

# The Comstock Communicator

COMSTOCK HIGH SCHOOL | COMPASS HIGH SCHOOL & ADULT EDUCATION | COMSTOCK MIDDLE SCHOOL | COMSTOCK ELEMENTARY | STEM ACADEMY | CELA



## ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS

From the  
Superintendent  
**page 2**

Board  
Briefs  
**page 3**

O'Donnell  
Takes Seat  
on School  
Board  
**page 5**

Community  
Auditorium  
Events  
**page 4**

School  
News  
**pages 6-8**

Winter  
Sports  
Schedules  
**page 9**

Comstock  
Library  
News  
**page 10**

## MORE NEWS

*Turn over to read  
Center Point*

A newsletter about the  
Comstock  
Community Center



# From the Superintendent

Dear Comstock Community,

We all have altered our lives in a myriad of ways during this pandemic. Yet, these many changes have also made me reflect and experience life anew. Like you, my family has maintained close contact virtually.

I've noticed that neighbors call out to each other more often, wave hello, and check on each other. And yes, during the isolation, my wife and I have binged on more cable shows, read many more books than before, and baked more banana nut bread than expected.

Our school personnel, students, and community have also faced many challenges and have overcome them with ample doses of creativity and

perseverance. We haven't given up because our tasks are too important.

We strive to succeed so that our students continue to learn and thrive. It is my belief that this optimistic outlook will propel us forward as we look to serve our students and families, and meet new challenges.

It is my sincere hope that together we can continue to live our lives fully and safely this new year. As we wait for the vaccine, may another loaf of banana nut bread come our way.

Stay safe. Stay hopeful. Stay Colt strong.

Sincerely,  
Dr. Jeff Thoenes  
Superintendent

## Superintendent's Update

By Dr. Jeff Thoenes, Superintendent

While Tuesday, May 4, 2021, may seem far in the future, the days and weeks will pass quickly. Before we realize it, the snow and ice will be gone, and spring's flowers will be in full bloom.

But why is this date the focus of my update? May 4, 2021, is election day for governmental agencies, local municipalities, and school districts. That means the renewal of the six-year, Kalamazoo County Special Education millage will be on the ballot. This millage helps to reimburse local school districts, such as Comstock Public Schools, for the costs of their special education programs.

In fact, CPS annually receives almost \$700,000 in financial support from the millage. It is important to note that local school districts are mandated by law to provide special education services.

Funds from the millage support quality instruction for students with autism, traumatic brain injury, and emotional trauma, as well as a wide variety of learning disabilities in the areas of reading, writing, math, speech, and language.

Due to voter support and passage of the special

education millage in 2015, Kalamazoo County school districts have been fully reimbursed for the cost of their special education programs.

However, if the millage were to fail in May, it would result in an immediate cut of \$700,000 to Comstock's budget. Since special education services are required by federal law, the budget cuts would come from other areas of our budget which potentially could include instructional, athletic, and extracurricular reductions.

How much would renewal of the countywide special education millage cost taxpayers? Since the millage is a renewal, there would be no increase in taxes. Homeowners would pay the following based on the taxable value of their home, which is typically about half of the market value:

- Market Value: \$100,000
- Taxable Value: \$50,000
- Annual Cost: \$75.00

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to me either via email, phone call, or personal visit. I can be reached at [thoenesj@comstockps.org](mailto:thoenesj@comstockps.org) or 269-250-8906.



COMSTOCK PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
A SCHOOL DISTRICT DEDICATED TO KIDS  
[www.comstockps.org](http://www.comstockps.org)

Dr. Jeff Thoenes  
*Superintendent*

### BOARD OF EDUCATION

Pamela Dickinson, President

Matthew Schreiner, Vice President

Dori Scholly, Secretary

Paul Lamphear, Treasurer

Saralyn Brown, Trustee

Karen Howes, Trustee

Kayleen O'Donnell, Trustee

Ashley LaVanWay, Appointed Recording Secretary

Michelle Darnell, Appointed Treasurer

### 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 Dr. Jeff Thoenes at [thoenesj@comstockps.org](mailto:thoenesj@comstockps.org) or by fax at 250-8908. It may also be e-mailed to Phyllis Rose at [phyllisarose@aol.com](mailto:phyllisarose@aol.com).



@comstockPS

## Fundraiser Launched for Dr. Hamet Memorial

Following the school board's decision to name the high school's athletic complex after Dr. Robert Hamet, long-time superintendent who died earlier this year, several people have organized a fundraiser to pay for a plaque and a memorial for Dr. Hamet.

If you are interested in contributing to this project, contact Comstock Elementary School principal Susan Caswell at Caswells@ComstockPS.org, or recently retired executive assistant to the superintendent, Faye Goldner, at fayego55@gmail.com. The link for making donations can be found at ComstockPS.org/Hamet.

A new stadium entryway will be constructed using bond monies.

## School Social Worker Receives Honor

CPS Social Worker Rida Jones has been named the Region B School Social Worker of the Year by the Michigan Association of School Social Workers (MASSW).

The significance of this recognition is magnified by the fact that there are only eleven regions within the MASSW.

