

TIGER TIMES

Vol. 2 | No. 3 | November 17, 2022

IB Commences Annual Canned Food Drive

Students of Illini Bluffs aid IB Christmas Hope in gathering food for the upcoming holiday season.

By Katie A.

Freshman Reporter

With 130 families in need of help this holiday season, the Illini Bluffs Canned Food Drive is here to help.

The Illini Bluffs annual Canned Food Drive, an event in which students engage in healthy competition to help families eat during the holiday season, has been a community staple for over 15 years.

IB held a kick-off event on Oct. 31, and students were divided into 4 teams based on their community hours. This allowed students to better know each other while working on the various projects. There was hot cocoa and other treats to celebrate this momentous outpouring of community and camaraderie.

During this time, students were assigned different tasks, such as making posters, creating marketing for the drive, designing banners, and completing puzzles.

The overall goal is to make sure there is money raised and non-perishables for families who need it, while giving students a fun and inviting space to work; indeed, it is an excellent way to boost morale.

This tradition spans all across the IB schools. The elementary is in-charge of collecting jello and pudding mixes, the middle school raises money in a penny wars competition, and, of course, the high school is in-charge of gathering non-perishable items.

Some years are better than others for the families in our community, especially with the economic effects of COVID-19 still being felt. There was a significant number of families in need.

Anyone in our community can apply for this basket through the link found on the IB website. There, you can fill out a form and, thanks to donations, will



Photo of the team Banners. Taken by Kristina Petrey.

make you eligible to receive the items collected by the school.

Being able to help people put food on the table is an important cause for our community and the staff who work here.

"My favorite part of the can food drive is when we are done... I like the friendly competition and seeing students get excited about doing good. It makes me happy when we pack up the food and we deliver it down to the legion," says Mrs. Coulter, high school librarian and IB canned food drive coordinator.

This drive is run through IB Christmas Hope, a non-profit organization that takes the food we raise, packages it, who collects the items from the American Legion in order to start distribution.

Doing this drive means a lot to the community and IB families. It benefits them and takes some of their worries and anxiety about not getting enough food to celebrate this holiday season with loved ones. This project will continue to raise food and money until Nov. 29.

One of the most impactful parts of the Illini Bluffs Canned food drive is the way it spreads throughout the community and the area surrounding the school.

It truly shows how much the community cares when students at IB roll up their sleeves to help one another.

They choose to bring in cans, even if they can only do so in small amounts,

and help make posters and banners to spread awareness of the project.

Being an IB student, specifically a high school student, it is eye-opening to see the work that students can do. It is so cool that everyone can help.

Whether it's helping make posters or videos to put on social media or coming up with ideas to help support the food drive and the Christmas Hope Fund, students can make a difference.

"It has lots of student involvement and teaches students real-world issues. I think it's good because everyone in the school helps out," said Avery, a junior here at IB.

Having all schools help is an important way of spreading the word about hunger.

This feeling of coming together is something that cannot be replicated. If you would like to contribute to this wonderful cause, you can go to our GoFundMe or bring in items to the bank or high school office.

All donations are extremely appreciated, and, of course, giving back to help friends and neighbors in need helps us all truly capture the holiday spirit.

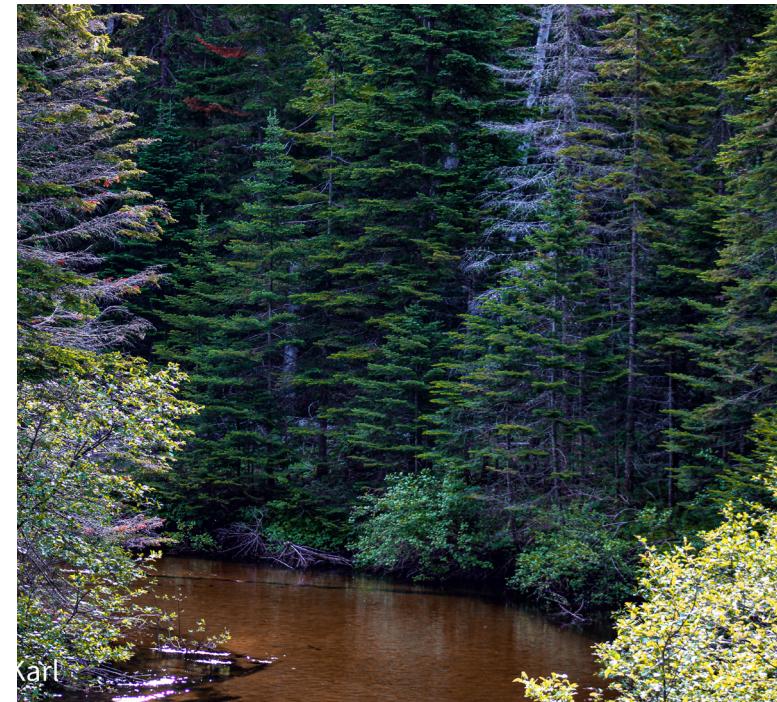


Photo Taken by Lillain Karl

Editorial: Steer Clear of Fast Fashion this Holiday Season

By Gracie L.

Freshman Reporter

Fast Fashion is low priced but stylish clothing made to replicate garments straight from the runway, and with the holiday season fast approaching, fast fashion brands like SHEIN and Cider will have their biggest sales of the year.

Fast fashion is a term used to identify brands that mass produce clothing to fill the many racks on their store floors, but how does mass production affect the environment?

Mass production affects the environment by producing enormous water and energy waste, in addition to polluting the environment with toxic clothes dyes and cheap fabric that leak into the water and sometimes waste system.

"Fast fashion is like fast food. After the Sugar rush, it just leaves a bad taste in your mouth" - Livia Firth, co-founder of Eco-Age.

