

# Willowbrook man enters blind plea of guilty to 2014 murder

DuPage County State's Attorney Robert B. Berlin announced last week that Dean Norris, 61, formerly of, Willowbrook, has entered a blind plea of guilty to the 2014 murder of

45 year-old Vanessa Cross.

Norris has been held in the DuPage County Jail since the murder on a \$2 million bond with 10 percent to apply.

At approximately 2 p.m. on Dec. 17, 2014, the DuPage County Sheriff's Office received a telephone call requesting a well-being check for Cross at the residence she shared

with Norris. Upon their arrival, Sheriff's Deputies gained entry to the residence and discovered Cross deceased on the floor of the living room, the victim of a homicide.

While investigating, deputies observed a male running across a nearby parking lot. The man, later identified as Norris, was stopped. When authorities attempted to talk to him he became uncooperative. Norris was ultimately detained by authorities and following an investigation, arrested on charges of first degree murder.

The investigation revealed that earlier that day Cross and Norris had a verbal argument. At some point in time the argument turned violent re-

sulting in Norris strangling Cross to death.

"Dean Norris admitted that he is responsible for the murder of Vanessa Cross," Berlin said. "While nothing can be done to bring Vanessa back, perhaps with this admission, those who loved Vanessa will be able to gain some measure of closure knowing the man responsible for murder will be held accountable."

Norris' next court appearance is scheduled for Feb. 23, for return of the pre-sentence report in front of Judge Liam Brennan. He faces a prison sentence of between 20 to 60 years in the Illinois Department of Corrections.



SUBMITTED PHOTO Villa Park Review

## Special day for the speech team

Willowbrook High School's speech team finished in third place out of 21 schools at a recent tournament at John Hersey High School in Arlington Heights. The event, known as the Mid-Winter Freeze-out, took place on Jan. 21. Willowbrook's top performers at the tournament included the duo of juniors Genevieve Corkery and Julia Cicero, which won first-place honors in the Humorous Duet Acting category. Corkery teamed with junior Isabella Ledonne for a first-place performance in the Improvisational Duet Acting category. Senior Kyle Denwood placed first in the Oratorical Declamation competition. Corkery claimed a second-place award in Original Comedy, while senior Anthony Clampt placed second in Special Occasion Speaking.

## Graveyard (Continued from page 9)

Novak has been involved in theater since her freshman year, appearing in the musicals "Spamalot" and "Cats," the play "Macbeth" and the dance show "Wii Dance Through the Night." She was also in the summer studio production of "The 4th Graders Present an Unnamed Love-Suicide."

Novak, who added that musical theater is her strong suit, said this character is different from others she has played because she's mature and not as innocent.

"She's a performer, and I'm a performer, so I get to perform on stage as a performer," she said.

Novak said the biggest challenge of portraying her character is the complexity and finding the balance of how innocent or not so innocent to play her.

Junior Lance Grunert plays the drummer. He described his character as a suck-up who wants to own the circus one day. This is his first role in a play.

Novak has been playing the drums since fourth grade. He played drums in the pit orchestra for the fall musical "Cats."

Grunert said he had seen other plays at Glenbard East and enjoyed them. Then, he took an intro to theater class and loved it, so he decided to try out for the play.

"I was so excited, but I was nervous the first couple days," he admitted. "But everyone was super nice helping me with my lines and getting into character."

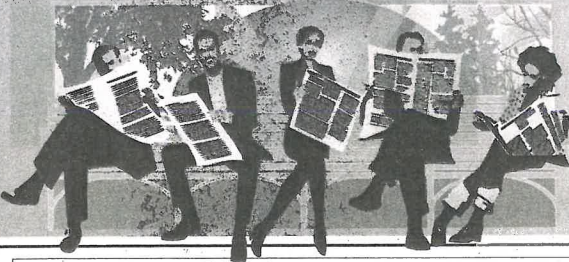
Grunert said he's enjoyed being a part of the play and all of the hard work that goes into putting on the show. His biggest challenge was getting into character, which he worked on with Kaetzer during rehearsals.