"This is quite an honor, and Rida certainly deserves it," said Dr. Amy Vlieg, school social worker. "She is a wonderful social worker and colleague. I'm proud to work with her."

## What Dr. Thoenes is reading:

*The Conquering Tide: War in the Pacific Islands, 1942-44 (2015)*  
by Ian W. Toll



## Food Service Provides for Families During Pandemic

Chartwells Food Service, under the direction of Holly Wait, and the school district have worked collaboratively to provide food to families during the pandemic.

Here are the statistics covering March through the end of November:

- 15,212 meals per week
- 7,605 meals/distribution per day
- 19,965 gallons of milk
- 399,310+ cups of fruits and vegetables
- 638,896+ plastic t-shirt bags

## Board Briefs

### REGULAR MEETING

#### October 12, 2020

- Recognized the Transportation Department for receiving a perfect inspection and mechanical score from the Michigan State Police for the second year in a row.
- Set a special meeting for October 19, 2020, to discuss the strategic plan.
- Reaffirmed the District's Return-To-Learn plan as must be done monthly.
- Approved a motion to allow staff, with parental approval, to schedule one-on-one tutoring and/or small group instructional sessions (remote or in person) for students who need academic or social-emotional support.

### SPECIAL MEETING (VIRTUAL)

#### October 19, 2020

- Approved an option of in-person learning instruction for grades 6-12 at the STEM Academy, Comstock Middle School, Compass High School, and Comstock High School beginning Monday, November 2, 2020.

### REGULAR MEETING (VIRTUAL)

#### October 26, 2020

- Approved Danielle Perez as STEM kindergarten teacher.
- Approved resignation of Chelsea Brooks, eighth grade social studies teacher.
- Approved giving the Board President temporary authority to act on behalf of the Board as necessary for an effective response to COVID-19 related issues and implementation of the District's preparedness plan.
- The Board continued reviewing the strategic plan.
- Discussed revisiting face-to-face learning decision. It will be discussed again at the November 9, 2020, board meeting.

### REGULAR MEETING (VIRTUAL)

#### November 9, 2020

- Approved the resignation of Heidi Anson, GSRP teacher.
- Approved going back to virtual learning on Thursday, November 12, 2020, with the exception of the Education for Employment Auto class and small group one-on-one tutoring, and return,

on Monday, December 7, 2020, with a hybrid of in-person and virtual learning.

- Approved the revised Comstock Public Schools Board Governance Guidelines.
- Continued discussion of the strategic plan.
- Moved into closed session to review a privileged attorney-client letter.
- Approved resignation agreement which had been discussed in the closed session.

### REGULAR MEETING (VIRTUAL)

#### November 23, 2020

- Superintendent Thoenes announced the district's decision to extend district-wide full virtual learning through the end of the first semester, January 22, 2021.
- Approved creating a custodial supervisor position. The custodial supervisor will be under the direction of Sean Gillette, Facilities Director.
- Approved changing the District's athletic conference from Berrien-Cass-St. Joseph (BCS) Conference to the Southwest 10 (SW10) Conference.
- Vice-president Amos announced she would be resigning from her board position effective at the end of the Monday, December 14, 2020, board meeting.

### REGULAR MEETING (VIRTUAL)

#### December 14, 2020

- Approved Sawyer Ruffalo for a third grade teacher position.
- Approved the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan.
- Reconfirmed the Learning Plan with virtual programming to continue through the end of the first semester on January 22, 2021.
- Moved into closed session to discuss negotiations and the Superintendent's quarterly evaluation.
- Approved contacts with the Comstock Education Association, Paraprofessionals, and Administrative Assistants.

### SPECIAL MEETING (VIRTUAL)

#### January 8, 2020

- Appointed Paul Lamphear to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Vice President Shirley Amos. He will serve the rest of her term until December 31, 2022.

# Comstock Public Schools Child Study Process

Students may be referred to Child Study if they are not making academic or behavioral progress for an extended period of time and multiple interventions have been attempted, modified, and reviewed. There is a slightly different path to Child Study depending on the reason for the referral. The processes are outlined below:

## Academic Referral Process:

Students are benchmark tested and progress monitored on a regular basis for those students whose scores indicate a need for it. The Professional Learning Community (PLC) reviews the data and interventions are modified to meet students' academic needs on a weekly basis.

- 1) Identify - The grade-level PLC team will identify students whose scores have flat-lined.
- 2) Create Interventions - The team, including the parent(s), will create interventions that will last approximately six weeks.
- 3) Track Data - The team will meet weekly to review progress related to the specific interven-

tion. If an intervention is successful and the student is making gains, there is no additional action required except to continue monitoring data at weekly PLC's.

4) Review Data - After six weeks, the team will decide if the student should continue with the current intervention or start a new intervention. If three separate academic interventions have been attempted with little or no gains made, the student may be referred to Child Study to discuss next steps (outside resources, possible testing, 504 Plan, etc.)

## BEHAVIOR REFERRAL PROCESS:

Most Child Study referrals are related to academic concerns. However, there are times when students might be referred for behavioral concerns. Below you will find some clarification about the Child Study process related to student "behavior".

