

Press Clippings 03/18/2019

---The Daily Herald---03/18/2019

How Bartlett High students are becoming role models to younger peers

By: Madhu Krishnamurthy



Bartlett High School senior Rohan Shah created Mentors For Tomorrow -- an after-school mentoring program for elementary and middle school students. Here, Shah celebrates a successful math result with second-grader Daichi Daniels at Spring Trail Elementary School in Carol Stream.



Bartlett High School senior Rushi Patel, right, works with first-grader Brianna San Martin on math problems during the after-school program at Spring Trail Elementary School in Carol Stream. Patel is a mentor with Bartlett High School's Mentors For Tomorrow -- an after-school mentoring program for elementary and middle school students.



Kindergartner Charlotte Mahnke listens as Bartlett High School senior Aayush Patel reads a book during an after-school program at Spring Trail School in Carol Stream. Patel is part of the Bartlett High School Mentors For Tomorrow program helping elementary and middle school students.



Kindergartner R.J. Owen, left, entertains Bartlett High School junior Sareena Shah with his paper airplane story during an after-school program at Spring Trail Elementary School in Carol Stream. Next school year, Shah will take over as president of Bartlett High School's Mentors For Tomorrow after-school mentoring program for elementary and middle school students.



Kindergartner Charlotte Mahnke listens as Bartlett High School senior Aayush Patel reads a book. Patel and his Bartlett High School peers visited Spring Trail Elementary School in Carol Stream as part of their Mentors For Tomorrow after-school mentoring program for elementary and middle school students.



Bartlett High School senior Rohan Shah, who created the after-school mentoring program for elementary and middle school students known as Mentors For Tomorrow, and his peers work with students at Spring Trail Elementary School in Carol Stream. Shah celebrates a successful math result with second-grader Daichi Daniels.



Bartlett High School senior Rohan Shah celebrates a successful math result with second-grader Daichi Daniels. Shah and his Bartlett High peers worked with students at Spring Trail Elementary School in Carol Stream as part of their Mentors For Tomorrow after-school mentoring program for elementary and middle school students.



Bartlett High School senior Rohan Shah demonstrates a math problem while helping third-grader Thomas Orthal at Spring Trail Elementary School in Carol Stream. Shah created Mentors For Tomorrow -- an after-school mentoring program for elementary and middle school students.

Growing up, Rohan Shah was lucky to have a role model in his older brother to help him navigate the challenges of school.

That kind of steady guidance from a mentor is something not all students are afforded, said Shah, a Bartlett High School senior who created Elgin Area School District U-46's first student-led, STEM-focused mentoring program for younger peers.

students -- involves a group of Bartlett High School students offering homework help, STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) projects and activities at Spring Trail Elementary School in Carol Stream, and Sycamore Trails Elementary School and Eastview Middle School, both in Bartlett.

Shah said he wanted to instill a love for learning in younger students and give back to the district for preparing him for college, where he hopes to pursue a career in medicine.

"I see that when people have role models, they can be so much involved in their education," said Shah, 17, the group's president.

Shah and some of his peers in Bartlett High's Science, Engineering and Technology Academy began visiting the after-school SAFE program at Spring Trail in 2016 during their freshman year.

The program later expanded to Sycamore Trails, and to Eastview this school year. It now involves 32 Bartlett High student mentors -- freshmen through seniors -- who visit the schools in smaller groups for two hours weekly, engaging students in hands-on activities, providing tutoring in math and other subjects, and being positive role models.

"I hope they continue having that curiosity that I see every time I come here," Shah said. "The same time that we are teaching them, they are teaching us."

The program's success has spurred the group to try and replicate it at other U-46 schools.

Shah spoke to dozens of his U-46 peers at last week's U-46 Student Leadership Summit about creating similar mentoring programs at their high schools.

Future chapters could follow the same model of having mentors volunteer at the SAFE after-school program available at 30 U-46 elementary schools.

"It's going to be best if it's student-driven," said Shah, who is working with students at Elgin and South Elgin high schools to start Mentors for Tomorrow chapters there.