He said he may audition for future plays and hopes to work backstage on crews.

"Elephant's Graveyard" runs through Saturday at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$8. For more information, call 630-424-6640.

# ON STAGE

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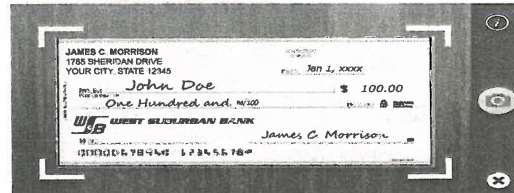
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# Sports

**LOMBARDIAN  
VILLA PARK REVIEW**

## Warriors increase winning streak to 13

### Alone in first in the conference standings

By Chris Fox  
LOMBARDIAN-VILLA PARK REVIEW  
STAFF REPORTER

The 2016-17 Willowbrook boys basketball team is closing in on some special achievements.

The Warriors' pre-season goals included winning the West Suburban Gold Conference title and earning 25 victories. Those goals are within reach.

Willowbrook improved to 20-1 overall and 7-1 in the conference by winning two road games in successive nights. The Warriors defeated Proviso East 64-59 on Friday in Maywood. Less than 24 hours later, Willowbrook earned a 50-38 win at Addison Trail.

The Warriors extended their winning streak to 13 games with Saturday's win in Addison. Willowbrook's only loss of the season is a 69-57 setback in a conference game at Hinsdale South on Dec. 16. The Warriors, who are alone at the top of the conference standings, will face Hinsdale South in this Friday's rematch in Villa Park.

Willowbrook opened the second half of its conference schedule with Friday's narrow victory over the Pirates. The Warriors, who held a 32-22 halftime lead, maintained a 10-point edge with eight minutes to play. Proviso East went on a run at the beginning of the fourth period and eventually took a one-point lead. Willowbrook regained the lead and sealed the victory by sinking several free throws in the closing minutes.

Junior Ethan Schuemer led the Warriors' offensive attack with 24 points. Schuemer made nine of 11 field-goal attempts in the win over the Pirates. He sank six of eight shots from the free-throw line.

Senior Iman Reynolds, who made seven of nine field-goal attempts, added 16 points. Sophomore Matas Masys who made a pair of shots from 3-point range, contributed eight

points. Junior Sikander Zafar supplied six points.

"Proviso East is more of an up-tempo, full-court pressure team," said Willowbrook coach Chris Perkins in discussing the team's two recent wins. "We knew it was going to be a game of runs. They [the Pirates] went on a run to start the fourth quarter. Our guys responded and we finished out strong."

The Warriors built another 10-point halftime lead in Saturday's conference game. Willowbrook piled onto its 27-17 halftime lead over Addison Trail by beginning the second half with a 10-0 run. Masys connected on a pair of 3-point shots during the surge, which pushed the Warriors' lead to 37-17. Schuemer and Zafar each provided one basket during the run at the beginning of the second half. The Warriors maintained a double-digit lead for the rest of the game.

"It felt good to get going at the beginning of the third quarter," said Masys after Saturday's win. "That was a good way to start it off."

"We knew if we came out strong in the second half we'd be able to keep that momentum," said Schuemer.

Schuemer tallied 17 points and six rebounds in Saturday's win. He made five field goals and drained seven of eight free-throw attempts. Schuemer said he enjoyed shooting free throws over the noise of the Addison Trail student section.

"I love that—especially when their student section is talking," said Schuemer of his successful evening at the free-throw line.

Masys provided eight points, while Reynolds and senior Freddie Clay contributed six and five points, respectively.

The Warriors have a chance to set the program's record for most wins in a season. The record of 23 victories in a season has stood for over 40 years.