- 1) Identify - If you have a student struggling with behavior, the student should first be referred

to the behavior team using the form which is available from the office.

2) Create Interventions - The team, including the parent(s), will work to create an appropriate intervention.

3) Track Data - The behavior team and teacher will work together to track data related to the intervention.

4) Review Data - If the intervention is unsuccessful, the team will create additional interventions to address the target behaviors.

5) Team Meeting - Once three separate interventions have been attempted, the behavior team, teacher, and administrative team will meet to review data and create an action plan for the student. At this meeting, the team will decide if the student should be referred to Child Study or find alternative resources to meet the student's needs. This could include outside resources, possible testing, 504 Plan, etc.

6) Refer - Administration may refer a student to Child Study for behavioral concerns.

## CPS Child Find Information

Child Find is a service of the Comstock Public Schools. We work closely with medical, educational, and other community agencies to locate individuals with unmet educational or developmental needs.

Child Find seeks to identify and refer individuals with special needs, birth through age 25, for evaluation and possible special assistance, unless a student has previously earned a high school diploma.

Parents or caregivers who have a concern about their children's development may call Comstock Public Schools Special Education Department at 269-250-8925. There is no charge for evaluations

or services.

For children from birth to age five (before September 1)

Free evaluations are offered through Kalamazoo Regional Educational Service Area in the areas of:

- Audiology (hearing)
- Occupational Therapy
- Physical Therapy
- Psychology
- Speech and Language

For children over the age of five (after September 1)

Free evaluations are conducted by the child's school district.

## Counselor Publishes Pandemic Book

CPS counselor, Julie Sorenson, has published a book titled, *A Nasty Virus Has Struck the World so the Giraffes Stay Home to Stay Safe*. Ms. Sorenson wrote the book in response to the anxiety she was seeing in her private practice with children and their families.

The book, recently highlighted in the local electronic journal, *First & 42*, is available from Barnes & Noble, and Amazon.

## 2020-21 Comstock Public Schools Calendar

February 26	Mid-Winter Break		No Students/Teachers
March 4	CHS Conferences	3:00-7:00	
March 11	Comstock Middle School Conferences	3:00-7:00	
March 16	Comstock Elementary & STEM Conferences	4:00-8:00 (CES) & 3:00-7:00 (STEM)	
March 18	Comstock Elementary & STEM Conferences	4:00-8:00 (CES) & 3:00-7:00 (STEM)	
March 19	District Provided Professional Development Day (Counted as Inst. Day 6 hours)		No Students
March 26-April 2	Spring Break		No Students/No Teachers

# O'Donnell Takes Seat on School Board



Newly elected school board member, Kayleen O'Donnell dreamed of running an airport so she got her degree in aviation science and administration at Western Michigan University. But reality hit when she

saw there were few minorities and women in the aviation field. So that sent her off in a different direction.

"That jump started my passion for nontraditional career fields," she said. "That's why I got my master's in workforce education to help women and minorities to realize their dreams and goals and find a career path that they are passionate about."

She graduated from Western Michigan University this past August with a master's degree in workforce education, development and leadership. With that degree she would love to become a career coach but the degree also came with teaching certification in business management and finance. So she could teach and be a career coach at the same time.

Mrs. O'Donnell ran for the school board because she saw it as a way to use both her education and her background. Her mother, who was a teacher, often told her stories which ignited her desire to be in education.

"I have a passion for politics as well," she said. "It goes hand-in-hand, having a degree in education and enjoying political platforms and making a difference in the community."

Her main goal as a school board member is to make sure students are set up for good career opportunities.

"All of my schooling has taught me that students aren't given enough opportunities to realize the different career paths that are out there so they are stuck going to college or working a minimum wage job that they are not passionate about and usually compiling a bunch of debt in the process," she said.

Improving teacher salaries is also one of her goals, she said, noting that teachers are underpaid and under-appreciated.

"I would like to get the community to be more

aware of all that teachers do," she said. "They're not just there from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. They are working on the weekends grading papers. They are putting together different curriculums that are needed for students who are nontraditional, who are falling behind or who are excelling in their grade level. They are passionate about it."

Looking at the Comstock district, she sees diversity as one of its strengths.

"We all want a better future for our children," she said. "I think Comstock can provide that with the diversity and with all of the students coming from different backgrounds and contributing to each classroom individually. Comstock is a great place to really enjoy the diversity of the community around them."

For improvement in the district, she would like to see the enrollment increase, an issue that schools across the state and country are also facing.

"We need to show the community what the schools have to offer and showing our highlights," she said. "The principals do a really good job of highlighting the fantastic teachers and the great curriculums that we have."

Besides her education and background, she brings several other strengths to the board. In her

part-time job as an administrative assistant in the College of Arts and Sciences at WMU, she handles all of the finance operations for her unit.

In addition, she loves talking to people, particularly strangers.

"I get an extreme sense of enjoyment in talking to people I don't know - to figure out where they came from, what they have to contribute to the community and what their life story is," she said. "I hope I can be that ear that will listen to people who just want to reach out to someone to talk about their troubled times or issues they want to bring out. I want to be a friendly face and open ear that they can talk to."