Group sponsor Vito Selvaggio, who teaches math at Bartlett High, said the program already has had a "remarkable impact" on the school community with more students seeking to become mentors and increasing participation at the schools they serve.

"Only time will tell what's in store for this group in the following years," Selvaggio said.

"These students are so impressive. I can't be more proud of the officers for the drive that they have. U-46 is really going to have something special with the program that they've started and will hopefully continue to grow. There's something really extraordinary and really special happening."

High school students don't often get to leave behind such a legacy, said Harsh Chheda, 17, a Bartlett High senior and vice president of the mentoring group.

"When we came into high school, we didn't know what we wanted to do in the future," Chheda said of the group's goal of helping inspire students' interest in STEM at an early age. "We wanted to be unique, rather than (being) just a tutoring program."

As Shah, Chheda and other seniors in the group graduate in May, they will hand over the reins to students waiting to lead the program forward.

"I'm so excited," said junior Sareena Shah, 16, who will take over as president next school year. "I have such a passion for giving back to the community and helping being a role model for these kids. We want to bring this club to all the elementary schools, which I'm really excited about getting that rolling."

---The Daily Herald---03/17/2019

Take PE remotely? U-46 to test online high school physical education courses

U-46 to test online courses where students can dictate their activity

By: Madhu Krishnamurthy



Juniors and seniors play handball in their team sports class at Bartlett High School on Thursday. Elgin Area School District U-46 this fall will be testing an independent, online physical education curriculum, allowing high school students to be in charge of their own wellness.



Freshman Thomas Korzeniowski lifts 225 pounds in his physical education class at Bartlett High School Thursday. Elgin Area School District U-46 will be testing two online physical education courses this fall at Bartlett and Elgin high schools and the district's Dream Academy alternative school. It will allow select high school juniors to be in charge of their own wellness.

High school gym class can be challenging for students struggling to keep up with more developed peers or juggling packed schedules due to increased academic demands.

Elgin Area School District U-46 officials are now recognizing that participating in a traditional physical education class is not for everyone.

This fall, U-46 is launching two online physical education courses allowing some high school students to be in charge of their own wellness by self-monitoring and recording their weekly physical activity outside school using heart-rate monitors.

The pilot program will involve 125 juniors at Bartlett and Elgin high schools and the district's Dream Academy alternative program.

"Physical education is more than moving kids," said Tracey Jakaitis, U-46 student wellness curriculum coordinator. "There's a lot of social, emotional, medical reasons why kids don't like physical education class, but it doesn't mean they don't like physical activity."

"Our new curriculum is all about choice. Traditional doesn't work for everybody, but online is not going to work for everybody, either."

Jakaitis said students need to develop a better understanding of why physical activity and being healthy is important and how they can stay fit.

Earlier this week, the school board approved the curriculum, assessments and resources for two new, semesterlong online physical education courses aimed at building students' fitness skills, knowledge and independent practice to improve their personal fitness. They will provide students flexibility to choose when and where they learn about and engage in physical activity.

Officials said the goal is to better meet students' academic, medical, social or emotional needs if they desire another option for completing physical education requirements.

Jakaitis said juniors and seniors pursuing various career pathways have a lot more demands on their time to complete coursework and internships, leading many students to get physical education waivers.

Students participating in the program will be required to log 150 minutes each week in their target heart-rate zone -- roughly between 140 and 175 beats per minute for about

30 minutes a day. They can perform any physical activity as long as they hit that fitness target.

"They might just be running every day because that's what they want to do -- that's what they enjoy," Jakaitis said.

Students' activity logs are uploaded through the heart-rate monitors. A teacher oversees students' online content and participation in discussion questions, quizzes, tests and blogs.

Jakaitis acknowledged there are challenges with an online course and student participation will be based on the honor system.

"There is a level of integrity we hope students will bring, but we also know they can cheat the system," she said. "We do have two heart-rate monitor physical activity checks. (Students) have to come into school to be sure they can show that they can maintain a target heart rate for 30 minutes in a controlled environment.