"We're three away from tying it and four away from breaking it,"



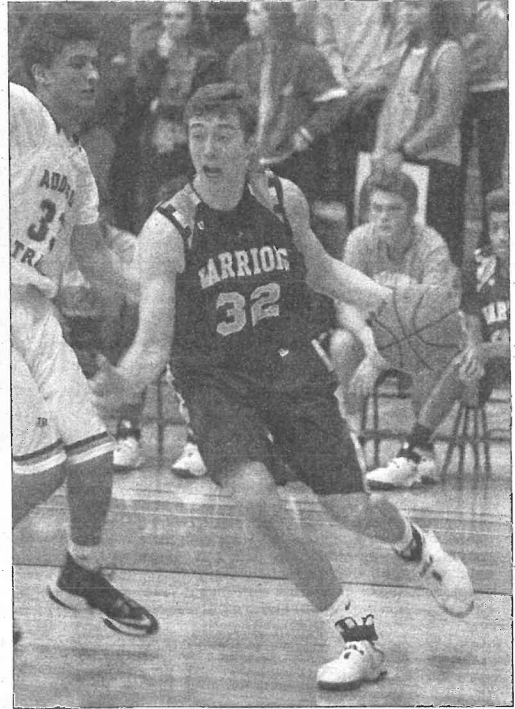
said Perkins. "The kids are aware of it. Winning the conference is our next goal. Hopefully we'll get that [the school record for wins] along the way as well."

Perkins said after Saturday's victory that while he expected a strong season, he did not anticipate a 20-1 start.

"I thought this, in all honesty, would be a 20-win season," said Perkins, whose team went 11-19 last season. "I just didn't think we'd get there by the 21<sup>st</sup> game."

"Hey, at the beginning of the season, I said we were pushing for 25 wins," said Schuemer, who indeed mentioned that lofty number after the Warriors won their season-opening tournament at Stagg High School in November. "Willowbrook basketball isn't really known, but I knew we had a good ball club."

"We treat every game like it's the same," said Masys. "We try to always get the intensity up. The competition doesn't really matter."



CHRIS FOX PHOTOS Lombardian/Villa Park Review

The Willowbrook boys basketball team improved its season record to 20-1 with Saturday's 50-38 West Suburban Gold Conference win at Addison Trail. The victory gave the Warriors a 13-game winning streak. (Above right) Junior Ethan Schuemer (No. 32) scored a team-leading 17 points for the Warriors, who moved their conference record to 7-1 with the win. Sophomore Matas Masys (pictured above left) made a pair of 3-point shots in the third quarter. Masys finished the night with eight points. Willowbrook opened the second half of its conference season with Friday's 64-59 win at Proviso East. Schuemer led all scorers with 24 points. The Warriors suffered their only loss of the season in a Dec. 16 conference game at Hinsdale South. The Warriors will play a rematch against Hinsdale South this Friday in Villa Park.

## Rams rally to earn their third straight conference win

The Glenbard East girls basketball team earned its third straight victory with last week's 38-33 Upstate Eight Valley Conference win over West Aurora. The Jan. 24 triumph in Lombard gave the Rams a conference record of 3-3 and an overall season mark of 6-14.

Glenbard East's winning streak came to an end with Friday's 50-30 conference loss at South Elgin.

The Rams beat West Aurora after falling to an early 11-0 deficit. The Blackhawks' lead stood at 15-4 after one period and 19-12 at halftime. The Rams trailed the Blackhawks 22-21 at the end of the third quarter.

"We came out a little bit flat," said Glenbard East coach Don Finnie after the victory. "The effort wasn't there to start with, but we had a total team effort after that."

Junior Briana Raysby scored six of her team-leading 13 points during the fourth quarter. Senior Christina Dolinski scored 10 points. Her younger sister—junior Sommer Dolinski—added six points.

Junior Mattie Pusateri made five of six free-throw attempts in the fourth period to account for all five of her points. Junior Sam Dooley connected on all four of her free-throws in the final period. The Rams did not shoot any foul shots in the first three quarters. They made 11 of 13 attempts from the free-throw line in the final eight minutes.

Glenbard East began its three-game winning streak with a 37-32 conference victory at West Chicago on Jan. 14. Six days later, the Rams earned a 39-35 win in a conference battle at East Aurora. Christina Dolinski poured in 20 points in the Jan. 20 win. Glenbard East trailed East Aurora 11-4 after one quarter and

22-15 at halftime. The Rams trailed the Tomcats 29-27 at the end of the third quarter.