Using more eco-friendly products like non-toxic clothes dye, and being conscious where your will end up in the longrun. Sustainable and Eco-friendly clothes should be able to last a decades, maybe longer. Comparatively, fast fashion companies like ZARA, H&M, GAP, Forever 21, Fashion Nova produce clothes that aren't made to last much longer than one wash.

Brands such as Patagonia pride themselves on their step towards a greener future. A high proportion of their materials are recycled. On top of that, they ensure their factories follow their strict code

of conduct which they call the Supply Chain Environment Responsibility Program. To ensure that the code of conduct is being followed, they send a team member from their social-environmental team to investigate and any orders are placed with the suppliers. What is the Supply Chain Environment Responsibility Program? It is to measure, reduce, and eliminate the environmental impacts of making and selling Patagonia products.

Looking into different brands to see that if they are eco-friendly is something that takes a quick Google search. Instead of turning to brands that are all about the latest fashion trends, turn to pieces of clothing that are timeless and could go with anything.

Sure these brands are expensive, but they are made to last longer. Think of it as instead a bunch of tiny payments, you make one large one, which eventually costs less.

Through things such as, growing your own vegetables, shopping as a second hand store, and shopping at brands that make being sustainable a number one focus, you can make a difference. Everyone taking a small step toward being sustainable leads to a large change.

Shopping sustainably can make a positive change your environment; these cheap brands who mass produce clothing have shown that they choose profit over the environment.

IB Creates Book Club

Illini Bluffs High School collaborates with Middle School to form a book club reading Lincoln Book Award Nominee's

By Bre S.

Library News Reporter

Starting in August of the 2022-2023 school year, Illini Bluffs High School and Illini Bluffs Middle School have joined forces through the power of books and a librarian determined to instill a love of reading in students.

Mrs. Coulter, the high school librarian, started a book club in hopes of students rekindling their passion for reading. Many students from 6th to 12th grade can agree that her mission has been successful and that this club has allowed students of various age groups to come together to discuss and carve out time for independent reading.

After sitting down and talking to the middle school students, they explained what it's like to be a member of the book club. Eighth grader, Sam S., says people should consider joining the book club because, "you'll be able to explore new and more complex books." Sage J., an eighth grader, talks about how, "you're able to connect with more people!" Overall, the middle schoolers are thrilled about this reading opportunity. The ability to just get lost in a book is an opportunity that many middle schoolers don't have the chance to do.

Now, what exactly goes on in a book club?

Seventh grader, Sophia H., says, "We're given time to read during enrichment." A time, kind of like a study hall, where students learn more about different subjects.

Mrs. Coulter created a quiet reading area in the library reserved for students who are a part of the book club so they can have a cozy area without distractions to jump into the story.

Another question students often face is, "What do you do in book clubs?" When asked this question, Sophia Hicks, a seventh grader, jumped on the question by answering, "We are given time to read and discuss books during enrichment." While talking to students, it's highlighted that Mrs. Coulter's book club has united middle school and high schoolers and made them want to further engage in reading."

Through email, a group of high school students were asked the same question and, junior Sophia O., shared how this has given them a place to have fun and read where in other situations it wasn't always possible. Sophia is currently reading "The Firekeepers Daughter" by Angeline Boulley! As a highschool member of the book club, she agrees that this book club has united students in a fun and inviting environment.

Mrs. Coulter's book club is easy to join and allows students to connect. Just go into the high school library and she will gladly tell you how to join, and what book club entails. This club also works with the Lincoln book award, which allows students to vote for their favorite book from the master's list. This allows writers and students alike to grasp what students like to read. Overall, this book club creates an environment that bridges the gap between high school and middle school students and allows them to converse and vote on their favorite books.

Student Council

Autumn G.

Student Council President

Can you believe that it is already November? This year has flown by!

This month, we know everyone is looking forward to Thanksgiving break. A few days of sleeping in, eating lots of good food, and spending time with family and friends is well deserved by all the Illini Bluffs students and staff!

The two days before break, we want to help you get into the comfy Thanksgiving spirit. Monday, Nov. 21 will be Pajama Day and Tuesday, Nov. 22 will be Flannel Day! Pick out your favorite PJs and coziest flannels and join us in giving thanks for a break from classes!

We hope you enjoy your time off this month. December is right around the corner, so we will be thinking about fun activities for the last month of the year to get everyone excited and in the holiday spirit! As always, we greatly appreciate your ideas and feedback. Please feel free to contact us via our Student Council email, ibstuco@ib327.com.

Happy Birthday

Hayden H.- Nov. 1
Ms. Gorsuch- Nov. 3
Patrick C.- Nov. 4
Lanie K.- Nov. 6
Mrs. Edmonds- Nov. 8
Grace H.- Nov. 8
Olivia H.- Nov. 9
Mr. Wirth- Nov. 10
Joshua H.- Nov. 13
Lily L.- Nov. 17
Davin G.- Nov. 19
Kyle E.- Nov. 19
Bre S.- Nov. 19
Evan T.- Nov. 20
Zander S.- Nov. 21
Ms. Gresham- Nov. 21
Mr. Schafer- Nov. 21
Ben P.- Nov. 22
Kyra P.- 28
Izellah B.- Nov. 28
Reese C.- Nov. 30
Ella N.- Nov. 30

Senior Send-Off

Seniors sit down and talk about their time at Illini Bluffs High school.

By Kristina Petrey

Editor-In-Chief

"As cliche as it sounds, these seriously are the fasted four years of your life," Senior Amelia H. said when talking about her time in high school.

Amelia, also known as Mia, considers herself an "average joe," but looking at her record as a state-qualifying golfer, destroyer of dance floors, and determination to make her life one worth living, she is everything but.