Mrs. O'Donnell and her husband, Brian, a business manager for an electrical union, have two children - Finnegan, 5, a kindergartner at the STEM Academy, and Karlee, 4, who is in preschool at the YMCA. The family enjoys camping and going to Disney World.

She enjoys baking cakes and cupcakes for friends and family for birthdays. She also likes to sew gift items such as bibs and clothes for new babies in the family.

Mrs. O'Donnell took the oath of office in December and began her tenure with the board in January.

## Community Auditorium Events

These events are tentative, depending upon the current COVID restrictions. Check with the venue or the sponsor for the latest updates.

### February:

6: Comstock Athletics Father/ Daughter Dance: 5:30 p.m. - Tickets: 250-8712.

8: Board of Education Meeting - Colt Center - 6 p.m.

10: Compass High School graduation: 6 p.m.

13-14: Nutcracker Ballet - Excel Dance Studio - Taped; limited seating.

20: Traci Phelps Dance Studios Competition Showcase: 2-3:30 p.m. Call Studio for details.

22: Board of Education Meeting - Colt Center - 6 p.m.

23: Band Festival Concert - 7 p.m.

### March:

8: Board of Education Meeting - Colt Center - 6 p.m.

18-20: Kalamazoo Christian High School Play: 7 p.m. each night. Matinee at 2 p.m. on the 20th. For tickets, call: Kalamazoo Christian High School: 269-381-2250

22: Board of Education Meeting - Colt Center - 6 p.m.

### April:

2 - Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra Recording - Michael Brown; Concerto for Piano, Julian Kuerti, Conductor. Tickets online: <https://boxoffice.kalamazoosymphony.com/events?q=concerts-tickets/concerts>

Comstock High School

## Football Players Named to Dream Team

Two senior members of the Comstock football team were recently honored for their football skills.

Senior linebacker Carl Owens was named to the First Team Kalamazoo area “Dream Team” on defense. The 6-foot, 200-pound athlete was Comstock’s primary ball carrier, and ran for nearly 750 yards and six touchdowns, but he was also a playmaker on defense, recording two pick-sixes to go along with 46 tackles, seven stops for loss, two forced fumbles, and a sack.

His brother, senior Kareem Owens, was named a second team defensive lineman.

## November Colt Credit Winners

Named Colt Credit winners for November were Johnnie Washington, Aiyana VanOrder, Alexander Rawlinson, Lyrix Smith, Jamani Carter, and Maria Alexander. Students received a certificate and a gift card.

## Students Rewarded for Positive Behaviors

Thirteen high school students received Colt Credit awards for demonstrating positive behaviors during October. They are RJ Baker, Jesse Hamilton, Destiny Beebe, Greta Hoopmann, Madalynn Bowers, Avery Pra , James Brindley, Anna Schreiner, Kevin Coronado, Amhir Walker, Brienne Doud, Jenna Weston, and Skylar George.

Along with the Leader in Me curriculum, one of the strategies used to achieve positive behavior is the Positive Behavior Intervention Systems of Support (PBIS).

Students can be nominated by their teachers for the Colt Credit incentive award for outstanding academic performance, participation, online etiquette, academic/behavior improvement, and random acts of kindness.

Despite all the uncertainties of this year with virtual and hybrid learning, students have excelled in these positive behaviors with 94 students being nominated.

## NHS Members Treat COVID Workers

National Honor Society members at the high school collected more than \$500 to make “Snack Baskets” for the workers in the COVID units at Bronson and Borgess Hospitals. Each basket contained over 400 snacks.

The baskets also included a framed positive quote to remind these dedicated health care providers just how important their work is.

The baskets were delivered the week of Christmas. Everyone at both hospitals was truly thankful, reports Colleen Grueter, faculty advisor for the NHS

## STEM/CHS Counselor Publishes Article

Julie Sorenson, counselor at both the STEM Academy and Comstock High School, recently had an article published in *The Good News Paper*. Her first article discussed how parents can support their children’s virtual or hybrid learning.

Ms. Sorenson will be submitting an article monthly to the paper.

## Dual-Enrolled Students Have Successful Semester

During the fall semester at Kalamazoo Valley Community College (KVCC), 47 Comstock students earned 255 college credits, valued at \$29,070, with an average GPA of 3.1.

Even through the ups and downs of a challenging environment, CHS students navigated the nuances of online college coursework with great success, according to Jim Cotter, college and career academy dean.

Comstock Middle

## CMS Has New Recognition Program

The middle school has started a program to recognize students for participation, completion of assignments, and consistent attendance.

To implement the program, the staff reached out to local businesses to support the program. The following businesses have responded:

- Meijer, \$600 worth of school supplies and gift cards
- Sweetwater’s Donut Mill, bottled water and gift certificates
- Anonymous donation, \$200

The first round of awards has been delivered but the staff plans to continue the program after winter break by handing out Comstock gear.

The goal is to focus on the positives so as to increase attendance and engagement by the middle school students.

## CMS Represented on State Advisory Council

Middle School principal, Mark Wilke, and eighth grader, Brandon Hernandez, have been selected to serve on a statewide middle school advisory council focusing on equity, inclusion, diversity, and anti-racism.