Glenbard East will tangle with Willowbrook in this Saturday's non-conference game in Lombard. The Rams will wrap up their regular season with next week's conference home games against West Chicago and East Aurora.



CHRIS FOX PHOTOS  
Lombardian/Villa Park Review

The Glenbard East girls basketball team earned its third straight victory with last week's 38-33 Upstate Eight Valley Conference win over West Aurora. The visiting Blackhawks took an early 11-0 lead over the Rams in the first quarter. Glen-



bard East trailed West Aurora 15-4 at the end of the first quarter but outscored the Blackhawks in each of the remaining three periods. (Above) Junior Sommer Dolinski (No. 40) contributed six points in the Jan. 24 win. (Left) Junior Mattie Pusateri (No. 25) made five of six free-throw attempts during the fourth quarter to help the Rams to the win. The Rams made a similar comeback in their previous game—a 39-35 conference victory at East Aurora on Jan. 20. Glenbard East trailed East Aurora 11-4 at the end of the first quarter but outscored the Tomcats in each of the remaining three periods. The Rams' three-game winning streak ended with Friday's 50-30 conference loss at South Elgin.



CHRIS FOX PHOTOS Lombardian/Villa Park Review

## Warriors split a pair of home games

The Willowbrook girls basketball team played two West Suburban Gold Conference home games in two nights last week. The Warriors suffered a 54-36 loss to Proviso East on Friday. One night later, Willowbrook edged Addison Trail 46-43. Saturday's win over the Blazers gave the Warriors an overall record of 7-15 and a conference mark of 4-6. Sophomores Katelyn McCann (No. 22) and CeCe Lizasuain (right) are pictured during Friday's game against the Pirates. Willowbrook trailed Proviso East 20-6 after one quarter and 26-14 at halftime. Sophomore Hanna Konrath scored a team-leading 16 points for the Warriors in Friday's loss. McCann contributed seven points, while sophomore Maureen Schmid provided five points and eight rebounds. Willowbrook trailed Addison Trail 34-33 with eight minutes to play in Saturday's game between District 88 rivals. Three Warriors—McCann, Lizasuain and freshman Shannon Knudtson—each finished the contest with 11 points. Knudtson connected for three shots from 3-point range. Willowbrook will complete its regular-season conference schedule with this week's games against Morton and Hinsdale South. The Warriors will play a non-conference game at Glenbard East this Saturday.

# IC Catholic jumps over .500 mark

By SCOTT SCHMID  
Daily Herald Correspondent

For a girls basketball team that has been up and down all winter, IC Catholic Prep has finally found some consistency.

Running their win streak to three games, the Knights climbed above the .500-mark with a 48-39 victory over Wheaton Academy in a Metro Suburban Blue matchup on Thursday in Elmhurst.

"The girls are excited," ICCP coach Kelsey James said. "We've been back and forth all year. When we finally put two or three games together and win, it's amazing how excited they

## Girls basketball

get about the win streak. It's nice to see things clicking. For the most part you can see each game we are getting better."

The home team never trailed in the contest, jumping out to an early 13-4 lead before carrying that 9-point advantage into halftime at 27-18.

Claire Gibler then got hot in the third quarter, knocking down four straight shots including a pair of 3-pointers to increase the margin to double figures.

"Without my teammates' passing and looking up the

court," Gibler said, "I don't think I would have gotten the shots I got. That was a good win. It's been a roller coaster, but we are definitely getting our offense set up more and are running things we need to run. And Coach has been on us about defense and we are getting better with that too."

Gibler finished with a game-high 19 points for IC Catholic (13-12, 5-7). Jaida Smith and Tess Reardon had 7 points apiece.

Emily Renn tallied 12 points for Wheaton Academy (11-16, 4-8), which had nine players score and 10 grab rebounds. Lizzy Swoboda chipped in with 7 points.

The Warriors did have a special moment when senior Meredith Bult became the program's all-time leader in 3-pointers with her 58th make late in the fourth. She also posted 10 rebounds and 6 blocked shots.

