora Superintendent

Register for Kindergarten and Young Fives

Comstock Public Schools will be offering Young Fives for the 2017-2018 school year.

Kindergarten Roundup was in March, but it's not too late if you missed it. Please call 250-8960 for Green Meadow and 250-8550 for North Elementary.

The STEM Academy is also offering kindergarten and can be reached at 250-8560. Signing up early is easy and quick. Don't wait for fall. Register now



COMSTOCK PUBLIC SCHOOLS - STRATEGIC PLAN SUMMARY 2016-2020

The MISSION of Comstock Public Schools is to serve our community by supporting, inspiring, and challenging every person within the school district to reach their full potential through education.

The **VISION** of Comstock Public Schools is to be an educational community where every person is empowered to reach their full potential.



- All students have the ability to learn
- We prepare students for their future and foster lifelong learning
- In evidenced-based decision making
- We can meet the needs of each student
- **Education is a community effort**
- Diversity is valuable

Strategic Focus Areas

ACADEMICS & PROGRAMS

Goal Statement: Comstock Public Schools will improve educational outcomes for all students through the efficient and effective use of student data, academic programming, and school calendars.

First Year Objectives:

- Academic Data Warehouse will be uploaded, and staff will be trained to use it
- Implement K-3 reading plan
- State assessment proficiency will increase by 20%

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT & CULTURE

Goal Statement: Comstock Public Schools will develop a school community that supports the whole student through active learning, leadership, academics, healthy lifestyles, and the arts.

First Year Objectives:

- · Identify universal support systems in all buildings (i.e. Leader in Me)
- Reduce out of school suspensions

OPERATIONS

Goal Statement: Comstock Public Schools will develop a comprehensive, proactive, prioritized building and equipment maintenance program including funding, staffing, and technology.

First Year Objectives:

- Building improvements
- Address needs not included in current bond projects
- Technology replacement schedule
- Bus replacement schedule

PERSONNEL & LEADERSHIP

Goal Statement: Comstock Public Schools will develop and implement an ongoing process to review and update personnel policies, practices and funding allocations to support recruitment, retention, and development of high quality staff.

First Year Objectives:

- Document and communicate responsibilities for HR staff
- · Implement employee handbook
- Create and communicate compensation philosophy and
- Budgeting process develop a 5-year forecasting plan

COMMUNICATIONS & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Goal Statement: Comstock Public Schools will develop and implement a plan to actively communicate through a variety of venues, media, and systems across the district, community, and county positively and effectively.

First Year Objectives:

- Marketing plan is established and includes positive monthly press featured on MLive and TV
- Survey results show 20% increase in communication satisfaction
- Increase IC portal/notification parent and student users by 20%

Comstock Board of Education: Dr. Brandy Brown, President // Shirley Amos, Vice-President // Dr. Richard Hathaway, Secretary Pamela Dickinson, Treasurer // Karen Howes, Trustee // Matthew Schreiner, Trustee // Jeff Van Goeve, Trustee Superintendent: Todd Mora

State Passes Third Grade Reading Retention Bill

Recently, Michigan passed the Third Grade Reading Retention Bill which will require third graders to be held back if they are not proficient in reading. This legislation makes Michigan the seventeenth state with such rules. The bill is available online at http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2015-2016/billanalysis/House/pdf/2015-HLA-4822-22068DE3.pdf.

The law states:

- Schools must assess the reading skills of K-3 students at least three times per academic year.
- Students who are not reading at grade level will receive an individual reading plan.
- Parents will be given a home reading plan and encouraged to read with their children outside of school.
- Third graders will not advance to the next grade unless their state reading scores are less than a grade level behind on the MSTEP, they show

proficiency through an alternative assessment or they demonstrate mastery through work samples.

• Parents may seek a "good cause" exemption which applies to students with disabilities, students who speak English as a second language, those who were previously held back and have received intensive reading interventions, and for newer students who didn't receive an appropriate individualized reading intervention in their previous district.

Why?

- Last year, less than half of Michigan's third grade students were proficient in reading.
- The Michigan Department of Education does not want students falling further behind.

Comstock staff members are dedicated to producing successful readers and collaborating with families. Thank you for your support!

Board Briefs

ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

January 9, 2017

- Elected officers as follows: Brandy Brown, President; Shirley Amos, Vice President; Richard Hathaway, Secretary; Pamela Dickinson, Treasurer
- Appointed Faye Goldner as recording secretary and Paula Johnson as treasurer.
- Established board committee memberships for Policy Committee, Performance Committee, Personnel Committee, and Facility & Finance Committee.
- Approved various authorizations related to conducting the district's business.

REGULAR MEETING

January 9, 2017

- Board members were given certificates recognizing their service.
- Assigned board members as liaisons to the buildings as follows:

North - Pamela Dickinson Green Meadow - Karen Howes Northeast Middle - Matt Schreiner STEM Academy - Richard Hathaway High School - Jeff VanGoeye Compass - Shirley Amos Transportation – Brandy Brown

SPECIAL MEETING

January 16, 2017

- Heard a presentation from Steve Braithwaite of the Mutant Brothers Artcars and Promotional vehicles about their plans for the use of the ACLC facility at 301 N. 26th St. They want to transform the building into an International Artist/Permaculture community, designed to encourage artistic talents.
- Approved evaluating the proposal from Steve Braithwaite.
- At the next meeting, the board will discuss what will be gained from the sale of the ACLC facility.

WORK SESSION

January 23, 2017

• Tom White of the Michigan Association of School Boards (MASB) facilitated a training session on how to evaluate the superintendent using the new superintendent evaluation tool.



CHS ALUMNI REUNION

Saturday, June 24, 2017

Comstock High School 2107 N. 26th Street

Doors open at 11 a.m. Potluck at Noon

Bring your own table service and a dish to pass. Come join your friends and classmates. Pass the word around!