Mia works at the before and after care that the school provides. This often leads her to "slugging throughout the day." From having to be at school early to staying up late working on scholarship essays, which she plans to use towards tuition at the University of Illinois to get a degree in nursing.

"Since it's so expensive, I'm hoping these scholarships come in clutch and make this opportunity possible," says Mia.

Senior Zoe E. can be found at various practices. Such as IB softball practices, travel ball practices, and volleyball practices. All that hard work has landed her a spot on ICC's softball team, where she will be going for two years before branching out to other universities.

Zoe would like to become a teacher once her high school years are over. Which is ironic, as she mentioned that in past years she had an overall disdain for children. But through IB's service project opportunities, she has grown to enjoy working with kids.

"Working with these little people has seriously turned over a new leaf for me. When I teach, I don't think I would want to be a kindergarten teacher, they're a little too hectic for me. But I would enjoy being a second-grade teacher. They're a little more manageable in my opinion," says Zoe.

Landon H. likes to refer to himself, jokingly one assumes, as a "pre-retired NBA player," clarifying that he was going to the NBA, but retired before his time on the court came around.

Landon, or LJ, as teacher Ms. Sewell calls him, is an excellent cook! He enjoys making tasty meals in Mrs. Jatakowski's food classes for himself. His favorite food to make is his special pepperoni quesadilla, which he refused to share since it's his secret recipe. On top of that, he enjoys being clean, one will most likely find his bedroom very tidy. Something very different compared to other guys his age, he jokes.

LJ knows the college route isn't for him. He plans on going to a trade school and then later becoming a traveling welder because "that's where the money's at." He's down for wherever life or the money takes him.

But these seniors' optimism for the future won't be overshadowed by the things they'll miss from our small-town school. Mia talks about how she will miss her ability to show off her moves on the dance floor and how weird it will be to go to a classroom and not know the names of every student there, which Zoe agreed on.

Landon will miss the teachers here, namely Mrs. Jatakowski, Mrs. Courtney, and Mr. Hallstrom. He talks about their ability to see beyond the grades on a paper, and rather see the student. "Instead of making it seem like they're here to get their check and move on, they focus on you individually and make you feel seen."

With their time here at IBHS coming to an end, they wanted to leave parting words for all students.

Mia: "Get involved in your own life. Don't sit back and let it go by."

Zoe: "Do the dress-up days, don't worry about if your friends are dressing up or not because you only have 4 years to do it!"

Landon: "This will be the quickest 4 years of your life. We're all about to be grown, so I wish everyone success and wealth. Hopefully, y'all reciprocate it back, so we can all get that bag."



@ibhs_tiger_times



Illini Bluffs Tiger Times

Netflix Originals

By Celine L.
Junior Reporter



Dahmer

“Dahmer” is about the life and crimes of Jeffrey Dahmer. For those of you who don’t know, Jeffrey Dahmer is responsible for the gruesome deaths of at least 17 people, who were mostly gay men. The first episode describes the scenario where he brought his last victim, Tracy Edwards, back to his apartment. Edwards managed to escape and contact authorities. Later, the police searched his home and found evidence of multiple murders and he was arrested.

When I had first heard of this show, I was a little worried that it would be problematic. Now that I have actually watched it, I think “Dahmer” does an excellent job of telling the story of Jeffrey Dahmer and his victims without glamorizing him or his crimes. It was a very well-made show and described the events fairly accurately based on my knowledge of the story. Overall, I would recommend this show, unless you are sensitive to gory scenes and violence.

Alice in Borderland

“Alice in Borderland” is about three friends who are facing some hardships in their personal lives. They decide to meet at a train station and talk about zombies and video games. Eventually, they start to mess around with each other and run into a crowd of people and they accidentally cause a crash. Quickly, they run inside the train station and hide in the bathroom. The lights flicker and they decide to check their surroundings and find that they are in a completely different world. While investigating the strange things that are happening, they find a girl who tells them that they have crossed a certain point and there is no way back.

When “Squid Game” was released, everyone loved it. When I had finished “Squid Game,” I wanted to find more shows similar to it and I was recommended “Alice In Borderland.” This show does a good job of pulling the viewer in from the beginning. The plot is interesting and engaging. You get some insight into the characters’ backgrounds and it helps you connect a lot more with them. So far, this show is honestly amazing and I will definitely be going back to watch the rest of it. I would definitely recommend “Alice in Borderland” to anyone who asked for Netflix recommendations. Overall, I would give this show five stars.

Inside Man

“Inside Man” is about two death row inmates who assist the police in their investigations. When a priest is given a flash drive by one of the churchgoers, he takes it in order to help the man from getting in trouble. Later, his son gives it to his teacher. She goes through it and finds some illegal content on it and assumes that it belongs to the priest.

I started writing this article saying that I will watch at least one episode of each show all the way through, but I simply could not finish this one. The story starts off interesting, but it gets a little strange as it goes on. It’s too cheesy, predictable, and generally uninteresting to watch.

It is very slow-paced and the acting is so awkward to the point where it almost seems like the interactions between characters are forced. This plot feels awkward and seems like it’s mostly filler. Overall, I would give this two stars.

The Haunting of Hill House

In our English 11 class, we just recently finished reading “The Haunting of Hill House” for our horror unit. Personally, I loved the story and so did most of the others in my class, so I was very excited for this one.

“The Haunting of Hill House” is about this family that moved into Hill House in hopes of refurbishing it. Strange things start to happen quickly. One of the children, Nellie, had been seeing a “bent neck lady” and her twin brother, Luke, had an imaginary friend named Abigail. Later, it shows the kids as adults. Steven, Nellie’s older brother, goes on to write best-selling books about ghost stories inspired by hill house. Although, he claims to have never seen a ghost in hill house. He interviews a lady whose husband died in a wreck. She claims that shortly after the accident, she saw her husband’s ghost hanging from the ceiling of her room and refused to sleep in there again. During this interview, Nellie calls Steven but he doesn’t answer. Then at the end we see a shot of Nellie walking up to Hill House.