Mr. Wilke and Brandon, having completed an application, were selected from a large pool of candidates. They are the only members of the council from west Michigan.

## Comstock Middle

## CMS Installs Touchless Water Dispensers

Due to the pandemic, CMS has installed new “touchless” water dispensers to increase the health and safety of students and staff.

With these water fountains, users simply push their water bottles against the touch-plate and the water flows into their bottles.

There is no contact between the person and the fountain. Similar units are already in place

throughout the district.

With the traditional water fountain, users depressed a button and then put their lips near the stream of water which came out of the spout. This created two possible touch points, which during a pandemic increases the potential of spreading the virus.

## Comstock Elementary

## CES Families Receive Holiday Meals

Northeastern Baptist Church provided holiday meals for ten families at Comstock Elementary School. The meals included canned goods, eggs, milk, and a ham or turkey.

The meals were delivered by Whitney Wilkins, CES parent liaison; Travis Tennant, intervention specialist; and Valerie McNutt, MDHHS Pathway to Potential support coach.

## A Drive-Thru Breakfast With Santa

The Breakfast with Santa tradition continued this year as a drive-thru event held in the school’s new drive-in loop.

Once again, Jeff VanGoye played Santa assist-

ed by staff members who were his elves.

Students and their families cruised by in their cars to pick up breakfast, crafts, academic packets, and a smile from Santa.

## Kindergartners Enjoy Holiday Stories Read by Staff

The technology of Google Meet allowed kindergartners in Miss Buscher’s class to continue the tradition of having staff members read their favorite holiday stories to her class. Reading to the students were the following:

CES principal, Mrs. Caswell, read “The Naughtiest Reindeer” by Nicki Greenberg.

Mrs. Ansel, Comstock’s assistant superintendent, talked about the love of snow and making snowmen after reading “Snow Friends” by Christina Butler.

School Board secretary, Dori Scholly, read “Reindeer Christmas” by Mark Kimball Moulton and shared how she is going to stay safe this holiday season.

Trustee Matt Schreiner read “How to Catch an Elf” by Adam Wallace. It is his favorite story to read to kids and his own kindergartener loves the book.

Mr. McMeekan and Vice Principal, Mrs. Boyce, both read “Aliens Love Panta Claus” by Claire Freedman and Ben Cort.

Mrs. Shreve read her favorite childhood story, “The Gnome from Nome” by Stephen Cosgrove. Her copy of the book has been so well loved it is held together by tape and rubber bands.

“Pete the Cat’s 12 Groovy Days of Christmas” by Kimberly and James Dean was read and sung by our music teacher, Ms. Fleming.

Mrs. Moore read “The Not Very Merry Pout-Pout Fish” by Deborah Diesen. She also talked about the true meaning of Christmas. Kindergartners learned that gifts do not need to be grand but given from the heart.

The special week ended with Superintendent Thoenes’ story, “Mr. Willowby’s Christmas Tree” by Robert Barry, a book from his own childhood. He showed the children where his mother wrote his name on the inside of the book. Before he began to read, Olivia Blett raised her hand and said “He looks like Santa Claus!”

A special thanks to all who read to the kindergartners. They enjoyed every moment.

## 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.

Below 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](http://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 (WNWN, WFAT)

100.9 FM (WQXC)

903 AM, 1400 AM (WBCK, WRCC)

106.5 FM, 590 AM, 1470 AM (WQLR, WKZO, WQSN)

107.7 FM, 103.3 FM (WRKR, WKFR)

TV 3 WWMT-TV

TV 8 WOOD-TV

TV 4 WOTV

STEM Academy

## STEM Academy Teacher Wins Grant

STEM Academy teacher, Karyn Medendorp, recently received a \$900 grant from the Kalamazoo Community Foundation.

The money will be used for projects to help determine how healthy the land and water are in the community.

Students will begin the project by conducting a health lab of the forest on school property. They will collect a variety of data ranging from lichen count, tree diameter, canopy cover, vegetation cover, and species diversity. Students will then

conduct soil and water testing from the forest and nearby Morrow Pond.

Students will bring in soil and water samples from their local neighborhoods and these samples will be tested in identical ways to the tests done in the forest and pond.

Students will draw conclusions and present their findings to local public service representatives.

The project will lead to a discussion of community need, local environmental policy, and long-term solutions to ensure public health.

## STEM Addresses Community Issues for Contest

For the sixth year, STEM students have studied community challenges and submitted their solutions in Samsung's Solve for Tomorrow contest to compete for \$100,000 for technology. While the projects submitted by STEM students this year were not selected to continue in the competition, students still learned about these issues and found possible solutions.

"Our team is a little sad, but I am always encouraged when middle school students share what issues are important to them, and work to implement a STEM solution to address it," said Principal Chris Chopp. "We learn as much or more from the things we try and don't succeed, than we do when the path is easy."

Three teams met virtually after school to collaborate on the following issues:

1. Kalamazoo River pollution. Various environmental issues over the years have affected the aquatic ecosystem. Students considered ways to treat Comstock's water resources so as to have a positive impact on the future.