Join Superintendent Mora for Coffee and Conversation

Superintendent Todd Mora invites you to join him for coffee and conversation at one of several events at Niko's Express, 5876 King Highway; Panera Bread, 5627 Gull Road; or Julianna's Restaurant, 2105 Lake Street.

This will be your chance to talk to Superintendent Mora about any concerns you have about what's happening in the district or specifically about your child's school.

Upcoming dates are:

- April 19 and May 17, 9-10 a.m., at Iulianna's
- April 26 and May 24, 8-9 a.m., at Niko's Express
- April 12 and May 3, 9-10 a.m. at Panera Bread

Please take advantage of these opportunities to learn more about the district and to voice any concerns you may have.

Pence Receives Foundation Scholarship

Holly Pence, Comstock's Director of Dining Services, has received the National Child Nutrition Foundation scholarship which will enable her to attend the National CACFP (Child and Adult Care Food Program) Sponsors Association Conference in San Diego, California, in April.

Her scholarship is one of 14 awarded from over 1,000 submissions. At the conference, she will join over 1,200 members of the child nutrition community for training, networking, and learning opportunities.

The National Child Nutrition Foundation is the sister organization and charitable arm of the National CACFP Sponsors Association whose goal is to secure financial resources to develop nutrition education materials, offer grant programs, and provide professional development and scholarship opportunities for the child nutrition community, where healthy eating starts early.

Since 1986, the National CACFP Sponsors Association (NCA) has been the leading national organization for sponsors who administer the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).

The organization provides education and support to thousands of members in the CACFP community and to sponsors of all sizes from across the country. They also strive to improve communication among families, caregivers, sponsors, and their supervising government agencies.

Comstock Community Auditorium Events Open to the Public

April:

- 11 West Michigan Home school Fine Arts Spring Band/Choir Concert; 7 p.m.(includes band, orchestra, choir) \$3 at the door.
- 14 Winnie The Pooh Kids-Home-school Performing Arts; 5:30 & 7:30 p.m. Tickets: 1-855-472-1472
- 28-29 Mary Poppins; Home school Performing Arts; 7 p.m. Matinée on the 29th at 3 p.m. Tickets: 1-855-472-1472

- 4-6 Mary Poppins Home school Performing Arts; 7 p.m. Matinée on the 6th at 3 p.m. Tickets: 1-855-472-1472
- 7-8 Center Stage Theater-Annie Auditions-Colt Center; 5 p.m.
- 8 Red Cross Blood Drive; Colt Center; 7 a.m.-3 p.m.
- 9 Kalamazoo Christian High School Choir/Band Concert; 7:30 p.m. FREE
- 11 Gull Lake Band Concert; 7 p.m.; Admission at the door \$5 for adults; \$3 for youths and seniors.
- 13 Comstock Senior Oscar Night; 7 p.m.
- 15 Kalamazoo Christian Middle School Choir/Band Concert; 7 p.m. FREE
- 16 Comstock STEM/Northeast Middle/High School Choir Concert; 7 p.m. FREE
- 17 NEMS/STEM Middle School Band Concert; 7 p.m. FREE
- 18 Comstock High School Band Concert; 7 p.m. FREE
- 21 Comstock High School Honors Convocation; 5 p.m. FREE
- 23 Shrek Jr.-Kalamazoo Christian Middle School Musical; Performances: 12:45 p.m. and 7 p.m. For ticket information, call 544-2332.
- 24 Comstock NEMS Awards Program; 7 p.m.
- 25 Green Meadow Music Program; 7 p.m. FREE
- 30 The Montessori School Concert; 6:30 p.m. FREE
- 31 Barclay Hills Graduation; 7 p.m.

- 1 Compass High School graduation; 7 p.m.
- 3 Traci Phelps Dance Studios Performance; 2-5:30 p.m. Call Studio for details/tickets.



Certified Nurse Aide Training, CNA

The Comstock Public Schools Community Education Center, 3010 Gull Road, offers a Certified Nurse Aide Training monthly.

Our intensive 80-hour course meets all of the requirements of the State of Michigan Certified Nurse Aide Training program. Course content includes long-term care facilities, physical and emotional needs of residents, resident rights, communication skills, death and dying, special needs including dementia care, vital signs, infection control techniques, observations, medical terminology, body mechanics, transfers, walkers, canes, positioning in bed, nutrition, intake and output, elimination needs, skin care, foot care, dressing, bathing, bed making, mouth care and first aid. Homework is required.

The class consists of ten classroom days from 8 a.m.-2:30 p.m. and three nursing home days from 7 a.m.-2 p.m. are required. Class size is limited to 22 students. Tuition is \$850, due at the time of registration. You get to keep the book.

A nurse aide uniform, appropriate shoes and a watch with a second hand are required. Students who desire state certification, pay an additional \$125 to the State of Michigan to take the state

Upcoming class dates are July 10, August 7, and September 5. Please call 269-250-8930 with questions.



Energy Conservation Program Reaches Milestone

The District has achieved over \$3 million in energy savings, according to Tim Searl, energy manager for the district.

In 2002, the district partnered with Cenergistic Inc. to initiate an energy management program. The goal of the program is to maintain comfort in occupied classrooms and offices, while reducing energy use, particularly during unoccupied times.

The conservation program has achieved over \$3 million in cost avoidance. The term cost avoidance reflects the amount of money the school district would have spent if energy use had continued at 2001 levels. Current utility bills (electricity, natural gas, and water) are compared to bills prior to 2002. Adjustments are made for variables such as weather, building use, student population census, and utility costs. The difference between what we would have spent and what we actually spent is cost avoidance.