"This is also why we are doing the pilot with a small group of students. If we feel there is too much dishonesty and do not see student cardio health improve from the pretest to the post-test, we do not want to continue with this program."

U-46 will be spending \$18,848 for the technology and teacher training needed to serve those 125 students this fall. Student pay a \$15 fee.

The courses will be offered to the entire junior class at all five district high schools and the Dream Academy in the 2020-21 school year, rolling up to seniors the following year.

The district also has adopted a variety of new physical education courses promoting a physically active lifestyle, moving away from the emphasis on team sports, at its six high schools.

Starting this fall, high school freshmen can take courses on functional fitness, strength and performance, walking for wellness, and officiating and coaching in team sports.

The goal is to appeal to students with varying interests and abilities who typically don't participate in physical education classes. Those semester-long courses also will be available to interested sophomores, juniors and seniors.

---The Courier-News---03/17/2019

Vaccination debate heats up

State's measles outbreak raises stakes: Is it parent choice or public safety?

By: Suzanne Baker



Ethan Lindemberger testifies during a hearing held by the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions on March 5 on vaccines and preventing disease outbreaks. Lindemberger had himself vaccinated against the wishes of his mother.

The year 2019 has the potential to record the highest number of measles cases in Illinois and across the country since the disease was declared eliminated in 2000.

As of Friday, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention confirmed 228 measles cases in the United States, the highest year-to-date number going back more than a quarter-century.

With a little more than two months into 2019, the number of measles cases in Illinois, six, already exceeds the annual totals in five of the last six years. Illinois had 17 confirmed measles cases in 2015.

The data underscore how anti-vaccine sentiment and the rising incidence of vaccine refusal threaten to bring back a public health threat.

With its six cases so far this year, Illinois is listed by the CDC among six U.S. locations of measles outbreaks, which is defined as three or more cases.

Others states include Washington, where 72 cases are confirmed; Texas with 11 cases; and California with three.

The other two hot spots are New York City and Rockland County, N.Y.

New York City Health is reporting 158 confirmed cases of measles in Brooklyn and Queens since October. Most of these cases have involved members of the Orthodox Jewish community.

The Rockland County Health Department confirmed 147 cases since fall 2018, causing county officials to resort to drastic measures to prevent the further spread. In December, unvaccinated children were banned from attending certain schools that had vaccination rates lower than 95 percent.

Despite a lawsuit filed on behalf of the unvaccinated kids, a federal judge barred 50 unvaccinated students from attending a private New York school in the county for at least three weeks.

Most kids in Naperville and throughout the Fox Valley attend schools with rates of at least 95 percent for the measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) vaccine, according to a 2018-19 report from the Illinois State Board of Education. Illinois requires all public and nonpublic schools to submit an Immunization Status of School-Age Children Report annually in October summarizing the compliance status of enrolled students.

Illinois law allows parents to object to a required immunization or exam on religious or medical grounds, and the number of objections are listed in the report.

The report also includes the number of students who are not vaccinated because they are homeless (McKinney Vento Act) and students who may not be fully vaccinated but are on a schedule with a doctor to become in compliance.

The vaccination, or protection, percentage is determined by dividing the number of students who are fully vaccinated by total school enrollment.

In the Naperville area, three schools show vaccination figures below 95 percent, based on the ISBE report: Wheatland Salem Christian Academy, 89 percent; Naperville Christian Academy, 91 percent; and Calvary Christian School, 91 percent.

In the Elgin area, five schools were below 95 percent: Westminster Christian School, 89 percent; Harvest Christian Academy, 91 percent; U46's Washington Elementary, 91 percent; Willard Elementary School, 92 percent; and Einstein Academy, 92 percent.

Eighteen schools in Aurora and the surrounding area, mostly private or preschools, fall below the 95 percent threshold. Because the second MMR dose is generally given between ages 4 and 6, preschool children are more likely to be not in compliance.