2. Mental Health. With mental health becoming an increasing issue, especially given the year-long pandemic, it's important to raise awareness and use technology and face-to-face intervention to help children, adolescents and adults feel like they are important and part of something bigger. By teaching students at a young age that it is okay to talk about their feelings with counseling and social emotional lessons provided by school counselors, we are helping to eliminate or decrease the stigma. Using technology, we hope to decrease people's fears, address their mental health needs and help them on their own personal path to success.

3. Lack of Necessities. Because of the pandemic, people have lost their jobs and can no longer afford essential supplies. To address that issue, STEM is creating a free store with an website or an app where people can see what is available and get what they need without putting themselves at risk for COVID.

## Comstock Early Learning Academy Collaborates with Air Zoo



Great Start Readiness Program staff at the Comstock Early Learning Academy collaborated recently with the Air Zoo for a STEM lesson on bridge building. Sean Webb (above) and Lilyani Morgan (right), pre-K students, build bridges after a virtual tutorial with Bridgette Elston, Air Zoo educator. The lesson also incorporated the story *Three Billy Goats Gruff*, that the class had worked with for literacy skills.

## STEM Academy Creates Nature Activities

To encouraging families to get outside this winter and explore nature together, STEM Academy has partnered with the Kalamazoo Nature Center and the Kellogg Biological Station to create family nature activities for each season. These activities are a part of STEM's bigger place-based stewardship education project that the school is implementing for its students over the next couple of years.

Even when the predominant mode of instruc-

tion is virtual, the STEM Academy is providing opportunities for families to explore nature together.

Here are some winter activities to do with your children:

1. Walk to Morrow Lake. Look for birds and other animals. What type of footprints and scat do you see?

2. Go back to the school garden. Find the com-

pass plant, native to Michigan. Find dead flower stems and look for the little holes on the stems. What do you think made those holes and why? Sketch or take a picture of the plant.

3. Look for the red-tailed hawk flying above you or perched on trees and posts.

4. Take a group picture and share with STEM using #familytime #scienceoutside, and tag us @comstockstem. Go to our website to see the answers to the questions in this activity.

# Sports News

## Hall of Fame Induction Banquet

Congratulations to the new inductees into Comstock's Athletic Hall of Fame:

- Dawayne Heath - Class of 1962
- Glenn Thomas – Class of 1968
- Martin Johnson – Class of 1971
- Tracy Daniel – Comstock Teacher and Coach - 1987-2018
- Bryan Crosby – Class of 1985

The Hall of Fame induction banquet was postponed in 2020 and now will be postponed again in 2021. The committee feels that waiting until 2022 will be the safest route to go. More information will come out again in January, 2022.

## Winter Sports Practice and Game Schedules

The Comstock winter sports practice and game schedules are posted at [www.comstockps.org](http://www.comstockps.org). Move the cursor to "Athletics" and a drop down menu will open up where you can find practice calendars and game schedules.

## High School Spring Sports Start Date and Physicals

The MHSAA tells us that spring sports are going to start on time this spring which means all high school sports can begin on Monday, March 15. A reminder that your son/daughter has to have a physical on file with the athletic office in order to participate in a spring sport. A physical that was obtained for the 19-20 school year will

count for the 20-21 school year. Middle school track and middle school girls soccer will begin Monday, April 5.

## Spring Sports Parent Meeting

Spring sports programs will conduct their parent meetings individually. Please stay tuned for that information from each program.



# COMSTOCK HIGH SCHOOL WINTER SPORTS SCHEDULES

**NOTE: Due to the ever-changing nature of COVID regulations, these sports schedules are tentative. Under current MDDHS guidelines, spectators are not allowed at events. For up-to-date information, go to [www.comstockps.org](http://www.comstockps.org) and click on "Athletics".**

### Boys JV Basketball

Tue 02/02	@ Niles High School	4:15 PM
Fri 02/05	Niles High School	4:30 PM
Sat 02/06	Marcellus High School	4:30 PM
Mon 02/08	Vicksburg High School	5:30 PM
Wed 02/10	@ Bangor Public Schools	5:30 PM
Fri 02/12	@ Buchanan HS	4:30 PM
Mon 02/15	South Haven High School	5:30 PM
Fri 02/19	@ South Haven High School	4:00 PM
Mon 02/22	Buchanan HS	4:30 PM
Tue 02/23	@ Allegan Public Schools	5:30 PM
Fri 02/26	@ Berrien Springs HS	4:15 PM
Mon 03/01	Calhoun Christian School	4:15 PM
Thu 03/04	@ Mendon HS	4:30 PM
Fri 03/05	@ Brandywine High School	5:30 PM

### Boys Varsity Basketball

Tue 02/02	@ Niles High School	7:00 PM
Fri 02/05	Niles High School	6:00 PM
Sat 02/06	Marcellus High School	6:00 PM
Mon 02/08	Vicksburg High School	7:00 PM
Wed 02/10	@ Bangor Public Schools	7:00 PM
Fri 02/12	@ Buchanan HS	7:30 PM
Mon 02/15	South Haven High School	7:00 PM
Fri 02/19	@ South Haven High School	5:30 PM
Mon 02/22	Buchanan HS	7:30 PM
Tue 02/23	@ Allegan Public Schools	7:00 PM
Fri 02/26	@ Berrien Springs HS	5:45 PM
Mon 03/01	Calhoun Christian School	5:45 PM
Thu 03/04	@ Mendon HS	6:00 PM
Fri 03/05	@ Brandywine High School	7:00 PM