As the chart shows, the district has saved nearly 29 percent of energy costs since July, 2002. That's equal to over \$3 million. The term BATCC stands for baseline adjusted to current conditions.

The baseline period for the program is July, 2001, through June, 2002. Cost avoidance is calculated from July, 2002, forward.

In addition to being a good steward of financial resources, the energy conservation program also reduces our carbon footprint and use of natural resources. Our use of electricity and natural gas has declined by 26 percent.

Using calculations from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), this reduction is comparable to not driving 3,618 cars for one year, or planting 445,335 tree seedlings for ten years.

The success of the energy management program relies heavily on the cooperation of all district employees. Everyone who uses energy in a school is responsible for ensuring that non-essential

devices are turned off at the end of the day.

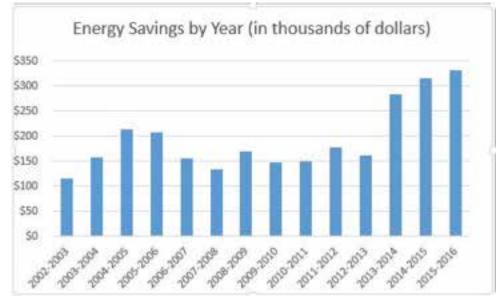
Nights, weekends, and holiday periods provide largest our opportunities energy for savings. In addition, district maintenance and custodial staff members provide a final

check on energy waste, by ensuring that lights are off and temperatures are adjusted properly for night shutdown.

The district has routinely achieved 80 percent or higher shut-downs for major holiday periods, including winter, spring, and summer break.

The chart below shows the year-by-year cost avoidance amounts.

As the district moves forward with bondfunded improvements to our schools, the energy management program anticipates even greater savings through upgraded heating and cooling systems, and automated lighting in areas such as locker rooms and rest rooms.



Students Visit Ferris State University



As part of the College and Career Academy, 41 high school students recently visited Ferris State University in Big Rapids, their third campus visit of the year.

After being greeted by the admissions team, students attended an informational session about the school's admissions criteria and financial aid process from some of the university's top officials.

Following the presentation, students walked around the 880-acre campus to visit residential halls, classrooms, libraries and the student success center. The group then dined in the famous "Rock Cafe" for lunch.

Before leaving, students participated in an interactive presentation from the Ferris State Multicultural Student Services team where current FSU undergrads shed some light on the everyday schedules of college students and shared key habits as to how they maintain their success.



Comstock students listen to a presentation about Ferris State University during a recent college visit.

New School Board Members



Karen Howes

Born and raised in Comstock, Karen Howes is a 1984 graduate of Comstock High School. She and her husband, Bruce, live in her family home they purchased in

2001. They have two sons, Grant, 16, a high school student, and Michael, 11, who attends the STEM Academy.

Howes has a degree in finance from WMU and has been a hairstylist for 18 years.

Elected to the school board last November, she says her first few weeks on the board have been eye opening.

"I have learned how hard the previous board worked," she said, noting that the board should be proud of completing the district strategic plan.

"The strategic plan is an indication that our school district, community and the school board are collaborating," she said.

Her time on the board has made her more aware

of the district's excellent administrators, teachers, staff, students and parents.

"The dedication to our school district is impressive and I am proud to serve on the school board," she said.



Matt Schreiner

Wanting a chance to have input into the policies and goals of the district, Matt Schreiner ran for the school board last fall and was elected. Schreiner is already enjoying working

other board members toward the common goal of improving students' educational experiences at Comstock.

In his short time on the board, he's seen at least one major accomplishment.

"We have worked to ensure that we are meeting the goals of our strategic vision with each and every decision we make as a board," he says.

But being on the board is also a learning

experience.

"The most important thing I have learned is that you can disagree with a group of people and still work together positively with them toward common important goals," he said.

A stay-at-home dad, Schreiner is married to Rebecca, a primary care internist and pediatrician. They have four children: Abigail, Annalise, Avery Grace, and Austin.

Abigail, 18, graduated from Comstock and is a freshman at Saginaw Valley State University. Attending Comstock's STEM Academy are Annalise, 11, a sixth grader, and Avery Grace, 9, a fourth grader.

"My son, Austin is two years old and wishes daily to ride the school bus to be a Comstock Colt," he says.

Schreiner is the volunteer president of the Eastwood Little League. When he and his family have free time, they enjoy traveling to new cities and attending competitive academic events. He also enjoys coaching youth sports.

Comstock High School

Band Students Earn Honors at District Event

Comstock High School band band members earned honors at the recent MSBOA District XI Solo & Ensemble Festival. Students performed either a solo or duet in front of a music adjudicator for a critique and rating. Adjudicators used the rating scale of a I - IV, with a "I" indicating the highest rating.

Out of the six events from Comstock High School, four were awarded a "II" rating and two events were awarded a "I". Congratulations to the following students:

Madison Ballinger - Flute Solo: I Rating Lauriana Sivley - Flute Solo: II Rating Emily Dodson - Alto Saxophone Solo - II Rat-

Clinton Lewis - Alto Saxophone Solo - II Rat-

Katie Rooney & Alyssa Loucks - Clarinet Duet:

Madison Ballinger & Lauriana Sivley - Flute Duet: II Rating

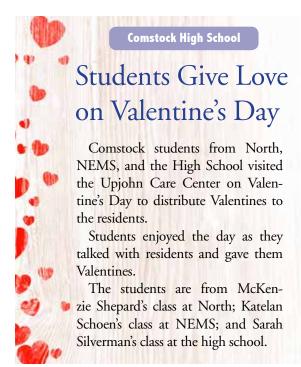
Symphonic Band Receives Highest Ratings

Comstock The High School Symphonic Band was one of two bands out of nine in their classification who received the best possible rating of a "I" from each adjudicator at the recent MSBOA District 11 Band Festival held at Harper Creek High School.