The report to the ISBE shows more than half of the 37 children at Montessori Academy in Batavia and 43 children at Grace Holistic Center for Education in Yorkville are not fully vaccinated for measles.

The only public schools, other than preschools, below 95 percent are Central School District 301's Lily Lake Grade School in Maple Park and Indian Prairie School District 204's Gombert Elementary in Aurora. Both were at 94 percent. In reaction to growing concern over outbreaks of preventable diseases across the country and the number of unvaccinated children, the U.S. Senate held hearings recently to address the misinformation.

An 18-year-old from Ohio who famously inoculated himself against his mother's wishes testified before the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions this month that his mother's anti-vaccine ideology came from a single source: Facebook.

Last week Facebook said it will work to reduce inaccurate vaccine material in news feeds and service and will block advertisements that include false content about vaccines.

Concerns about anti-vaccine movement have reached the World Health Organization, which listed “vaccine hesitancy” as one of the 10 threats to global health in 2019.

In its report, the WHO said the reluctance or refusal to vaccinate despite the availability of vaccines threatens to reverse progress made in tackling vaccine-preventable diseases, like measles.

Anti-vaccine advocates say parents, not the government, should decide what’s best for their children.

Rita Maniotis of the Illinois Vaccine Awareness Coalition said the side effects from the MMR vaccine should be enough to cause parents to rethink vaccinating. “Where there is risk, there must be choice,” she said.

Maniotis described her daughter’s experiences receiving her MMR at 6 months old in 1991.

“She screamed in pain, had a distended belly, and numerous doctor visits did not cure her digestive issues that she continues to struggle with today at the age of 27,” Maniotis said.

Maniotis said all of the recent measles cases have awarded the children affected a lifetime immunity from the disease and real herd immunity, sometimes call community immunity, meaning there are enough people who can’t spread the germs that the disease and the community is less likely to get the disease.

In fact, many past outbreaks have been among children who had already received the MMR vaccine,” she said. “Just because you have received the vaccine, does not mean you are providing herd immunity. If your immunity has worn off, you are not part of herd immunity.”

Government’s sources argue that community immunity actually comes through inoculation.

“Germs can travel quickly through a community and make a lot of people sick,” according to the federal website, www.vaccines.gov. “If enough people get sick, it can lead to an outbreak. But when enough people are vaccinated against a certain disease, the germs can’t travel as easily from person to person — and the entire community is less likely to get the disease.”

Making girls' prom dreams come true

Cinderella's Closet offers affordable dresses, accessories

By: Amanda Marrazzo



Volunteer “fairy godmother” Joanna Tyszko, left, of Hanover Park, and Chathia Johnson, center, from Claire’s Boutique Inc., help Aysha Kirkwood, of Geneva, select prom accessories.

Koren Buckley, of Geneva, looked on quietly, watching her teen daughter chat with her “fairy godmother” on Saturday at Cinderella’s Closet while picking out accessories to match her stunning yellow satin gown embellished with rhinestones that she will wear to her senior prom.

Buckley’s daughter Aysha Kirkwood, 18, was just one of hundreds of young ladies filtering in and out of Cinderella’s Closet on Saturday at Elgin’s YWCA, shopping for the perfect dress, shoes and bling for prom.

Cinderella’s Closet, in its 15th year, provides young ladies going to prom with all the sparkle and shine they need to make a grand entrance, but at a very discounted price. Depending on what gown they choose, new or gently used, there is a suggested donation of \$20 or \$50. Accessories and shoes are free.

Describing the event as “totally awesome, cool and fun,” Buckley said she appreciated the opportunity to buy her daughter the dress of her dreams with all the right accessories without breaking the bank.

“We are having a hard time, financially, (it’s hard) to pay for something that is so important to her,” Buckley said.

The basement of the YWCA was transformed into a boutique and filled with hundreds of gowns and shoes, as volunteer “fairy godmothers” tended to the girls’ every need. And should a dress need a nip or tuck, skilled seamstresses were on hand as well. Any dresses not selected will be kept at the YWCA for future events such as homecoming.