I feel like this show doesn’t really feel the same as reading the novel, but it’s still the same interesting story and I love it. The plot keeps you engaged the entire time and you are always just waiting for more. I personally liked reading the story better than watching the show but that doesn’t mean it is bad at all. It is well-written and I think it’s a very fitting adaptation of the novel. Overall, I would give this four stars.



Student Spotlight: Ella B.

By Katie R.
Managing Editor

Illini Bluffs is full of outstanding, talented students, and Ella Basham is no exception. Nominated because of her cheerful attitude, outstanding work, and entrepreneurial spirit, Ella exemplifies the character of a sensational student.

Ella is involved in many clubs and activities inside and outside of school. Not only is Ella a co-captain of the dance team, a creative asset in publications, and a part of the student council, she also runs her own business outside of school! Her business is called Batter Up and she bakes and designs all kinds of cakes, cookies, and cupcakes. You can find her work displayed in beautiful pictures on Instagram @batterup.bake! It is truly inspiring to see someone younger being an entrepreneur.

There are many career paths that Ella expresses interest in. Baking, of course, catches her eye the most and she says she hopes to continue down that career path. Although, if that doesn’t work out she also expresses interest in psychology and cosmetology.

Her optimism and intelligence have not gone unnoticed by teachers. They commend her for her attitude, helpful behavior, and good work in the classroom.

Being a junior in high school, Ella is excited for her first year of prom and for her second year of Anything Goes. COVID-19 put a lot of fun school activities on hold for a few years, but now that things are finally getting back on track it opens a lot of room for excitement in many students.

Overall, Ella is an outstanding and talented student. It takes a very special and dedicated person to do as much as she does! We are lucky to have people like Ella, who helps inspire other students while also keeping herself in check, here at Illini Bluffs High School. Go check out her business on Instagram!



Ella B. (left) with Ms. Sewell (right). Photo captured by Katie R.

How To Not Be Like Grandma Betty

By Anna S.
Sophomore Reporter

All across the internet are surveys about politics, and they have a lot of things in common: about eight out of ten citizens are worried about the increase of families splitting apart due to these politics.

This has never been a new thing; it wouldn’t be politics without the tension. Your family might be enjoying a peaceful Thanksgiving meal, when BAM — Grandma Betty brings up some new bill the Senate passed. Suddenly, your whole family is arguing, and Thanksgiving ends on a bitter note. However, in the past, Grandma Betty would still go to your hockey game she promised to go to, and your parents began to let the fight fade away.

Now more and more families are splitting apart due to political beliefs. Grandma Betty stopped coming to your hockey games, and your parents stopped calling half of your family. COVID debates, combined with recent political elections, have made politics more tense than our generation has ever seen. You end up cutting Grandma Betty off because now she is judging you for your beliefs. But let’s say you don’t want to be like Grandma Betty. You don’t want to push others away. How do you do this?

The fix seems quite simple, but it is nonetheless true: have an open mind. Be aware that the other person might have a perspective that you’ve never thought of. Listen to them, hear them out, and then they’ll listen to you. Don’t expect to change their beliefs in a singular conversation because, chances are, your beliefs wouldn’t change either.

However, talking through things and respecting other people’s opinions will slowly center both of your beliefs. Even if it doesn’t, at least you’ll learn where they’re coming from, and can be more understanding of their side. Listen to understand; don’t listen to wait for your opportunity to talk again.

Annual Veteran's Day Ceremony

Illini Bluffs school come together to celebrate those who fought bravely to ensure our country is free.

By Gracie L.
Freshman Reporter



High School Choirs singing "American Our Home."

The Illini Bluffs Veterans Day Ceremony is one of the longest standing traditions in the IB school history. This year we brought back the ceremony better than ever after.

This is Illini Bluffs' first year having the traditional ceremony without COVID-19 restrictions. When asked about Veterans Day, Dr. Rodger Alvey described many starter steps to getting the whole event started.

Dr. Alvey, says "the first thing I do is send a starter email." The email to get a gauge of volunteers. In that set of volunteers, he talks to 3 volunteers who would like a play a huge part in the ceremony.

After the email, he had a meeting with volunteers and our school staff. During the meeting, Dr. Alvey took suggestions and just general ideas about the very important day. He puts together a draft of everything that will be taking place such as music, the timing of the various speaker and the veterans' who will be honored.

While making the draft he makes many arrangements with students, band teachers, decorations, and the guest speaker, Mike Price. This year Student Council President, Autumn Gray, and Vice President, Amelia Howard were speakers during the ceremony. This year our new head of kitchen Mr. Murphy will be in charge of making meals for 300+ people. Dr. Alvey described everything happening as a "Mad-Dash"

He explained step by step how the day came to be and what each school did to contribute to the special day.

This year IBES students made placemats for the veterans and their families for the lunch-in. IBMS students made cards thanking the veterans for everything they have done. And IBHS provided the gym and decorations for the ceremony.

After everything has been accomplished from the step-by-step list, they hold a final meeting and ran through the ceremony to practice.

After the ceremony, Mr. Jason Briggs of the Marines 1994-2000 sat down for an interview. Mr. Briggs talked about what it meant to him that our school held a ceremony for all the veterans in our school district. .

"It shows that the school and community care about their veterans still," says Mr. Briggs.

After the interview with Briggs, Mr. Sean Paul Erickson of the Army from 2006-2016 came and talked. He served in Afghanistan from 2009-2012, and a Civilian contractor from 2016-2018. During the interview, Sean talked about what his thoughts were since it was the first Ceremony in a couple of years. Erickson talked about how cool it was and showed how much pride IB as community.

