

Press Clippings 12/07/2018

---Daily Herald---12/07/2018

U-46 students in need get new shoes for holidays

By: Madhu Krishnamurthy



- Hillcrest Elementary School children get high-fives as they enter Shoe Carnival in South Elgin, where AT&T employees and retirees and Elgin police officers helped them pick out pairs of shoes Thursday. Roughly 400 students in need from Elgin Area School District U-46 schools within Elgin, South Elgin and Hanover Park were served.



- Elgin Police Officer Hector Gutierrez talks with Aaliyah Lewis, 8, from Washington Elementary School on her way out of the Shoe Carnival store in South Elgin. Roughly 400 children in need from Elgin Area School District U-46 schools within Elgin, South Elgin and Hanover Park received new shoes Thursday as part of AT&T's "All Children Shall Have Shoes" Project.



- Jo Maniscalco of AT&T helps 11-year-old Darien Walls with a new pair of shoes Thursday at the Shoe Carnival in South Elgin. AT&T provided pairs of shoes to roughly 400 children in need from Elgin Area School District U-46 schools.

Roughly 400 students in need from seven Elgin Area School District U-46 schools received new shoes Thursday as part of AT&T's "All Children Shall Have Shoes" project.

Students visited Shoe Carnival in South Elgin, where AT&T employees and retirees and the Elgin Police Department's ROPE (Resident Officer Program of Elgin) officers helped each pick out a new pair of shoes and socks.

Participating schools were Ronald D. O'Neal, Washington, Harriet Gifford, Hillcrest and Garfield elementary schools, all in Elgin, Willard Elementary in South Elgin, and Parkwood Elementary in Hanover Park.

"It's a delightful process to see how AT&T merges with the Elgin Police Department to send more than 60 volunteers to shop with students," said Kyle Bunker, principal at Garfield Elementary School. "To see the smiles on the faces of the volunteers transfer to the smile on the faces of the students as they put on their new shoes is what the holiday season is about. As a principal who gets to be a part of this project, I'm thankful that there are those who see the community need and fill it."

The "All Children Shall Have Shoes" Project was started in the early 1960s after a former Illinois Bell plant technician and his co-workers started providing children from families in need with new shoes. It is funded yearly through donations from AT&T employees.

---The Courier-News---12/07/2018

U46 to apply for program to ease local tax burden

By: Rafael Guerrero

Elgin-area property owners could be getting a little relief when it comes to the tax money they pay to support School District U46, which takes the largest share of the average property tax bill.

District officials have until Jan. 7 to apply for a portion of the \$50 million pot being made available by the state to lighten the burden on taxpayers and help financially struggling districts.

The funds are part of the state's new Evidence-Based Funding for Student Success Act, which was approved in August 2017 and is being administered by the Illinois State Board of Education. Additional money is being made available to districts that have "under-resourced students" in an effort to ensure "all schools have the resources they need to provide a safe, rigorous and well-rounded learning environment for all students," according to the state board's website.

This is the first year in which school districts can request a share of the money available.

U46 will apply for as large of a portion as they qualify for, which is \$43 million for the 2018-19 school year, Chief Operations Officer Jeff King told school board members Monday. However, it's unlikely they will receive anywhere near that amount given the size of the pot and the number of districts that are expected to apply, King said.

"If everybody applied, I would say (the amount U46 would receive) is somewhere between \$1 million and \$5 million," King said.

Once all the applicants are known, he'll be able to provide a better figure for how much U46 might expect to receive and what that might mean for taxpayers, he said.

The financial assistance the district is given would be in addition to a tax abatement the school board will be asked to approve in February, King said.

While the school board will not vote on the grant application until its Dec. 17 meeting, members said they were in support of going after the funds.

Board members initially feared that if they secured money through the state grant program, the district would lose money elsewhere, member John Devereux said.

Officials in other districts had the same concerns when the funding plan was first introduced but that's been found to be untrue, King said. "I don't see any downside to (applying) whatsoever," he said.

More than 50 tapped to serve as guest principals

By: Rafael Guerrero

More than 50 local and out-of-district leaders will become "principals for a day" Friday at District U46 schools.

The annual program invites people to fill in as school principals for a few hours, visiting classrooms and observing operations.

This year, the guest list includes Elgin Police Chief Ana Lalley, Kane County State's Attorney Joseph McMahon and state Rep. Michelle Mussman. There will also be police officers, firefighters, doctors, elected officials, and people who work in finance, business and education.