### Girls Varsity Basketball

Tue 02/02	@ Niles High School	5:30 PM
Fri 02/05	Niles High School	7:30 PM
Sat 02/06	Marcellus High School	7:30 PM
Tue 02/09	Quincy High School	5:30 PM
Wed 02/10	@ Decatur High School	6:00 PM
Fri 02/12	@ Buchanan HS	6:00 PM
Mon 02/15	South Haven High School	4:00 PM
Fri 02/19	@ South Haven High School	7:00 PM
Mon 02/22	Buchanan HS	6:00 PM
Tue 02/23	Allegan Public Schools	6:00 PM
Fri 02/26	@ Berrien Springs HS	7:15 PM
Mon 03/01	Calhoun Christian School	7:15 PM
Thu 03/04	@ Mendon HS	7:30 PM
Fri 03/05	@ Olivet High School	7:00 PM

### Girls and Boys Varsity Bowling

Mon 02/01	Hackett Catholic Prep (Eastland Bowl)	4:00 PM
Wed 02/03	Comstock Tri w/ Bronson & Brandywine	4:00 PM
Mon 02/08	@ Parchment High School (Eastland Bowl)	4:00 PM
Wed 02/10	@ Martin Public Schools (Airport Lanes)	4:00 PM
Mon 02/15	@ Kalamazoo Christian High School (Airway Lanes)	4:00 PM
Wed 02/17	@ Hackett Catholic Prep (Continental)	4:00 PM
Mon 02/22	@ Bronson JR/SR HS (Bronson Strike Zone)	4:00 PM
Wed 02/24	Parchment High School (Eastland Bowl)	4:00 PM
Mon 03/01	Martin Public Schools (Eastland Bowl)	4:00 PM

Wed 03/03	Kalamazoo Christian High School (Eastland Bowl)	4:00 PM
Thu 03/11	@ SAC Divisional Tournament	TBA
Fri 03/12	@ SAC Divisional Tournament	TBA
Fri 03/19	@ MHSAA Team Regional at TBA	TBA
Sat 03/20	@ MHSAA Individual Regional at TBA	TBA

### Boys Varsity Wrestling

Wed 02/03	Comstock BCS Quad vs WP, RV & Colon	5:00 PM
Sat 02/06	Comstock Quad w/ Vicksburg, Homer & Hillsdale	9:30 AM
Wed 02/10	Comstock BCS Quad vs BH, BS & WP	5:00 PM
Sat 02/13	@ Union City Quad	10:00 AM
Wed 02/17	@ Lawrence BCS Quad vs Buchanan	5:00 PM
Sat 02/20	@ Portage Northern Quad w/Gull Lake & Marshall	TBA
Wed 02/24	Comstock Quad w/ Hopkins, Mendon, Bloomingdale	5:00 PM
Sat 02/27	@ White Pigeon Quad	10:00 AM
Wed 03/03	@ MHSAA Team District	TBA
Sat 03/06	@ MHSAA Individual Districts	TBA

### Girls Varsity Competitive Cheer

Mon 02/01	Comstock Quad w/ Fenn, Parch	6:00 PM
Wed 02/03	@ BCS Berrien Springs Jamboree	6:00 PM
Sat 02/06	@ Quincy Jamboree	2:00 PM
Mon 02/15	@ BCS South Haven Jamboree	6:00 PM
Thu 02/18	BCS Comstock Jamboree	6:00 PM
Wed 02/24	@ BCS Lawrence Jamboree	6:00 PM
Sat 02/27	@ Paw Paw Invitational	TBA
Sat 03/06	@ MHSAA District - at Otsego	TBA

# Comstock Township Library Events

Due to rising COVID-19 cases, the library building is closed until further notice. We are now offering curbside pick-up service and computer use by appointment. Please call 269-345-0136 with questions or visit the library's website at [www.comstocklibrary.org](http://www.comstocklibrary.org) for details and updates on the library's Phased Reopening Plan.

Comstock Library is FINE FREE! The library does not charge fines for overdue materials, with the exception of mobile hotspots and Playaway Launchpads. Also, all outstanding overdue fines have been cleared. If you have long overdue library items, you can bring them back without penalty!

Visit our website for information on services and virtual events. Sign up for our eNewsletter so you can stay current with all the latest library news and events.

## An All-Ages Event!

**NEW Family Winter Reading:** Runs until March 1. Print out our Family Winter Reading Challenge BINGO sheet from our website or grab one with your curbside order. Have fun with the whole family to complete your BINGO sheet and turn it back into us before March 1. One lucky family will win a \$500 trip to Great Wolf Lodge Resorts!