"Last year I think she averaged, like, four and a half points," Wheaton Academy coach Tory Gum said. "To come out and have this kind of season from the 3-point line and also defensively, that's great."

"Offensively, we haven't had a game like that for a little while. We've been playing well the last couple of weeks, but some nights you will have that offensively."

# York places 3rd, Willowbrook 4th at regional

By CHRIS WALKER  
Daily Herald Correspondent

## Girls gymnastics

It's good to have a couple of really talented seniors, as well as lots of talent behind them.

Geneva didn't have any seniors last year, and combined with injuries, that hurt the Vikings a season ago.

What a difference a year can make for a girls gymnastics team.

Behind senior Claire Ginsberg's 37.25 and fellow senior Michaela Allen's 35.825 in the all-around, Geneva cruised to victory during Thursday's Geneva regional with a 143.75, easily finishing ahead of runner-up St. Charles co-op's 137.475.

Neither Ginsberg, who was injured, nor Allen, who was also battling injuries but had never been on the team previously, competed during last year's regional.

"We're one of those teams that asks so many to step up, and we had a good meet here," Geneva junior Holly Friedel said. "We hope we can go 5-for-5 in every event next time. We're just trying to get better each time out and that's how we've been all year long."

Friedel's third-place effort of a 9.075 on beam was one of many highlights for the Vikings.

In addition to winning the all-around in her final home meet, Ginsberg won vault and floor. She won the all-around at state as a freshman so this was her first step in putting the bookends in closing her high school days in amazing fashion.

"It was a good meet and we made some of the improvements that we had talked about," Geneva junior Lily

Chapman said. "But we still made some errors that we need to fix soon."

St. Charles co-op fell short of advancing to sectionals as a team but junior all-arounders Emma Grace Redmond-Mattucci and Grace Levita both advanced individually, finishing second and fourth in the all-around.

"We were hoping that we'd make it as a team because we thought we had the potential," Redmond-Mattucci said. "We did get our highest team score of the year. We couldn't have done much more."

The duo has been side-by-side for more than a dozen years so it's not surprising that the success has followed them.

"It's a tough sport, but we've stuck with it and we're happy to be where we're at," Levita said. "We've been to state before and we'll try to get back

there again."

York finished in third place with a 131.5 while Willowbrook was fourth with a 122.175.

Sydney Hill qualified for sectionals on bars and Megan Cronin did the same on vault for the Dukes.

Willowbrook's fine season has been overshadowed despite its growth with a young squad since it often finishes low in the standings. It hasn't scored that high in comparison to most of its opponents but had made outstanding progress.

"I think our first meet last year and again this one was 105 and then we went up to 122," Willowbrook coach Deanna Zuchowski said. "We've worked really hard and made a lot of progress. We hit 4-of-5 beam routines tonight, which was really unbelievable."

# Basketball: Takahashi scores 17 points in Lisle victory

Continued from Page 8

like they were going to come out ready to play, because they're a team that likes to come back," LeGrand-Melton said.

The Lions' shooting touch abandoned them in the second half, though, when Lisle managed to sink just one field

goal the final 16 minutes. They survived by making 12 of 16 free throws in the second half.

"Early on they were kind of extended (defensively in a 1-2-2 zone) because we were hitting shots from the perimeter," Balaban said. "Then when we weren't hitting

shots that defense shrunk in the lane and it didn't allow TyAnn or Natalie to get into the lane. That was the big difference."

The Lisle lead peaked at 13 points in the second half, but each time the Lions seemed about to pull away, the Blue Devils came right back. Still,

the Lions never gave up the lead.

"I'm not going to lie, toward the end there we thought they were going to give us a run for our money," LeGrand-Melton said.

Elizabeth Coffey scored 19 points and Isabelle Kuroski 16 for Peotone.