Overall, the ceremonies hold a special importance of all the veterans. IBHS is eager to see what next year brings



Student Survey: Best Part of Thanksgiving

Kristina Petrey
Editor-In-Chief

Family, Food and Football: the three F's that make up Thanksgiving. For this survey, the Tiger Times staff wanted to see which of those elements was most important to the students here at IB.

To 41% of students, seeing family is the best part of the holiday itself. "Relishing the company of the people you care about is what makes Thanksgiving so special," said sophomore Jacob R.

Senior Lindsey H. said, "Don't get me wrong, I love the food, parades and black Friday shopping. But these are things I do with my family. Being with the people you love is what makes the holidays so special." Which is such a unique way of thinking.

Junior Blake M. said, "Family is something you have for such a short amount of time. Especially at this age. Soon most of us will be moved away. There will always be the other important things during this time that will continue once our families are gone. But family is what makes this holiday so unique."

Things such as food are also incredibly important to students of IBHS. 23% said that its not always about just the food, it's about the friends we made along the way.

Students Grace T. and Katie A. agree that food does taste pretty good. But there's always the memories of everyone gathered around to eat and it's just a great way to bond with each other. On top of that, "it just tastes really good."

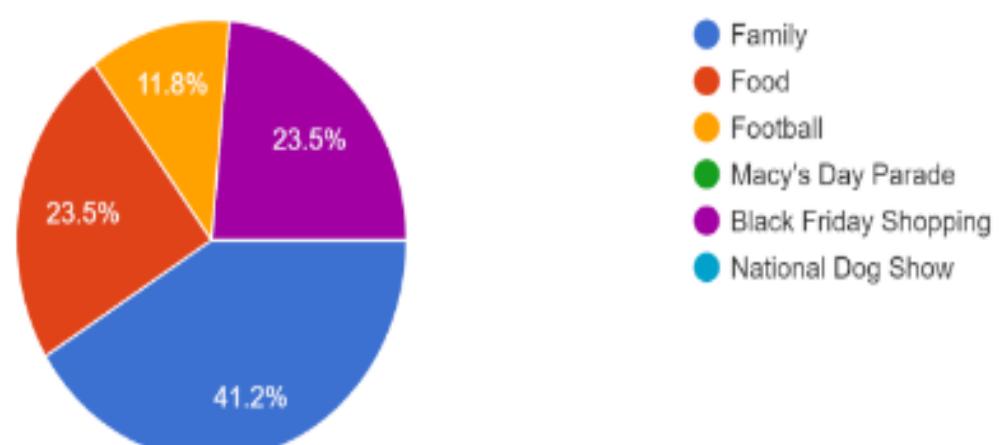
There's nothing quite like the sales that happen on Black Friday, which usually happens around Thanksgiving time. Students quite like the sales due to the fact that they are high school students who work minimum wage jobs.

Senior Grace H. said, "every year my aunt, mom and I finish dinner and head out for the early sales. It's something they've been doing since they were young and it's so much fun to be a part of it. We usually don't get back until 3 or 4 a.m." They seemed to love the whole 'shop till we drop' mentality.

Football is pretty important to some families. Thanksgiving is one of the biggest times in the football season. Sophomore Toby C. enjoys tuning into the games to see how they hold up for his fantasy football league. To Lauren B. it's important because all her friends and family tune in to watch from all over the country. And for senior Autumn G., Thanksgiving is the perfect napping opportunity, with a full stomach and the people you care about surrounding you.

Things that are truly under-appreciated are The National Dog Show and Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. None of the students said those were their favorite part. Seems like watching cute dogs strut their stuff or a marching band playing their little instruments is not as important as family. Interesting to see where their priorities lie.

Overall, none of these events that happen during Thanksgiving mean anything without the people you care about around you. Thanksgiving time is for people to be surrounded by love, whether it be the love you have for your aunt's killer cheesy potatoes, or the grandparents who talk about how much you've grown since they last saw you, it's just a time to be surrounded by love.



STAFF PICKS

Best Thanksgiving Food

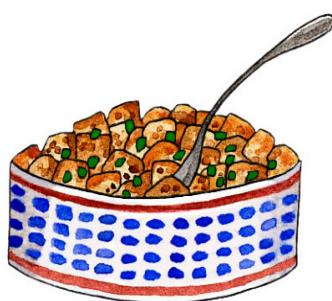
Staff of the IBHS Tiger Times

There are so many foods to choose from when attending a Thanksgiving dinner. Staff of the Tiger Times tell you what is worth getting.

Celine L.

Sweet Potatoes

My favorite Thanksgiving food is sweet potatoes; they're just a perfect balance between sweet and savory.



Lillian K.

Turkey

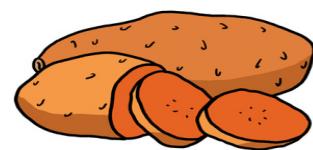
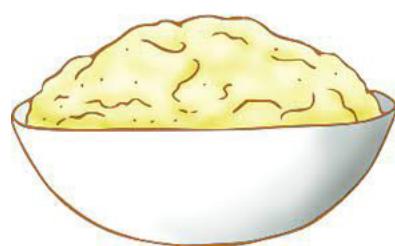
The best Thanksgiving food is either turkey or pecan pie. I say this because every year we go to the family farm and eat a great big dinner, and every time there is turkey, of course! It truly brings joy to the rest of the meal.



Grace L.

Cheesy Potatoes

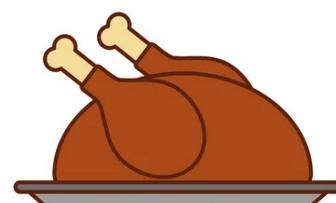
The best dish is cheesy potatoes because it was the first thing I tried; now, it's my all time favorite. My first memory that comes to mind with that dish is helping my mom make it for our family Thanksgiving party (which really involved me getting the ingredients everywhere).