Congratulations Comstock Band of Blue!



Posing in front of the ratings poster are (back row from left to right): Laken Groll, Garrett Green, Thomas Newhouse, Clayton Osborn, Brian Hazen and (front row left to right): Michaela Kessler, Kendall Green, Taylor Wells, Miranda Cannon, Phoebe Aumack.



SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS NEEDED

Become a School Bus Driver! METS, the transportation employer for Comstock Public Schools, is currently hiring school bus drivers for part-time assignments starting at \$14.75 per hour.

No experience is necessary and training will be provided to qualified candidates. Apply today by sending your resume to: recruiting@contractbusdrivers.com.

For more information, please call (269) 250-8690, or toll free at (888) 996-8586

Pie-in-the Face Event Raises Funds



Even with pie in her face, Mrs. Connellee, gives the "thumbs up" for the Honor Society fundraiser.

NEMS English and reading teacher, Cristy Connellee, took a pie in the face from student Megan Kendall, all in good fun as part of the NEMS National Junior Honor Society's (NJHS) fundraiser. The event raised over \$200 which will be used to paint doors at NEMS.

The event started when students were asked to vote for the teacher they would most like to see get a pie in the face. They voted by placing money in a jar with that teacher's name on it. At the end of two weeks, the teacher with the most money in his/her jar would get a pie in the face during the



Jerome Bryant, NEMS student behavior and security liaison, gives the signal for Megan Kendall to throw a pie in the face of Cristy Connellee, NEMS English and reading teacher.

student-staff basketball game.

Every time students put at least 10 cents in a jar, they could write their names on a ticket. At the basketball game, a student's name was drawn from all the tickets entered and that's how Megan got to throw a pie in Mrs. Connellee's face. Megan also won a \$20 WalMart gift card.

In addition to the money raised through the event, Student Government surprised Liz Norton, NJHS advisor, with a check for an additional \$200.

North Elementary

North Students Stage a Puppet Show

North students recently created puppets to use with a visiting artist to put on a puppet show. This was to prepare them for viewing an Aesthetic Education Work of Art.

Students also read or listened to Bruce Coville's Jeremy Thatcher, Dragon Hatcher with their teacher. Through an Education for the Arts Grant, students enjoyed an original screenplay of Jeremy Thatcher, Dragon Hatcher at Western Michigan University's Shaw Theatre.

Puppets and changing technological scenes kept the audience engaged the entire time. Students and staff were amazed as they watched a dragon grow on the stage.

The screenplay was so moving one could spot a tear or two on the audience's faces. "I didn't expect it to be so emotional," said one student.

> First grade teacher KateAppel's students, Ronnie Parker, Tamia Dixon and Myah Anderson, enjoying the new books they purchased with their book vouchers.



North Elementary

Students Enjoy Read-O-Lympics

The theme of North Elementary's annual Literacy Night was the Olympics. Students participated in Olympic-themed activities from "Michael Phelps Says" to Long Jump to Around the World and Olympic Rings.

National Honor Society students from the high school planned the activities and helped during the event.

Guest readers for the evening included Comstock firefighters, Superintendent Todd Mora, Board Trustee Matt Schreiner, NEMS and North Elementary alumni Girls on the Run participants, first grade teacher Katherine Jones's mother, Laura Clark, and Michelle Marvin from Nutrition Works with her bicycle smoothie maker.

Staff decorated the school and provided lots of sports items such as basketballs, footballs and soccer balls for the raffle at the end of the event.

Every student received a gift bag, gold medal and free books. North Elementary thanks the Honor Society students and all the guest readers

Also, thank you to Jet's Pizza who provided a free pizza coupon to all attendees. We would not be able to have this event without you.

Third grader Kyle Duncan creates a smoothie with guest reader Michelle Marvin.



STEM Named School of the Year

STEM Academy

Comstock STEM Academy has been named School of the Year as part of the Catalyst University Education Awards.

As the School of the Year recipient, the STEM Academy will receive \$5,000 to be used to expand and enhance hands-on STEM opportunities across all grade levels at the K-8 school, according to Chris Chopp, STEM Academy director.

The district is thrilled to receive this honor. It would not have been possible without the support of the community, the guidance of the Comstock Board of Education, input from the STEM Academy Advisory Board, and the tireless work from the district's director of curriculum, Jill Ansel.

The STEM Academy's first director, Gerielle Stewart, and current director, Chris Chopp, have also played valuable roles in the school's success, as have all of the teachers who share their enthusiasm and knowledge on a daily basis.

The 238 student, K-8 Academy is in its fourth year overall, and its second year as a K-8 school. Several ideas led to the creation of the STEM Academy. First, it provides parents with choices for their children. It also provides the benefits of a hands-on approach to learning. And, in addition, people with more knowledge in the STEM disciplines are essential to our nation's workforce.

The school's success is illustrated by the Catalyst University Education Award, and by the school's strong showing as Kalamazoo County's number one performing school on the statewide M-STEP



Heather Smith Baker, managing partner from from Southwest Michigan First watches as William Parfet, Southwest Michigan First board member, presents the School of the Year award to Chris Chopp, STEM Academy director. Southwest Michigan First was host of the Catalyst University event.

test in 2015.

STEM education puts a focus on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math; it seeks to engage and excite students about learning by engaging them in project-based activities.

At Comstock STEM Academy, students in kindergarten through second grades have a STEM block two hours each day. This interdisciplinary time allows students to work on science, technology, engineering, and math through explorations, design challenges, or in the LEGOTM lab.

Students in third through fifth grades have STEM lessons that are supported by National Geographic curriculum, and the Engineering is Elementary curriculum from the Boston Museum of Science. Students learn about coding and 3-D printing. They also produce the daily announcements with a green screen and an iPad.