## Boys basketball conference standings

### Chicago Catholic League North

School	All W-L	Conf. W-L	GB
Fenwick	17-4	9-0	—
DePaul	17-6	7-1	1
Loyola	15-8	6-2	2
St. Ignace	10-13	5-3	3

### East Suburban Catholic

School	All W-L	Conf. W-L	GB
Mariel	21-2	5-0	—
St. Patrick	18-4	4-1	1
St. Victor	7-13	4-1	1
Notre Dame	18-5	3-2	2
Marian Catholic	12-8	3-2	2
Benet	17-6	2-3	3
Madison Parkland	10-8	2-2	3

### Metro Suburban Blue

School	All W-L	Conf. W-L	GB
Aurora Central	16-4	6-1	—
IC Catholic Prep	14-7	5-2	1
Glenbard South	10-11	5-2	1
Riverside-Bridle	8-11	3-4	3
Wheaton Christian	12-10	3-5	3.5
Wheaton Acad.	6-14	2-5	4
Farmington	3-13	1-6	5

West Chicago	15-6	2-4	4
East Aurora	4-15	2-4	4
Glenbard East	1-21	0-6	6

### West Suburban Gold

School	All W-L	Conf. W-L	GB
Willowbrook	21-1	7-1	—
Peotone South	12-8	6-2	1

# Trojans looking to start fast in postseason

By MATT LE CREN  
editorial@mysurbanlife.com

**BENSENVILLE** – Things will end well for the Timothy Christian girls basketball team if it starts fast.

At least that's the hope as the Trojans enter the Class 2A playoffs in search of their first regional championship since 2011.

The Trojans (10-14) have endured an inconsistent season and much of that can be explained by their habit of getting off to slow starts.

It happened again Jan. 28 in a Metro Suburban Conference crossover game at Fenton, which led 11-9 late in the first quarter. Timothy eventually won 50-25, but the early deficit was a surprise.

"I think we usually have two or three turnovers right from the beginning," Timothy Christian coach Michele Strube said. "Unfortunately, we do this a lot. But they keep with it. They don't give up."

Yet slow starts still defy explanation.

"I don't know," Timothy senior guard Olivia Hoekstra said. "I think it's mental. We don't take warmups seriously sometimes. We need to focus and get into the game faster."

When the Trojans do get rolling, they have a lot of weapons, although no player is a huge scorer. They showed that against Fenton, using an 18-2 run bridging halftime to take control.

Nine different players scored for



Bill Ackerman - For Shaw Media

Timothy Christian's Heidi Westra shoots the ball Jan. 9 in a road game at IC Catholic Prep. Westra and the Trojans are looking for consistency with the playoffs set to begin Feb. 7.

Timothy, with Hoekstra and junior forward Olivia Schuringa leading the way with 11 points and 10 points, respectively.

"We started out kind of slowly and we were just kind of groggy," Hoekstra said. "We had to get into it. Our big

had to make some shots and I think that really helped when we started driving and making our shots."

The Trojans play tough defense and will have a size advantage on their regional opponents thanks to the 6-foot Schuringa, 6-2 senior center Ava Vene-

ma, 6-2 junior center Emily DeBoer and 6-foot sophomore guard Heidi Westra.

"We have a really nice inside game, so the girls do a good job using that," Strube said. "They usually do really well on defense. That keeps us in the games."

The Trojans are seeded No. 5 in a sub-sectional of the Lisle sectional. They will face No. 3 seed Chicago Richards at the Lisle regional semifinals at 7:30 p.m. Feb. 7.

Richards has only one senior, 5-10 center La'Monica Griggley, while the Trojans have five, including guards Allison Zeilstra and Tyra Hopson and forward Hope Zastrow.

"They do have a senior that averages 13 points and 13 rebounds, so we'll have to watch her, and then they have a lot of young players," Strube said. "So hopefully we can use our seniors and use our defense to cause some trouble."

A win would advance the Trojans to the Feb. 10 regional final, where the opponent is expected to be the host Lions (15-10). Timothy beat Lisle 48-45 on Jan. 14, taking a 20-3 lead before holding on.

"We know how to beat them," Strube said. "It is just which team comes to play. We can do it."

Hoekstra said the win over Fenton gives the Trojans confidence looking ahead to the playoffs.