Katie A.

Stuffing

The best Thanksgiving dish is stove top stuffing with turkey gravy. One of my favorite memories is going hunting with my Dad, Uncle, and Grandpa one Thanksgiving. We had to get up really early, but I ate like a queen in the duck blind. That night, we had a nice family dinner, but I had eaten so much that morning that I didn't feel hungry. Somehow, though, I managed to make room for some stuffing.



Katie R.

Pecan Pie

I love pecan pie. The texture is great, the taste is great, and I could eat it for any meal. I usually don't like Thanksgiving food, so it's nice to be able to enjoy pie! My aunt makes it every year and it never disappoints.



Lauren B.

Mashed Potatoes

Mashed potatoes hands down. They're just a classic Thanksgiving staple! My uncle that I don't get to see very often comes to our house just to make the best mashed potatoes on the planet.

Featured Artist

Helena shares her favorite part of the returning Art Club, led by Mr. Hallstrom.



Helena M.

"I like the vibe. It's relaxed, fun and informative. It's the best situation to learn anything. He provides kindness, encouragement and a safe space for creative and decompressing."

Preview of Boys Basketball: Reaching for Redemption

By Lillian K.
Freshman Reporter

The boys' basketball team has started preparing for its upcoming season. The boys have been in the gym nonstop to improve their skills. Mr. Clay Vass and Mr. Joey Waters are coaches of the team leading a total of seventeen athletes, which is a major improvement in people and talent from last year, hopefully leading to a victorious season.

The boys have been preparing by attending open gyms during the weekdays at 6:45 a.m. Despite the fact of early practices, their hopes are to improve their skill from last season and accomplish more.

Charlie F. is a freshman at Illini Bluffs and hopes to achieve more from where he left off in middle school by participating in practices, going to get-togethers, and attending open gyms. He expects his team to excel further than regionals and is ready for wherever he is needed. He does this by getting into the correct mindset through "working small on scrimmages."

Devon W. is getting in the process by eating right, getting mentally prepared, and going to the gym in his free time. Pre-season to him is seen through many open gyms and being more active, however, he wants his team to be greater than they were last season.

Devon mentions, "As a team, we are there for each other while getting through the ups and downs."

A junior, Hank A. says, "I hope to make a deep postseason run, and it leads us to the state competition located in Champaign."

Hank A. is in many activities within the district, and one of his latest sports, soccer, prepared him for the basketball season by helping his hand coordination and endurance. Last year, he believed the team's lack of numbers was a little problem, but this season, more people are showing up to bring skill, spirit, and willingness to the team.

This is the last season for Brandon C., so he is taking action to make it the best one yet. He picked up many workouts last summer and fall and is physically getting prepared for what is ahead of him. However, he knew there was a lot of work that needed to be done. He believed "people knew the expectations."

While the players have their intentions set, the coaches provide input on their thoughts about the upcoming season.

Mr. Joey Waters has been working effectively with his team and fellow coaches, and he has been preparing the boys by having morning drills about three times a week. To him, a couple of returners are really going to bring a show to the court this season.

"Returners Hank Alvey (Jr.) and our Lone Ranger Senior Brandon Coats are back, who should fill up the scoring and rebounding category at will."

With this, he doesn't just want to achieve regionals and sectionals but wants to own the state title. With this only being his second year of coaching, it is going to take the whole team to make it all the way to the end, so be sure to show support by attending the games!

Wrestling State Champs Determined to go Further

Students Paul I., Ian O., and Jackson C., talk about how they're preparing for this upcoming wrestling season

By Lillian K.

Freshman Reporter

The wrestling team expects a crowd this year, but out of the many wrestlers, Paul Ishikawa, Ian O'Connor, Hunter Robbins, and Jackson Carroll have taken matters into their own hands. That pre-season period of cutting weight, staying in shape, and motivating oneself has arrived for these four dedicated athletes.

Each of these four athletes has hit the mat at the state wrestling tournament, leaving them all hungry to go farther this year.

Last year, Hunter R., a junior, placed 2nd at the state tournament, which has inspired him to push harder this upcoming season. In his eyes, "motivation is a way to get better for the upcoming season and be more prepared than last year."

The dedication in the wrestlers is quite remarkable, as it inspires wrestlers of all grades in this program.

Paul Ishikawa, another dedicated wrestler, has been wrestling as long as he can remember. Last year, he had received 4th in the state, so there is significant pressure on him to make another state appearance. During the pre-season, he tries to be the best he can possibly be in order to achieve his goal. He has poured hours into workouts and spent even more time dedicating mental energy towards his performance. Indeed, Paul's state last year is motivating him to seek the same success, if not more, that he found last year.

Out of the four boys, Hunter and Paul are the only two to publicly confirm that they have received offers from various colleges. Paul is currently looking at University of Mary and Grandview. As for Hunter, he is keeping his option open. One thing is for certain, though: In order to continue the sport of wrestling outside of their high school career, they are going to put their all into this season.

Another notable upperclassmen wrestler is Ian O.

The O'Connor family has quite a legacy here at I.B. Wrestling started with Ian O'Connors grandfather, who led the program here and was inducted into the Illinois Hall of Fame for coaching. Ian mentions how each of his uncles and one of his cousins competed at the state level at least one to two times in their high school careers. Shawn O'Connor, the current coach of the team and Ian's father, is always encouraging these boys. Ian said that his dad pushes them no matter how tired they are.

"His encouragement pushed me to state last year, which pushed me to accomplish more out of myself this year," said Ian.

The upperclassmen aren't the only ones vying for a state title, though.