Sixth through eighth grades have Project Lead the Way engineering, robotics, and biomedical science classes.

By the time STEM students are in eighth grade, the curriculum is enriched by the fact that they are earning high school credits in algebra, honors biology, honors English 9, and Spanish.

For further information, or to schedule a tour, visit ComstockPS.org/STEM, or contact the office of Superintendent Todd Mora at 269-250-8900.

STEM Students Solve Breakout Problems

STEM Academy

Escape Room games, where people lock themselves in a room and try to escape within a certain time limit using clues in the room, are sweeping the nation.

A similar idea that doesn't involve being locked in a room has come to Comstock's STEM Academy middle school students in their history and English classes through what is called Breakout EDU.

In this activity, students are given a toolbox with five locks to unlock. Working against a 45-minute limit, students must work in groups to solve the clues and open all the locks. All the clues relate to what students are learning about in class. Students are given several tools to help them such as black lights, primary documents, puzzles, iPads, and much more.

The middle schoolers have participated in multiple breakouts this year. For example, eighth graders were told the Constitution had been stolen and locked in the Breakout box. If they were unable to open the box, our country would no longer have governing rules. Using what they had learned about the Constitution and other primary historical documents, students worked to open the box to save the Constitution. In another game, students were going to have grammar lessons all day every day unless they could open the box using what they had learned about grammar.

It's amazing to see students work together to accomplish one goal.

"It really helps with social skills by working together," said sixth grader Brianne Doud.

Students are much more motivated to work and

use what they have learned to solve the puzzles and open the Breakout box.

Seventh grader RJ Baker said Breakouts are better because "they are challenging and everyone needs to work as a team."

Eighth grader Megan James added, "They are fun and educational."

Students ask almost weekly to complete a Breakout. They are much more driven to apply the skills they are learning in class to solve the problem.

"It's intense and forces you to think quickly," said eighth grader Alex Kish. "I like interacting with the mysteries."

Ultimately, it's a "fun way to connect to what we're learning about," said seventh grader Amelia Hall.

HAZARDOUS WEATHER COMMUNICATIONS

With hazardous weather conditions just around the corner, Comstock Public Schools is encouraging all parents to talk with their children about the possibility of school closing due to bad weather. In the event that school must be closed early on any given day, please have a plan developed with your children so they arrive home safely.

Every effort is made to make a decision to close school by 5 a.m. and to notify the news media immediately. However, the district has no control over how quickly the information is disseminated by the media.

On the right is a list of the multiple ways you can be notified of early closings, or school closings:

You may sign-up to follow Tweets at https://twitter.com/ComstockPS regarding school closings or go to our website at www.comstockps.org.

Make sure your Infinite Campus portal is current with correct contact information in order to receive ShoutPoint notification.

For the latest school closings, turn your radio or television to the following stations:

CALL LETTERS

98.5 FM, 96.5 FM 100.9 FM 903 AM, 1400 AM 106.5 FM, 590 AM, 1470 AM 107.7 FM, 103.3 FM TV 3 TV 8 TV 4

STATION

WNWN, WFATs

WQXC

WBCK, WRCC

WQLR, WKZO, WQSN

WRKR, WKFR,

WWMT-TV

WOOD-TV

WOTV

Green Meadow Elementary

Teachers Attend *Leader*in Me Symposium: Rethink Leadership

Faculty and staff from almost every building in the district recently attended the 2017 Leader in Me Symposium in Livonia. During this three-day event, staff learned about the Leader in Me process, attended break-out sessions on various topics, and visited schools nearby that are going through The Leader in Me process or have implemented it for several years.

Green Meadow's principal, Susan Caswell, participated in an Administrator's Panel for a question and answer session.

Participants gained new ideas and had fun.

This year Green Meadow and North Elementaries will be having Leader in Me events in the spring. Be sure to visit Comstock's website and Facebook pages for more information.



March Madness: The Literacy Version!

Green Meadow Elementary

To celebrate National Reading Month in March, Green Meadow students participated all month long in many reading activities.

The school hosted a Family Literacy Night thanks to the creativity and dedication of Comstock High School's National Honor Society. Students and families read stories and participated in various sportsthemed activities.

Several members of Western Michigan University's Women's Basketball team came and not only read a story, but acted parts of it out, too. They were great readers! Shane Easter, a high school athlete,

was also a guest reader and did a great job.

Lisa Watson, library media clerk, also conducted a March Madness Book Bracket. It was the upper elementary vs the lower elementary in an epic Battle of the Books. Each class read two books by the same author and then voted on which one is the best. Results have been posted on Facebook.

The Kalamazoo K-Wings Players came and read books in each classroom. Students learned about hockey as the players answered lots of questions. We were very appreciative that they came to read and talked to us about the importance of reading.

Susan Harrison, the Reading Blues Performer, entertained and educated students through music and puppets as another of our Reading Month activities.

School Wide WIGS in Action - A "WIG" is a "Wildly Important Goal" and one of Green Meadow's "WIG"s was to read 7,500 books by the end of March. Everyone in the building was keeping track of every book read individually as well as a class. It turns out that Green Meadow students are reading a lot of books because we met our goal two weeks early. We had a Dance Party to celebrate.



K-Wings player, Mingo, reads a riddle book to kindergarteners.



Green Meadow student, Sophia Arrey, shows the gift card she won during the school's Literacy Night.

Amy Stacy Awarded Grant

Green Meadow Elementary second grade teacher, Amy Stacy, has received the Rena H. Brooks Early Education Grant this year.

Bridget Hicks, president of the Comstock Foundation, presented the award to Miss Stacy, who was very appreciative and thankful to receive the grant which she will use to attend a conference to further her studies in early education.