Downstate state Sen. Andy Manar will not only be a guest principal but will be the guest speaker at a Friday luncheon for the other visiting "principals."

Manar, D-Bunker Hill, sponsored the law that created an evidence-based funding formula to help narrow the funding equity gap between poorer and more affluent school districts. According to U46, the reform meant an additional \$24 million for U46 in the 2017-18 school year and an additional \$18 million for the 2018-19 school year.

According to a U46 news release, the guest principals will spend the first half of the school day at their schools before attending the noon luncheon at Villa Olivia in Bartlett.

"This annual event is not only a way to celebrate our schools, but it is also an opportunity for our district to create and strengthen relationships with community leaders" U46 CEO Tony Sanders said. "These relationships matter; they are what build and sustain our schools and communities."

Freemont Street Theater offering affordability

'Mrs. Claus Saves Christmas Eve' on stage in Elgin

By: Kathy Cichon

Ticket prices often are a barrier to theater.

"Theater should be affordable for kids and families, and there are many families who are unable to support some of the other theater companies in the Fox Valley area with a ticket price of \$25," said Madeline Franklin, artistic director and founder of Fremont Street Theater Company.

"So our goal is to keep the holiday magic central and present and phenomenal, and keep the ticket price at \$6 per person. Kids of all ages, \$6 per person."

To keep live theater more accessible, Palatine-based Fremont Street Theater Company's Raising Awareness Through Theater Expression!!, in partnership with JEM N' Friends, Side Street Studio Arts and Bravo magazine, are presenting a new holiday musical, "Mrs. Claus Saves Christmas Eve." Written by Sue Mrotek, the bilingual musical runs Dec. 7-16 at Elgin Art Showcase in downtown Elgin.

Performances are at 7 p.m. Fridays and 2 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays.

“We have this wonderful 50-minute production about Mrs. Claus saving Christmas Eve because Santa and the reindeer came down with the candy cane flu,” said Franklin, who is co-producing the show with her husband, Rusty.

Mrs. Claus puts out the call for help, and a variety of animals — each with their own personality and quirks — come to the rescue.

“I’m really excited about it. This show is absolutely adorable. ... We all look different; we come from different parts of the country. I’m a penguin, there’s moose, a polar bear,” said Franklin, who plays Chenille the Penguin. “It’s truly about seeing that people who look different and are different can work together for good. And we can overlook our differences for a purpose and to work together and live together well.

“It’s a beautiful story, and I just can’t wait for the Fox Valley community to see what we’ve done.”

Children will have the opportunity to make their own art before the Saturday matinees during a free art workshop for kids ages 6-12. Sponsored by Side Street Studio Arts, the workshop is free with the purchase of a show ticket for that day. The workshops run from 1 to 1:30 p.m. Dec. 8 and Dec. 15 at Elgin Art Showcase. Children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian 18 years or older. To register for the kids’ art workshop, call 847-431-1084 or email madeline.franklin@fremontstreettheater.com.

“It’s affordable holiday magic,” Franklin said. “And on Saturdays, with your \$6 ticket before the show, you get a free art workshop. And you can go home with your art.”

The new musical is made possible through the joint efforts of several area organizations.

Last year Fremont Street Theater submitted a grant application to the Elgin Cultural Arts Commission to do a season of original children’s musicals with the intent of keeping prices down and traveling to area schools to perform to save the schools on field trip-related expenses.

“We didn’t get the yes, but (we decided) we’re going to do it anyway,” said Franklin, who is also vice president of Elgin Theatre Company.

Now they are reaching out to Elgin School District U-46 “so families know they can take their kids to see a show for \$6 a person,” she said.

Advance ticket purchase is recommended. However, tickets will be available at the door with cash, check and credit card accepted. The box office opens 30 minutes before showtime.

“We can just take people away for 50 minutes and take them on a wonderful journey to the North Pole,” Franklin said.

‘Mrs. Claus Saves Christmas Eve’

When: Dec. 7-16
Where: Elgin Art Showcase,
164 Division St., 8th Floor, Elgin
Tickets: \$6
Information: www.fremontstreettheater.com

SPORTS

---Daily Herald---12/07/2018

Larkin finds groove, beats West Chicago

By: D.J. Wanberg

It was a tale of two teams Thursday night at West Chicago High School. Both teams were the Larkin girls basketball squad.

The Royals were scoreless in the first quarter, trailed 19-8 at halftime and stalled out offensively. However, Larkin found its groove, and a 31-point second half propelled it to a 39-34 victory over the Wildcats.