Sophomore Jackson C. states, "I'm seen with the same equality as the other wrestlers." Carroll intends to excel to state again this year, so the energy stays alive pacing himself towards his goal while he is starting to cut weight and gain more hours in the gym.

In order to stay in shape, many of these wrestlers participate in more than one sport; however, wrestling is their best. Hunter R. states, "Wrestling is an individual sport, but you still are connected with your peers...as a family."

Despite wrestling being an individual sport, the team still connects through their personalities, common interests, and inside jokes. Their determination has certainly left an impact for future years.



Hunter R. and Jackson C. Photo taken by Lillian K.

Girls Basketball Team Shoots Their Shot at a Good Season

Lillian K.

Freshman Reporter

With the ending of the volleyball season, the Girls' Basketball team is determined to make their mark. The basketball team has sixteen athletes this season and is confident that their skills will take them further than in previous years.

The basketball team is looking forward to building their relationships, understanding the game better, and working through their problems. They accomplish this by rerunning drills multiple times, practicing whenever they can, and refusing to be defeated.

A senior, Autumn G. mentioned, "All of the players have been working non-stop to re-enter the Basketball mode." This is the last season of basketball for Autumn, so she is making every second count while never being able to catch a break. Autumn doesn't have much free time, so prioritizing is a way of management and is something vital to ensure she succeeds in all her fields. Being a Valedictorian of the Class of 2023, a part of NHS, head of the Student Council, and also working at Glasford Bank, she has a tight schedule, but she seems to manage with ease.

The team would also get together outside of the gym. Freshman, Chloe E., especially loves how the team has lunch together to talk about their expectations for this season. Chloe has a promising future for her basketball career here at IB. She has been playing basketball since grade school and worked her way up to captain in her eighth-grade year. Eeten is ready and prepared for what she is needed to do on the court and is bringing inspiration and courage to her team.

While only a sophomore, Brenna D. hopes to excel in her basketball career. In the beginning, she wasn't so sure what her thoughts were for pre-season, but with time, she was able to pick up many great qualities. Through the multiple personalities and talent on this team, the girls hope to climb their way through regionals to state. Pre-season to the girls is a way to pick up where you left off last season, and as the team continues to get ready, the community will wish them the best of luck.

Catching the Spirit

The cheer season is in full swing with upcoming games and the competition season.

Lauren B.

Freshman Reporter

The start of basketball season means that the cheer season is just around the corner! With only one incoming freshman, Gabby G., the team is already accomplishing many goals and getting ready for competitions.

Gabby G., the only freshman on the cheer team, said that she enjoys being the sole ninth grader because "because [she] gets to know the other people on the team better." The cheer team has helped her adjust to high school incredibly well, and she is thrilled to be part of the experience.

With a limited team, the stakes are high to perfect routines.

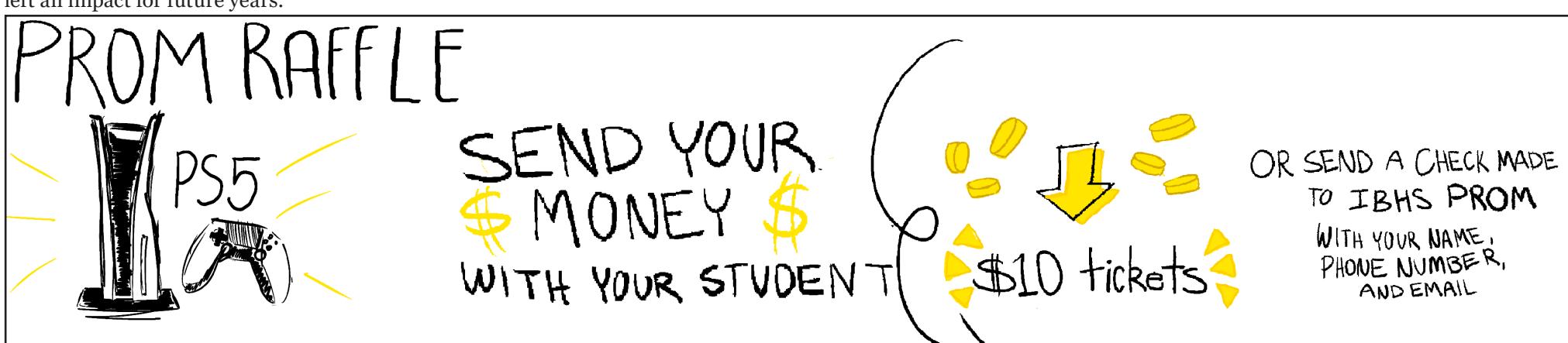
"The weekend of October 22nd, we had to bring our choreographer back to redo our routine after we lost 3 girls from our competition team," said Grace H., a senior.

Despite the struggles of team injuries, Grace and Karena are trying hard to make routines work.

The cheer community has not only helped the young cheer members, but the upper-classmen too. "The cheer team for me at least has built a place where I can come in and work together with a group of hard working girls to help accomplish a goal. Whether it is trying to figure out formations, a stunt, or a tumbling pass we all work together, and offer advice to each other," Grace said.

With upcoming competitions on the way, the team is rushing to create a perfect routine. Grace is especially hopeful for a fantastic routine for her last year of high school cheer. Although the team has already accomplished so much, they still have so much to learn.

"I hope to advance in my tumbling, stunts, and jumps", said Gabby, "I think our biggest accomplishment so far this year is that we have progressed on our stunts, and that impacts us because it gives us hope to get better."



Native American Heritage Month

In 1990, President George H. W. Bush signed into law that November would be National Native American Heritage Month. This is a time when Americans can educate and appreciate the indigenous cultures that have been around for years.

Students Bradley Miller, and Kristina Petrey share stories of their native heritage.