The award is named for Rena Brooks who taught in Comstock for 32 years with most of those years spent at Green Meadow.

The Rena H. Brooks Early Education Grant and the Comstock Foundation have grants available for teachers throughout the year.

Bridget Hicks, president of the Comstock Foundation, presents the Rena H. Brooks award to second grade teacher, Amy Stacy.



News from the Athletic Department

Hall of Fame Induction Banquet

Congratulations to the new Hall of Fame inductees:

- *Patrick Vallier Class of 1970
- *Susan Jackson Class of 1990
- *Michael Giddings Class of 1999

*The 1993 State Championship Volleyball team made up of Jennifer Bell, Jennifer Briggs, Brandy Driver, Nicole Frizzo, Danielle Hotrum, Christine Keller, Tracy Parker, Christie Perry, Mandy Whitfield, Ayanna Wilson and Coach Jeff

The Hall of Fame induction banquet will be held on Saturday, April 29, at the WMU Fetzer Center. Doors will open at 5 p.m. with dinner starting at 6 p.m. and the induction to follow at 6:45 p.m. Tickets to this great event can be purchased from the Comstock Athletic Office for \$25. Come support these great Comstock alumni and visit with family and friends. The deadline to purchase tickets is April 24.

High School and Middle School Physicals

A reminder that your son/daughter has to have a physical on file with the athletic office in order to be able to participate in sports. Physicals for the 17-18 school year must be dated after April 15, 2017, to be valid.

Spring Sports Awards Banquet

The spring sports awards banquet will be held on Tuesday, June 6, starting at 6:30 p.m. in the auditorium. All spring high school and middle school athletes are invited to attend the banquet.

MHSAA State Qualifier

Monday

Tuesday

Girls Varsity Tennis

Apr. 15

Apr. 17

Apr. 18

Apr. 20

Wed

Wedn

Saturday

Monday

Tuesday

6:00 PM

3:15 PM

6:00 PM

6:00 PM

2:45 PM

6:00 PM

4:00 PM

6:00 PM

6:00 PM

TBA

Home

Away

Home

Home

Away

Home

Home

Away

Away

Home

Home

Thursday

Congratulations to Mubark Hasan for representing Comstock in the MHSAA State Finals in wrestling. Mubark started off his state tournament a bit nervous but represented Comstock very well. We're very proud of his achievements this year.



BCS Conference Girls Basketball Champions

The varsity girls basketball team finished their season with an 18-4 record and secured a share of the BCS Conference Title. Congratulations to seniors Miranda Cannon, Arreona Blakely, Marissa Vandyk, juniors Ahkyla Blakely, Kaylee Gilley, Kierra Lovelace and sophomores Daisy Ansel, Abby House and Madelyn Caswell. Great job!

COMSTOCK HIGH SCHOOL SPRING SPORTS SCHEDULES

GK Invitational - Mattawan Away

Lake Michigan Catholic HS Home

4:45 PM

4:30 PM

4:30 PM

2:15 PM

TBA

TBA

Away

Away

Home

Away

Away

May 22 Schoolcraft High School

May 30 MHSAA District Quarter

GK Invitational Finals

May 24 Delton-Kellogg H.S.

Apr. 12 Berrien Springs HS

Buchanan HS

Boys Varsity Baseball					
Tuesday	Apr. 11	Coldwater High School	Home	4:00 PM	
Friday	Apr. 14	Hopkins High School	Home	4:00 PM	
Tuesday	Apr. 18u	Berrien Springs HS	Home	4:15 PM	
Saturday	Apr. 22	Bridgman Round Robin	Away	12:00 PM	
Tuesday	Apr. 25	Buchanan HS	Away	1:45 PM	
•	•		•	4:15 PM	
Wednesday	Apr. 26	Kalamazoo Christian H.S.	Away	3:00 PM	
Saturday	Apr. 29	Hastings High School	Home	10:00 AM	
Tuesday	May 2	Parchment	Away	3:00 PM	
Friday	May 5	Benton Harbor HS	Away	2:30 PM	
Tuesday	May 9	Bridgman Public Schools	Away	1:45 PM	
Saturday	May 13	Bangor Invitational	Away	10:00 AM	
Tuesday	May 16	Brandywine High School	Home	4:15 PM	
Friday	May 19	Loy Norrix High School	Home	4:00 PM	
Tuesday	May 23	BCS Rain Date	Away	TBA	
Wed	May 24	Plainwell Schools	Away	2:30 PM	
Saturday	May 27	Bronson Invitational	Away	9:00 AM	
Tuesday	May 30	MHSAA Pre District - at GA		TBA	
Saturday	June 3	MHSAA District - at GA	Away	TBA	
Girls Varsity Soccer					
Wed	Apr. 12	Buchanan HS	Home	6:00 PM	
Monday	Apr. 17	Hartford High School	Away	3:30 PM	
Wed	Apr. 19	Brandywine High School	Away	2:45 PM	