"I think that was a good reinforcement of our defense," Hoekstra said. "[We are] having fun with it and playing well."

## WRESTLING POSTSEASON PREVIEW

# Wrestlers set to hit road to state tournament

### SUBURBAN LIFE MEDIA

The end of the postseason road for high school wrestlers is the State Farm Center in Champaign for the state tournament from Feb. 16 to 18. Here's the outlook for IC Catholic, York, and other area schools as the postseason gets set to start with regional tournaments Feb. 4.

#### Glenbard East

**Regional:** Lyons Township  
**Sectional:** Downers Grove North

**Outlook:** The regional is where Reese Martin (113 pounds), Nick Donovan (120), Scott Szabo (138), Cole Martin (152) and Brandon Raines (285), all ranked by IllinoisMatmen.com, start their postseason journeys. Finishing in the top three looks up a trip to the Feb. 11 sectional, but that will be easier

said than done as Montini and host Lyons Township also boast solid lineups.

#### IC Catholic

**Regional:** Walther Christian  
**Sectional:** Coal City

**Outlook:** Already a two-time state qualifier, junior Joe Bianchini will be looking to make it three state tournament berths in a row this postseason. A champ at three invites this season (and named outstanding wrestler at two of them), Bianchini is ranked No. 1 at 113 pounds by IllinoisMatmen.com. He and junior Victor Vargas (220), also ranked in Class 1A, will be looking to lead a contingent of IC wrestlers to the Feb. 11 sectional.

#### Montini

**Regional:** Lyons Township  
**Sectional:** Downers Grove North

**Outlook:** The arrival of the Class 3A postseason means it is Montini's time to shine.

With eight state-ranked wrestlers – Dylan Ragusin (106), Joey Melendez (113), Real Woods (126), Fidel Mayora (132), Jake Stiles (138), Will Lewan (145), Matt Ortiz (152) and Peter Christensen (170) – the Broncos are the team to beat at the regional, although Glenbard East and Lyons Township could challenge for the title.

#### Willowbrook

**Regional:** Lyons Township  
**Sectional:** Downers Grove North

**Outlook:** Junior Jack Jessen's road to a potential third state tournament starts at the regional. Ranked No. 2 in the state at 182 pounds in Class 3A by IllinoisMatmen.com, Jessen will be the favorite to win the regional and earn a

first-round bye at the Feb. 11 sectional. Dominic Ranieri (132) also will be eyeing a top-three finish and a spot at the sectional.

#### York

**Regional:** Leyden  
**Sectional:** Conant

**Outlook:** The Dukes should be familiar with a large portion of their potential foes at the Class 3A regional as West Suburban Silver teams Glenbard West, Oak Park-River Forest and Proviso West, as well as dual meet opponent Addison Trail, are part of the field.

OPRF will be favored to win the team title, but York seniors Austin Hoffmann, Michael Piszczor and Blake Quarrie will be among the Dukes wrestlers looking for top-three finishes to lock up berths at the sectional Feb. 11.

THE BLOG

# From Poem to Children’s Book - My Darling Child Shiloh by Aaron Ozee

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**Marisa Sanfilippo**  
Journalist turned award-winning marketer. Freelance writer. Twitter chat junkie.

Growing up, I was hooked on [Shel Silverstein](#). I mean, who wouldn't be right? From the prose to the graphics, he had a creative way of telling a story. Must be why so many schools still use his books for story time.

Eventually, we grow up. While I still have my copy of *Where the Sidewalk Ends*, my taste for poetry has matured just a little.

One of my favorite modern day poets is a kid. That's right, a kid.

In a course I took at University of Denver, the instructor encouraged the class to explore different poetry and break out of our comfort zone. But, kind of ironic that as a kid I read poetry written by an adult, but now as an adult I read poetry written by a kid, isn't it?

With his first anthology published at the age of fifteen, [Aaron Ozee](#) was on his way to becoming a bestselling American poet.

For me, it started just a few years ago with the purchase of *Celestial Inferno: Poems of Another Realm*. The anthology contains poems touching upon various emotions that really express how we feel about life such as fear, greed, love, and hate. And from that moment on, I was hooked.