Kristina Petrey

I was born in Sitka, Alaska. I'm a member of the Raven Coho Tribe. Tlingit, a culture that I'll define in a minute, is matrilineal, meaning it follows your mom. Similar to how kids get their father's last name, natives get their mother's tribe. This was a way to show that women were powerful, they were praised for their spiritual and mental strength, and men were praised for their spiritual and physical strength. Each of their strength's complimented each other and they were seen as equals, rather than in the patriarchal society we live in today. On top of that, Native women were the ones who gave birth to all kids. So, it just makes sense.

Due to family conflicts, I was raised here in Central Illinois by two lovely parents. They encourage me to learn about my Native side, and provide support whenever I question if I'm a "real native." My biological mother, Katie Thomas, moved down here a couple of years ago and taught me a basic understanding of my family's history. She provides me with the resources to educate myself further.

Luckily, just before this school year started, I had the opportunity to go back to Alaska for the first time in 16 years. In my time there, I saw so many people who looked like me: tan skin, dark hair, and dark eyes. It was so different from being here, a predominantly white area. It was truly amazing.

During my time there, I walked Totem Park with my aunts and cousins, a beautiful trail surrounded by spruce and hemlock trees. This is a national park that preserves a battle that took place between invading Russian Traders and the frog clan, Kiks.ádi, a Tlingit tribe. Tlingit, pronounced Cling-ket, means "people of the tides." Tlingit is both a language and a word to describe Natives in Southeast Alaska. The Totem National Park website has a lovely and educational video about the history of the park and the people who live there. I highly encourage watching it and learning more.

I have both an English name, Kristina, and a Tlingit name, Kutaan — pronounced Koo-tahhn — meaning summer.

Tlingit is a difficult language to learn since it was never meant to be a written language. My mom, Katie, says it's because you have to "know your vowels, and it relies heavily on oral history." As of recently, Tlingit is starting to be retaught in schools! This is incredibly important because Tlingit is a dying language.

My mother told me stories about how my great-grandmother was forced into a boarding school where they would have to speak English, abandoning their native tongue. If they did not, they would face corporal punishment. This has caused severe generational trauma that is still felt to this day.

Me being so far away from Alaska has introduced an educational barrier, preventing me from immersing myself in the history of my tribe and the history of my people. Once I graduate high school, I fully intend to go back and spend my time gaining knowledge and an understanding of my family's history. Along with that, it's such a beautiful place. Any photo you've seen of Alaska is nothing compared to the beauty of seeing it with your own eyes.

Something I want to clarify is that I AM NOT AN ESKIMO. 'Eskimo' was a derogatory term used by non-native colonizers to subjugate native people. It was used in a way that painted native people as barbaric and violent people. Tribes of the North, which are located in the Arctic Region, are vastly different compared to southeastern tribes. Overall, unless you're a native of the Arctic Region, I would refrain from saying it.

Overall, there is so much to learn about Native cultures, and oftentimes, it feels incredibly overwhelming. This is just what I've learned so far, and as time goes on I will continue to learn more. I encourage everyone to learn more about other indigenous native people this month, even if it's not an in-depth pursuit. There's so much to learn, but starting small makes everything a little easier to understand.



Photos taken by Kristina Petrey

Bradley Miller

I was born in Peoria IL to a young mother and father, my mother was 17 and my father was turning 19. My Grandma was a full-blooded Cherokee woman and was born in Oklahoma. She met my grandpa in Colorado where my mother was born. My mother was the first child born to my grandma, and I am my mother's only child.

For me growing up, things were rough. This mostly came from the fact that for as early as I can remember, my parents were never together, so we weren't together much as a family typically would be. When I was a child, I went to school here at Illini Bluffs. But when each school year ended, I would go back out to Peoria with my father. He was trying to find my mother and I was just trying to figure things out on my own.

Since as far back as I could remember I've been going to Pow-Wows, large celebrations full of singing, dancing, and eating. When I was in third grade, I grew my hair down to my shoulders to show my native pride. I was often mocked for it in school, but I didn't care. I felt that my hair was the best in school.

After third grade, things took an unexpected turn. My mother got into an accident and passed away at 28. I was 9 years old. As one could imagine, this changed me in very dramatic ways, ways I can't even get into because of the extensiveness of the topic. This led me to be a bit more grown-up than most kids in my grade. That year I grew tenfold. My father ended up giving me to my aunt and he left for Colorado to "make things right." Ever since that year, I've never lived with my father again. He's been in and out of my life the whole time but that's fine. I still love him.

My point of this is I've been going to a predominantly white school and living with the white side of my family rather than my native side, it hasn't stopped me from learning and appreciating my Cherokee heritage, though.

I would go to visit my aunts and grandpa, they taught me to keep my culture alive within myself. They have bought me things like Baja blankets and hoodies, which have native prints on them, in addition to making me dream catchers and taking me to Pow-Wows.



Photo from Peoria Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma

They introduced me to Native American music. It's not like what they sing at the Pow-Wows, but it is people with Native Heritage singing about their love for their people and culture. It's truly quite beautiful. I've listened to that kind of music since 7th grade, and it has inspired me to learn the Cherokee language and about my family's history.

There's a line between cultural appropriation and cultural appreciation. Appropriation is the act of taking a culture without understanding what it means, examples being dream-catchers Spencers. Whereas culture appreciation is taking another culture and learning more about it. Rather than buying dream catchers from a chain store, instead, find a place online that is run by Native people who know the importance of dream-catchers. 2 birds 1 stone. Educating yourself and supporting an indigenous business!

Native American Heritage month is a way Natives can share their culture with pride. In this month be an ally, read books by Indigenous authors, and support native voices when they are in crisis, and support small businesses that are created by Indigenous people.



Photo of Bradley Miller, taken by Aubrey Richardson