"Our coach (Steve Knapp) said at halftime, 'Keep fighting, keep fighting.' We knew we had it in us," said junior Brianna Young, who led her team with 13 points.

A 20-point third quarter by Larkin (3-7, 2-2 Upstate Eight Conference) put it within range of the Wildcats (0-11, 0-3) at 32-28.

"The key was to get the ball to middle. That's how we could get the open shots," Young said.

The Royals' Aallyah Dixon opened the final quarter with a 3-point basket to make it 32-31. Then the scoring dried up for both teams until 4:14 remained in the contest, when Dixon hit a free throw to tie the game at 32.

Young's basket gave Larkin its first lead at 34-32 and West Chicago coach T.J. Nall called a timeout with 3:17 remaining.

About a minute later the Wildcats' Shailee Patel took the ball the full length of the court for a layup to tie the game at 34. Patel led all scorers with 29 points, including six 3-pointers.

"She's our rock, our scorer, our leader," Nall said.

Amber Allen's 3-pointer gave the Royals at 37-34 advantage and they held on to it and padded it with more free throws with less than a minute remaining.

"We were stagnant in the first half. We missed six or seven layups and missed nine free throws. We were really passive," Knapp said. "We went to a 1-2-2 press in the second half and that helped speed up the game and we got good looks. I didn't substitute the last 10 or 12 minutes of the game because the energy being shown."

That's not what West Chicago wanted. Because of injuries, only seven Wildcats were dressed for Thursday's game.

"We have to slow it (the game) down and be able to catch our breath and look for the good shot," Nall said. "We have to control the pace of the game."

The West Chicago coach said that while things haven't gone the Wildcats' way so far this season, it has not been for a lack of effort.

"They've done a heck of a job playing hard. It's a shame things haven't gone better," Nall said.

West Chicago's Monse Vargas led her team on the boards with 11.

Larkin prevails in crosstown matchup

By: Mike Garofola



- Elgin's Brian Rea, left, faces off against Larkin's Justin Valle at 126 pounds during varsity wrestling at Larkin on Thursday night. Valle won the match.



- Elgin's Natalie Gonzalez, left, battles Larkin's Gavin Clark at 113 pounds during varsity wrestling at Larkin on Thursday night. Clark won the match by pin.



- Elgin's Ivan Gutierrez, left, battles Larkin's Mehki McClenden at 120 pounds during varsity wrestling at Larkin on Thursday night. Gutierrez won the match.



- Elgin's Ivan Gutierrez, right, battles Larkin's Mehki McClenden at 120 pounds during varsity wrestling at Larkin on Thursday night. Gutierrez won the match.



- Elgin's Brian Rea, bottom, battles against Larkin's Justin Valle during varsity wrestling at Larkin on Thursday night. Valle won the match.



- Elgin's Chris Santana, top, battles Larkin's Jayln Clark at 132 pounds during varsity wrestling at Larkin on Thursday night. Clark won the match.



- Elgin's Chris Santana, left, battles Larkin's Jayln Clark at 132 pounds during varsity wrestling at Larkin on Thursday night. Clark won the match.



- Elgin's Ivan Gutierrez flexes after winning over Larkin's Mehki McClenden at 120 pounds during varsity wrestling at Larkin on Thursday night.

There's nothing more exciting than a wrestling dual between two crosstown rivals.

The shouting of the fans, some fiery individual bouts, and the excitement from a big crowd cheering their heroes.

If you are a fan of Larkin wrestling, it could not be any better than Thursday night on its home floor.

The Royals extended their unbeaten start to the season over their neighbor Elgin, and in doing so kept the Crosstown Classic trophy for the fifth consecutive year.

Larkin won eight straight bouts -- four of them by pins -- to overwhelm visiting Elgin 52-17 and move its overall record to 7-0, 2-0 in conference.

"This is a big one for us to win. (It) gives us bragging rights for another year," said Royals coach Mike Hodge.

"We won a lot of big matches tonight, but the one that I am most pleased (of) was Alexander Young's win at 138 over a returning sectional qualifier. That win gave our team a lot of momentum, and we took full advantage of it."

Elgin made the short drive over with the hope of changing its fortunes against its long-time rival, and appeared to have a chance at doing so after going out to a 12-6 lead.

"We used that forfeit at 106, then got a great effort from Ivan Gutierrez (120) to give us the start we wanted, but it quickly went south for us," said Elgin coach Mark Woollard.

Gutierrez led the Maroons last year with 27 wins.