Apr. 20 Coloma High School

Parchment

May 15 BCS Crossover Match

May 17 BCS Crossover Match

May 19 Saugatuck High School

May 12 Watervliet

Cassopolis High School

Bangor Public Schools

Berrien Springs HS

Dowagiac High School

Maple Valley High School

Apr. 24

May 1

May 10

Thursday

Monday

Thursday

Monday

Wed

Wed

Friday

Friday

Wedn

Friday

Monday

Monday Thursday Saturday Tuesday Thursday Monday Thursday Monday Thursday	Apr. 24 Apr. 27 Apr. 29 May 2 May 4 May 8 May 11 May 15 May 18	Bridgman Public Schools Brandywine High School Otsego Invitational Bronson Junior/Senior HS New Buffalo HS St. Philip School BCS Conference Meet Hillsdale HS MHSAA Regional - 5-18, 19 or 20	Home Away Away Home Home Away Home Away	4:30 PM 2:15 PM 9:00 AM 4:30 PM 4:30 PM 4:00 PM 6:45 PM 4:00 PM TBA
Boys Vars Friday Monday Thursday Friday Friday Thursday Monday Friday Wed	Apr. 14 Apr. 17 Apr. 20 Apr. 21 Apr. 28 May 4 May 11 May 15 May 19 May 31	BCS Parchment Jamboree BCS Centreville Jamboree GK Invitational Comstock JV Golf Invite BCS Comstock Jamboree BCS Bronson Jamboree BCS Mendon Jamboree BCS Conference Meet Parchment JV Scramble MHSAA Regional	Away Away Away Home Home Away Away Away Home	4:00 PM 4:00 PM 9:00 AM 9:00 AM 4:00 PM 4:00 PM 4:00 PM 9:00 AM 9:00 AM 8:30 AM
Girls Vars Saturday Tuesday	s ity Softk Apr. 8 Apr. 11	Pall Comstock Varsity Tourney Mendon High School	Home Away	11:00 AM 4:00 PM

Friday May 26 Otsego HS Away 4:00 PM Tuesday May 30 MHSAA Pre District - at GA Away TBA	Friday Tuesday	May 26 May 30	MHSÃA Pre District - at GA	Away Away Away Away	4:00 PM 4:15 PM 4:00 PM 10:00 AM 4:15 PM 4:00 PM 4:00 PM 4:00 PM 4:30 PM 9:00 AM TBA 4:00 PM 4:00 PM 4:00 PM 4:00 PM 4:00 PM 4:00 PM
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Boys & Girls Varsity Track and Field					
Wed	Apr. 12	Parchment Meet	Away	3:00 PM	
Friday	Apr. 14	Gull Lake Invitational	Away	3:15 PM	
Wed	Apr. 19	Berrien Springs Meet	Away	1:45 PM	
Friday	Apr. 21	Comstock Invitational	Home	4:00 PM	
Wed	Apr. 26	Comstock Meet	Home	4:15 PM	
Friday	Apr. 28	Comstock Colt Relays	Home	4:00 PM	
Wed	May 3	Comstock Meet	Home	4:15 PM	
Friday	May 5	Parchment Relays	Away	2:45 PM	
Wed	May 10	Mendon Meet	Away	2:15 PM	
Monday	May 15	Comstock Invitational	Home	3:00 PM	
Friday	May 19	MHSAA Regional	Away	TBA	
Wed	May 24	BCS Conference Meet	Home	3:00 PM	
Saturday	June 3	MHSAA State Meet	Away	TBA	

Comstock Public Schools 2016-2017 School Calendar

March 31 – April 7	SPRING BREAK		No Students/No Teachers
May 9	High School Conferences	4:00-8:00 PM	Full Day Students K-12
May 29	MEMORIAL DAY OBSERVANCE		No Students / No Staff
June 12	Half Day Students K-12 (High School Exams)	Half Day Students & To	eachers K-12
June 13	Half Day Students K-12 (High School Exams)	Half Day Students & To	eachers K-12
June 14	LAST DAY FOR STUDENTS / (High School Exam: Teachers' Records Day P.M.	•	2 Last Day for Teachers

Comstock Township Library Events

ADULT PROGRAMS:

We offer one-on-one technology lessons with a librarian (computer questions, tablets, etc.) Please call to set up an appointment.

Comstock Community Bulletin Board: We will be hosting an online bulletin board for the community. This free service is hosted by the Comstock Township Library for events of interest to Comstock area residents. Event submissions are free; however, the library takes no responsibility for the claims made in these advertisements. Click on the "Submit an Event" link to send us your information. Please visit www.youseemore.com/comstock.

Homebound Library Services: The Homebound Delivery Service seeks to provide library materials to Comstock Township Residents who are unable to visit the library according to the following criteria:

Residents are to be considered homebound if they have a condition (due to illness or injury) that restricts their ability to leave their place of residence, except with the aid of a supportive device such as crutches, canes, wheelchairs, and walkers, the use of special transportation, the assistance of another person or if leaving home is medically contraindicated. In most circumstances, if a resident drives, helshe would not be considered homebound.

Homebound delivery includes the selection of materials by library staff and delivery of those materials by library employees. Call 345-0136 for further information.

We now have a preservation station! Do you have home videos you would like to transfer to DVDs and photos or other print material you would like to digitize? The Preservation Station, purchased with a gift from Bell's Brewery, allows patrons to make digital copies of print and media. To use the scanner and video transfer equipment, please call to set up a training session with a librarian. Patrons may scan print material to a USB drive or a writable CD/ DVD disc. Bring your own or we have them for sale. Suggested USB size is 16 MB. Video files must be transferred to a DVD-R. Usually 1 full VHS would fit on a DVD. Sorry, we are unable to convert 8mm video at this time. For more detailed information, give us a call.

We now have a **notary service** at the library during business hours. The cost is \$5 per notarial transaction. Call 345-0136 for more information.

Learn to Knit or Crochet: 1-3 p.m. on Friday, April 7 and May 5. Learn how to knit or crochet at the library and acquire a new hobby. Signups are required for this program and begin on Monday, March 13, at the adult reference desk. Call 345-0136 for more information.

April Adult Craft: Teacup Bird Feeder, Wednesday, April 19, at 5:30 p.m. Make and decorate an eccentric bird feeder to feed the hungry spring birds. Registration is required for this free craft and begins on Monday, April 3, at the adult reference desk; space is limited. Call 345-0136 for more information.

CLOSINGS

The library will be closed on Saturday, May 27, and Monday, May 29, for Memorial Day.