However, it was a more recent work by Ozee that caught my eye. Now in his early 20s, Ozee has branched out to writing stories for children. Despite no longer being a kid, Ozee has shown that he is still a child at heart. His most recent work, *My Darling Child Shiloh*, is a children's book, illustrated by Mallory Clark.

TRENDING

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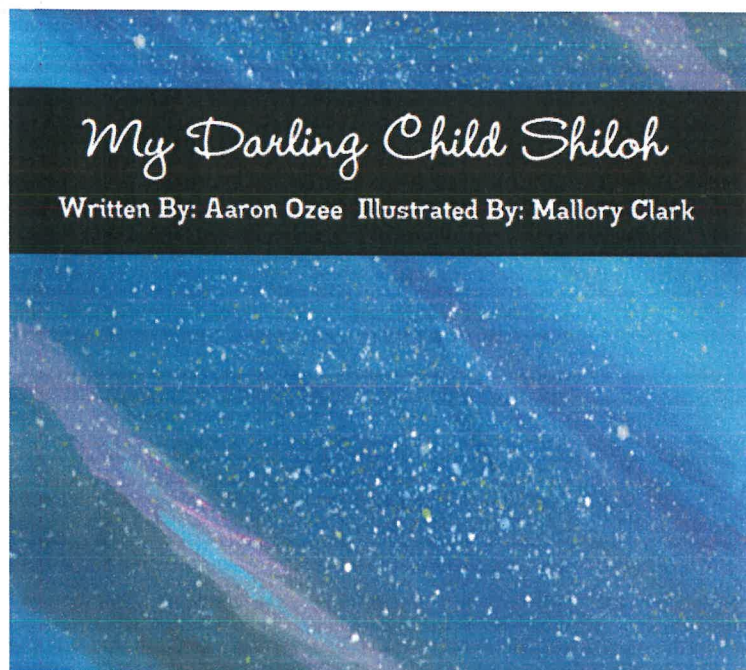
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# H From Poem to Children's Book - My Darling Child Shiloh by Aaron Ozee



My Darling Child Shiloh - Cover Image

"The book originally manifested as a poem," Ozee told me in an email. "I wrote it back in my senior year at Addison Trail High School and then partnered with Mallory to illustrate the book when I first began taking classes at the College of DuPage."

So what influenced Ozee to craft his work for younger generations?

"Many of my readers suggested that I apply my poetry to children's literature," writes Ozee. "My friends and family encouraged me to broaden the reach of my creativity and it eventually led me to embark on a new path that would lead me to conjure my first children's book, My Darling Child Shiloh."

The book itself is set around a little boy named Shiloh and his mother. It addresses the selfless bond they share and highlights the true importance of family. But I won't share the whole story (you'll have to read it yourself), since it was the actual reading experience that stood out to me.

"We arranged the book in a way that visually requires you to periodically, yet unknowingly, pivot your line of sight from one side of the book to the other," writes Ozee. "By doing this, it takes the child twice as long to read the entire book which helps to expose them to the text and the illustrations presented throughout in a way that makes them more memorable and meaningful."

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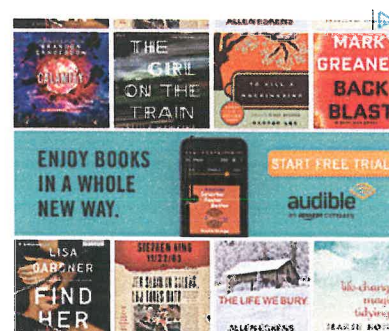


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## From Poem to Children's Book - My Darling Child Shiloh by Aaron Ozee



Ozee signing copies of My Darling Child Shiloh in October 2016.

According to Ozee, he began writing at the age of five. His poetry was first published at the age of 15 and he has since authored nine books of poetry and one children's book.

Despite not being a poem in the traditional sense, My Darling Child Shiloh still has me interested in what lies in Ozee's mind. While I don't have kids yet, I at least have the first book for them when (and if) i do!

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