"A couple of close ones that could have swung our way and could have helped, but in the end, Mike's guys really came out strong, and they were able to reel off eight straight to put us away."

Justin Valle, a 2018 sectional qualifier, began the Royals' offensive explosion with a well deserved 9-2 decision over Brian Rea.

"I'm usually at 120 (but) bumped up to (26) tonight, and felt real good at that weight tonight," said Valle, who won 25 a year ago.

"We wanted this (one) real bad tonight -- not only to keep the trophy another year, but also to stay undefeated, and we were able to do both."

The aforementioned Young would keep the big home crowd happy with his victory, which was followed by a pin from Balthazar Ramirez (145) and a hard-fought 10-8 win at 152 by Kevin Reyes.

Miguel Flores (160) was the bridge to back-to-back pins from Alan and Diego Facio before Felipe Franco ended the 37-0 run by the homeside.

"Elgin is always a team we want to beat every year," said Diego Facio, who fell short of joining his older brother Jesus downstate last season.

The Royals star, who went 28-8 last season, likes what he sees thus far in the early going from his teammates.

"We've had a great start -- the best since I've been here, and if we continue to work hard, it could be a real good season for all of us."

Both clubs will compete at area tournaments this Saturday, Elgin at the 41st Marchese Invite at Hoffman Estates, Larkin at the 43rd Rex Lewis at host Buffalo Grove.

"It's still real early in the season, but we'll see how the guys respond this weekend (which) with the way they have been working so hard this year, should be good when we go to Buffalo Grove," said Woollard.

South Elgin tops Streamwood for 6th straight win

By: John Lemon

South Elgin led Streamwood by 20 points at halftime and ended up beating the Sabres by 20, but that didn't tell the whole story of their Upstate Eight Conference win Thursday night.

The short-handed Sabres, missing three regulars and then losing Riya Patel to a first-half injury, rallied from a 38-18 halftime deficit to within 43-38 when Peyton Hedger opened the fourth quarter with a 3-point basket.

But South Elgin was able to put an end to the comeback, starting with a pair of free throws from Casey Brennan followed by a drive from Aryanna Williams and then a

basket by Megan McClure. The Storm's 18-1 run restored command of the game and eventually the 20-point lead in a 61-41 victory.

"We were able to stay together as a team and pull it together and work hard and make sure we don't force anything and have silly turnovers," McClure said. "And we stopped fouling in the fourth quarter so that helped."

Free throws did help Streamwood (1-7, 0-3) in its third quarter comeback accounting for 12 of 17 points.

In the fourth quarter the Storm (6-3, 4-0) sent the Sabres to the line just twice as they picked up their sixth straight win and stayed unbeaten in conference.

"We've been working so hard in practice so it's showing us when we work hard it pays off," McClure said.

McClure continued her hot start to the season with 22 points. She also had 7 steals and 6 assists.

McClure scored the first five points for the Storm and had 8 in the first quarter as South Elgin built a 16-6 lead.

The Storm took their biggest lead of the first half at 38-17 on Ella Winterhalder's 3-pointer.

"We told them before the game you have to fight really hard to keep that good feeling, to keep the smiles in the locker room," South Elgin coach Dan Mandernack said.

Mandy Mien started Streamwood's third quarter rally with a basket and then made 2 free throws. Hedger hit a 3 to pull within 38-26 before 6 free throws from Vivian Sumoski made it a 41-33 game. Alexis Rojas sank two more at the line to bring Streamwood within 41-35.

"Good comeback, excellent comeback," Streamwood coach George Rosner said. "Probably the best basketball we've played in awhile. Played disciplined. That was an outstanding comeback. Lots of positives."

Mandernack also was impressed with Streamwood's charge while crediting his girls for their composure in the fourth quarter. Brennan added 12 points.

"Defense travels and the way we came out flying, sense of urgency, wanting to get our sixth in a row, wanting to get to 4-0 in conference, we let it go up in smoke (in the third quarter)," Mandernack said. "Credit to our girls, they stayed calm. Just like the season, there's going to be ups and downs, it's how you handle things. We stayed together, played with a lot of heart and passion, and everything will turn out OK. We're starting to have an identity."

South Elgin will go for its seventh straight win Saturday at Schaumburg while the Sabres are off until playing at Elgin next Tuesday. Sumoski and Mien led the Sabres Thursday with 13 and 10 points, respectively.

"She (Mien) makes things happen for us, gets people good looks," Rosner said. "And Vivian had a great game. She doesn't play like a sophomore."