On Saturday, girls also selected from a full array of jewelry, hair pieces, purses and makeup donated by Claire’s Boutique.

Chathia Johnson, manager of store segmentation for Claire’s Boutique Inc. who also is the chair person for the Claire’s Cares committee, said this is the second year the company has set up a pop-up store at the event.

Claire's donated about 2,000 sparkly pieces of jewelry, hair accessories and purses. Johnson said it is "an amazing" experience to help the girls feel like real princesses for the day. Whatever is not given away Saturday also is donated to YWCA for future events.

"They are amazed they get to pick out a whole look," Johnson said, adding that when she tells the girls they can have whatever they need, "They look at me like, 'Are you sure?'"

Girls from at least 50 high schools in a 50-mile radius were invited Saturday to select their perfect prom attire.

A group of about 40 cadets were bused in from Kelvyn Park High School in Chicago to pick out dresses for a formal military ball being held in June.

Cindi Leon, a Pingree Grove police officer who also volunteers with the YWCA, and 1st Sgt. Leonard Haith, senior Army instructor of the school's JROTC program, facilitated the girls attending. Leon said the girls have little financial means and some are homeless.

"This is a huge event," Leon said of Cinderella's Closet. "This is one day where they have a Fairy Godmother. I wanted each girl to be spoiled."

The idea behind Cinderella's Closet is to help those who otherwise might not be able to afford prom and to make them feel like a princess for the day.

"It is just a really feel good day," said Sheri Kinser coordinator of Cinderella's Closet. "Prom is so expensive so if you can save on the dress ... they still have to get their hair done, get the limo, pay for dinner, the prom ticket, we are taking a big burden, I think, off of the parents."

Kirkwood's fairy godmother Joanna Tyszko, of Hanover Park, said this is her eighth year volunteering at the event.

"It's always great to help them find that perfect dress ... when they say 'yes to the dress' and to see that smile," she said, motioning to Kirkwood, who was beaming in her gown.

Later, as seamstress Karen Roeckner, of Carpentersville, hemmed up the bottom of Kirkwood's dress, Roeckner said she has been volunteering the last five years and enjoys it every time.

"The girls are just so appreciative of us helping them," Roeckner said.

Kirkwood said she tried on about five dresses before selecting her yellow gown.

Speaking softly, she said the experience is "definitely fun."

"I'm feeling pretty awesome. All the compliments are making me feel good," said Kirkwood, a senior at Geneva Community High School. "Everyone has been really nice."

Samantha Prus, 17, of Bartlett, is a senior at **South Elgin High School** who selected a black gown. She said while her friends are going out and spending \$500 for their prom dress, she is "super-excited" not to be.

"It (is) awesome, I couldn't even pass it up," Prus said of shopping Cinderella's Closet.

Her mom Cindy Prus looked on with a smile as her daughter worked with her “Fairy Godmother” picking out sparkly accessories.

“I just think this is such a wonderful event,” Cindy Prus said. “I love how the Fairy Godmother is with her the whole time. It can be very stressful. It’s nice to stand in the background and watch the whole process. I love it. They treat the girls with such respect and make them feel special.”

Police: School threat written in store

Elgin High School gets extra security after discovery in Walgreens bathroom

By: Rafael Guerrero



Authorities responded to a threat against Elgin High School, found Thursday on the bathroom wall of a local Walgreen’s. Additional security was posted at the school Friday.

Elgin police found a written threat against Elgin High School on a bathroom wall at a nearby pharmacy Thursday, prompting additional security at the school Friday, authorities said.

School District U46 officials were notified Thursday night of graffiti found at Walgreens at 600 Villa St., near Ellis Middle School, according to a social media update from the district posted Friday morning.

The threat was directed at the high school less than 2 miles away.

As of Friday, there was no additional information regarding the threat or who wrote it, district officials said.

The nature of the threat was not disclosed.