## Adult Events

**Reminiscence Writing with Wilma on Zoom, Tuesdays, January 5-February 16. It's not too late to participate in this event. This is a drop-in type class so you can sign up and participate in the last three classes.** Tired of being stuck at home with nothing to do? Please join the Comstock Township Library's "virtual" Reminiscence Writing Class. You can write about your past or present; you can write essays, stories, fiction, or poems. It's just a fun, supportive class for people who love to write. Class leader Wilma Kahn has an MFA in Creative Writing and a Doctor of Arts in English. How does this class work? Wilma provides optional writing ideas or you can write anything you like. You do your writing at home, share it each week with classmates over Zoom, and "hand it in" by email or mail. Wilma will return your writing with helpful comments. Registration is required for this free program and it can be done on our website. Go to Programs and it will be under "Upcoming Events." You may also register by calling 345-0136. Please include your email address and a Zoom link will be emailed to you. The number of participants is limited.

**Adult Pick-Up Crafts: Terracotta Decoupage Pot.** Decoupage a terracotta pot in preparation for the spring! This adult take-home craft kit includes instructions and all materials. There will also be an instructional video posted on YouTube. Go to [youtube.com](http://youtube.com) and search for "Comstock Township Library". Registration is required for this free craft and begins

February 16 on our website, [comstocklibrary.org](http://comstocklibrary.org), "Events". You may also register by calling 345-0136. The number of participants is limited. Participants can pick-up their crafts the week of February 22.

**Trivia Contest for Adults, February 22-26.** Show off your knowledge in an online trivia contest! Stay tuned to our Facebook page and website on February 22 for a link to the questions. You can play alone or as part of a team, but please limit your teams to no more than four people. And let's keep it honest -- no help from outside resources like Google, please. The contest ends on February 26; if there is a tie, a tie-breaker question will be sent to those players on February 26. The grand prize winner will be announced on our Facebook page. Good luck!

**Adult Pick-Up Crafts: Watering Can.** Make a watering can with gems and wire! This adult take-home craft kit includes instructions and all materials. There will also be an instructional video posted on YouTube. Go to [youtube.com](http://youtube.com) and search for "Comstock Township Library". Registration is required for this free craft and begins March 22 on our website, [comstocklibrary.org](http://comstocklibrary.org), "Events". You may also register by calling 345-0136. The number of participants is limited. Participants can pick-up their crafts the week of March 29.

## Youth Events

**Storytime on Facebook LIVE: Thursdays at 10:30 a.m.** - Join Ms. Liz and Ms. Sue every Thursday morning for a fun online storytime. You can watch our storytimes without a Facebook account. Just keep scrolling down the page until you see the LIVE video appear.

**Monthly Youth Craft:** Pick up a new take-home youth craft on the first of the month! Please make sure you're also checking out books to support the library!

**NEW Kids Biblio Boxes:** Join our new book subscription service for kids! Now you can get your very own custom biblio box from the library - for free! Each box will be tailored by librarians based on your child's reading preferences. Boxes will include surprise library books inside along with candy/snacks, an activity or craft and other surprises and goodies. You keep everything but the library books! You will need a Comstock Library card to register as the surprise books will be checked out to you. This program is only available to students in kindergarten through fifth grade. Register on our online calendar.

**1,000 Books Before Kindergarten:** Read a book (any book) with your newborn, infant, toddler, or preschool-aged child. The goal is to read 1,000 books before your little one starts kindergarten. With every completed sheet (100 books), your children earn a free

book of their choice from us so they can build their own at-home library. Pick up a tracking sheet with our curbside pick up or print one from the youth page on our website.

**NEW Storytime Kits:** Re-create the magic of storytime with a take-home storytime kit! Some of our themes include: Dinosaurs, Transportation, Cats, Dogs, Construction, Colors, Owls, Winter, Jungle Animals, Bedtime and many more!

**Monthly Teen DIY Project:** Sixth through twelfth graders, pick up your monthly take home on the first of the month! No registration is required, but we do ask that those picking up projects support the library by checking out materials. Don't have a Comstock library card? Most patrons qualify for a free card!

**Teen Biblio Boxes:** Ever wanted to check out fun book subscription boxes like Owlcrate? Now you can get your very own custom biblio box from the library - for free! Each box will include a themed book from the library, candy/snacks and other fun book-themed surprises and goodies. The only thing we need back from you is the library book and your cardboard box (if it's in good shape). Registration is required through our online calendar. A Comstock library card is needed to check out the box. This program is only open to sixth through twelfth graders.

Follow us on Facebook at [ComstockTownshipLibrary](https://www.facebook.com/ComstockTownshipLibrary)  
Follow us on Instagram at [comstocktownshiplibrary](https://www.instagram.com/comstocktownshiplibrary) or visit our online calendar for more information regarding programs: [comstocklibrary.evanced.info/signup](http://comstocklibrary.evanced.info/signup)



We have Homebound Library Services! Please call the library for information.



Wi-Fi is available in the library. You may also ask about checking out one of our mobile hotspots.



We have fax, photocopy, and scanning services available.



Download free audiobooks, ebooks, music, and video from home through our digital services, Hoopla and Overdrive (Libby). Go to <https://www.comstocklibrary.org/ebooks.asp> for a complete list of all our available digital materials.