Introduction to Homebrewing: Wednesday, April 26, at 5:30 p.m. Interested in learning about homebrewing? Would you like to take up a new hobby? Please join us as Bell's Brewery offers a presentation on this exciting topic! Required registration for this free event begins on Monday, April 3, at the adult reference desk. Please call 345-0136 for more information.

End-of-Life Care: Wednesday, May 3, at 1 p.m. Join funeral director, Tami Penny, and attorney, Angela Easterday, for a presentation on End-of-Life Care. They will be here to answer questions about funeral arrangements and legal issues surrounding end-of-life treatment. Registration for this free event is required and begins on April 17 at the adult reference desk. Please call 345-0136 for further information.

Michigan Department of Attorney General Consumers' Education Series: Phone, Mail, and eScams on Wednesday, May 10, at 3 p.m. This presentation will help participants recognize the signs of scams found through phone calls, mail, email and texts. In addition, you will learn how to minimize your risk of being scammed. This program is FREE. Registration is required and begins on April 24. Please call 345-0136 for more information.

Introduction to Calligraphy: Wednesday, May 17, at 5:30 p.m. Join artist, Nancy Alexander, for an introduction to the art of calligraphy. Signups are required for this free event and begin on Mon-

Comstock Township Library Events (cont.)

day, May 1, at the adult reference desk. Space is limited.

Saturday May 20, 2017: Community Yard Sale and Ice Cream Social. 9 a.m.-1 p.m.Comstock Township Library is hosting an outdoor yard sale. Vendors may purchase a 10x10 space for \$5. To reserve your 10x10 space please call the library at 345-0136 starting May 1. Tables and chairs are not available; you must bring your own. *Multiple spaces can be purchased * No food items please.

Ice Cream Social: 10 a.m. − 3 p.m. Show your Comstock Library card or register for a card and get a free dish of ice cream and visit our toppings bar. Current card holders must be in good standing; new registrations must show picture ID and proof of address. Non-resident or reciprocal card holders, please call us for additional registration information.

Interested in joining a book group that will take you around the world via the written word? Leave your contact information at the adult reference desk or call 345-0136.

EVENTS IN THE YOUNG PEOPLE'S DEPARTMENT:

STORYTIME: AGES 1-5. Register your child for a 45-minute session, which includes 30 minutes of stories, songs, and other activities followed by a 15-minute craft. Storytimes run through Thursday, April 27. Call for more information.

1000 BOOKS BEFORE KINDERGARTEN:

Pre-Kindergarten. Reading to children beginning at a young age is the single most important thing parents can do to help their children become successful readers as they get older. Any child can participate until s/he enters kindergarten. They can earn small prizes along the way. Pick up your tracking sheet at the Young People's Desk today!

Earth Day Craft: Saturday, April 22, 2017: 11 a.m.-Noon. Celebrate Earth Day with a recycling craft. Make a Tin Head Man out of a recycled tin can, felt and plant grass for his hair. Registration is required for this free craft and begins April 4. Children under five need a parent helper with them.

Mother's Day Craft: Saturday, May 13, 2017: 11 a.m.-Noon. Paint a small ceramic vase for Mom! We'll even provide a flower for her.

Registration is required for this free craft and begins May 2. Children under five need a parent helper with them

TEEN ADVISORY BOARD: Every month on the first Friday, sixth through twelfth graders. Earn community service hours helping us plan programs for teens and other youth! Must be in sixth through twelfth grades to register for this free event! The meetings will be:

Friday, April 7, 4-5 p.m. (Registration begins Monday, March 28.)

Friday, May 5, 4-5 p.m. (Registration begins Monday, April 25.)

LEGO CLUB: Every month on the third Friday, 4-5:30 p.m., all ages. Use your imagination and build a Lego creation for us to display in the Young People's Department! Children under the age of five should have an adult helper with them. Registration is required for this free event. Lego

Friday, April 21, 4-5:30 p.m. (Registration begins Monday, April 11.)

Club dates are as follows:

Friday, May 19, 4-5:30 p.m. (Registration begins Monday, May 9.)

Teens: Do you need volunteer hours for next year? Teen volunteers are very important to the success of our Summer Reading Program and we appreciate all the hard work they do. We need volunteers for correcting worksheets, redeeming prizes, and assisting with programs and parties! Volunteer applications are available at the Young People's desk and on our website. You must be in seventh through twelfth grades to volunteer! Adult volunteers are also welcome!

FOR EVERYONE!

- WE HAVE eBOOKS! Call us for more information! 345-0136.
- The library now has a Cricut Expression available for patron use. You must be 18 years or older or with a parent or guardian to use and must provide your own cardstock. Please call 345-0136 for further information.



Call the library to make sure we are open if there is inclement weather.



We now have tutor rooms and Wi-Fi available! Call 345-0136 for more information.



We now have a fax service! Must use credit or debit card to send.

Now Available



OverDrive! Download free audiobooks and e-books from home using your computer, MP3 player, e-book reader, and other compatible devices.

Computer Help



Have a question about the computer? Would you like to learn how to use the computer? Please call 345-0136 to set up a block of time for one-on-one help. Must be a library cardholder.

Need Resume Help?

Please call to schedule an appointment or visit the adult reference desk to do so. We will help you write a cover letter or resume, or just proofread one you already have. Call 345-0136 for further information. Must be a library cardholder.

- Would you like to learn how to research genealogy using Ancestry Library Edition? Please call the library 345-0136 to set up an appointment with a librarian.
- We offer one-on-one technology lessons with a librarian (computer questions, tablets, etc.) Please call to set up an appointment.
- Interested in donating your acrylic yarn? We would be happy to accept it to knit and crochet afghans and lap robes for the Warm-Up America Project. For more information, call and ask for Myla or Barb.