Police are looking through camera footage of the pharmacy in an effort to identify possible suspects, officials said.

Classes were not disrupted, but additional police officers and staff were at the school Friday to supervise student entry and keep watch on activities, the district said.

“We ask that if you know something about this, please call the Elgin Police Department as soon as possible,” the district’s post said. “Identifying the person who wrote this threat is very important for the safety of all.”

John Heiderscheidt, the district's director of school safety and culture, did not have additional details regarding the threat, only saying Elgin High School was "quiet" during the school day.

The graffiti is still under investigation by authorities, he said.

The district will continue to monitor the situation, he said.

CEO Tony Sanders discussed Friday's threat and the topic of school threats in his weekly message to social media followers. He reminded students and families to not contribute to rumors, to await information from school principals on possible threats and how to respond to them, and for families to discuss with their children the ramifications of making threats to others.

SPORTS

---The Courier-News---03/17/2019

‘Big’ push

Larkin graduate Shaw caps freshman season at Triton College with double-double in loss

By: Bob Narang



Triton’s Jalen Shaw tries to put up a shot during the second half against Moberly in the NJCAA Division I District IV championship game March 9. He had 23 points, 13 rebounds, three assists and two blocked shots.



Shaw grabs a rebound during the first half March 9.

Jalen Shaw closed out his first season at Triton College in memorable fashion.

The Larkin graduate saved his best for the final game of his freshman year.

Shaw, a 6-foot-10 center, scored a career-high 23 points with 13 rebounds, three assists and two blocked shots in a 96-92 loss to Moberly in the NJCAA Division I District IV championship game.

Shaw started 21 games this season for Triton (30-4), showing his immense potential by averaging 10.3 points, 6.8 rebounds and 1.8 blocked shots in just 14.5 minutes per game.

“It’s been a long journey for me since high school,” Shaw said. “I’ve been looking at other bigs, taking their moves to help me out and also playing against better people. I just have to just keep pushing myself. This is only the beginning for me.”

Shaw was an active force against powerhouse Moberly.

He affected several shots, helped by losing 14 pounds since the start of the season in trimming down to 226. That allowed him to keep up with the fast pace, running the court and extending possessions with offensive rebounds.

His presence in the middle — offensively and defensively — helped the Trojans erase a 10-point deficit in the second half and take a lead until a late comeback by the Greyhounds.

“My teammates have been talking to me, helping me and getting into my head to push me and to not give up,” Shaw said. “And that really helped.”

Moberly coach Pat Smith, who has a 566-349 record in his collegiate career, noticed Shaw’s raw potential in high school.

“We recruited him hard last year,” Smith said. “We knew how good he was.”

Before high school, Shaw had never played organized basketball. Each year, he kept improving in becoming a bigger part of the Royals’ program.

Early in his senior season at Larkin, Shaw started showing signs of becoming an NCAA Division I recruit. He averaged 16.2 points and 12 rebounds as the Royals took fourth place in the state in Class 4A.

Larkin coach Deryn Carter was among the 1,600 fans in attendance for Triton’s biggest home game in 10 years.

Carter said Shaw showed he belongs in the same company as Triton teammate Alondes Williams, an Oklahoma recruit, and Moberly guard Alonzo Verge Jr., who has signed with Arizona State.

“(Triton) is doing a great job with him,” Carter said of Shaw. “In my eyes, he was the third-best prospect on the floor, and the other two are going to Oklahoma and Arizona State.

“He’s got a great future ahead of him. He’s made huge strides. He’s only 18. He could be a senior in high school.”

Shaw currently doesn’t have any offers, but he’s receiving interest from Oklahoma and West Virginia. Triton coach Steve Christiansen said Shaw is just scratching the surface on his potential.

“I think he’s the type of guy you are waiting for the light to come completely on,” Christiansen said. “You get flickers of it, then you get longer flashes.

“Hopefully, his performance against Moberly will reinforce to him to put in the time in the spring and summer. If he does, somebody is going to get a great kid. He just needs to stick to the grind.”