

Neighbor & Classifieds

A new beginning

Montini graduate Samantha Mullins, with the phone, takes a picture of fellow graduates Francesca Kokkines, left, and Kiana Calkins prior to Montini's graduation.



JEFF KNOX/jknox@dailyherald.com

It's graduation season in DuPage

Daily Herald report

During most times of the year, it seems to us, the demand for mortarboards is somewhat limited.

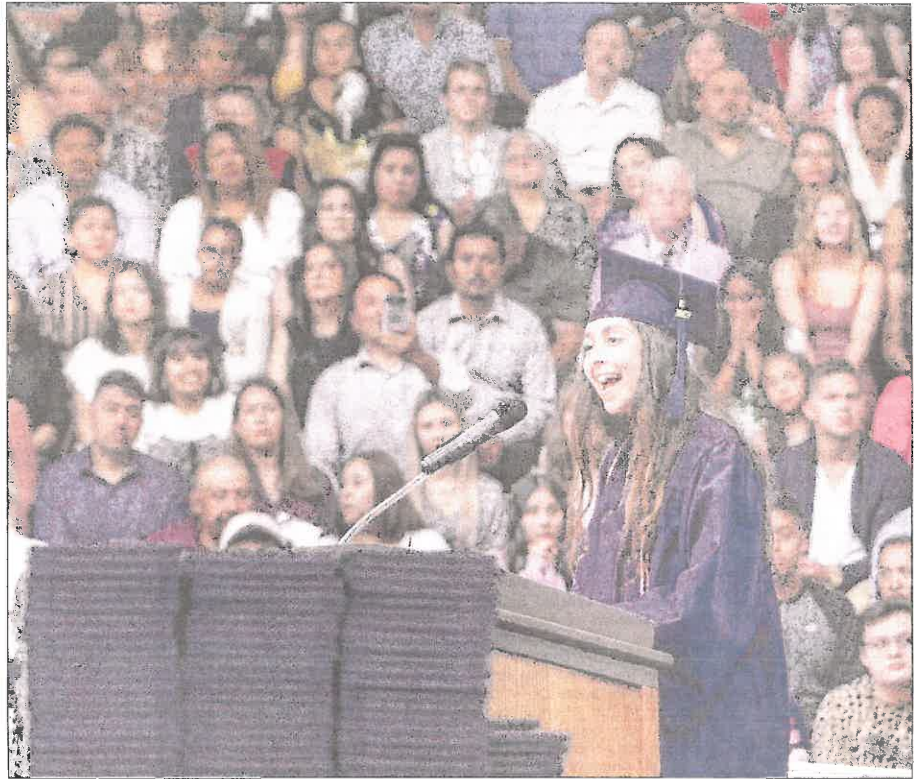
Truth is, outside of a high school or college graduation, we can't remember the last time we saw someone walking around wearing one of those square hats with a dangling tassel — not that there's anything wrong with that.

The good news for the folks who make mortarboards, though, is that the headwear is as much a part of this season as colorful robes and "Pomp and Circumstance" and speeches about going out and changing the world — as you

can see from this collection of graduation photos from some of our area high schools.

And that's good because there's value in tradition and there's value in inspirational speeches and there's value in wearing a funny-looking hat that you can toss in the air once you've snared that diploma.

So, graduates, don that cap and gown proudly and celebrate one last chance to be with all your classmates, because tomorrow we're depending on you to tackle a pretty important job: You know that part about going out and changing the world? We were serious.



Gabriella Bonilla gives the commencement speech at Addison Trail High School.

BEV HORNE/bhorne@dailyherald.com

Kayla Griesbach flips her shoe to illustrate a point in her speech — the shoe almost always falls right side up — at Naperville North.



PATRICK KUNZER/pkunzer@dailyherald.com



Garrett James recognizes some audience members at Naperville Central.

PATRICK KUNZER/pkunzer@dailyherald.com

Counselor Kimberly Mikesell takes a selfie with graduate Miriam Youhanoun before Willowbrook's graduation in Villa Park.



York High School grads celebrate in Elmhurst.

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THURSDAY, MAY 23, 2019

Police join 'Neighbors' by Ring to provide real-time crime, safety information

App connects people, law enforcement, security cameras to reduce crime

The Addison Police announced last week that it is joining the free Neighbors app by Ring to provide the Addison community with real-time, local crime and safety information. The Neighbors network already has millions of users and has been instrumental in catching package thieves, stopping burglaries and keeping neighborhoods safe.

Residents can text addisonil to 555888 from their smartphone to download the Neighbors app for free on iOS and Android and use it to join their neighbors to share crime and safety-related videos, photos and text-based posts, and receive real-time safety alerts from neighbors, local law enforcement and the Ring team.

"The Neighbors app makes it easy for residents to keep one another informed of local crime and safety situations occurring in their neighborhood," said Addison Director of Police Tim Hayden. "Now Addison Police can join the conversation directly and benefit all of us by helping to solve crimes and further the mission of the Addison Police in ensuring the safety and security of all who live, work and frequent Addison."

"The Addison Police Department will also be able to write their own posts and help spread information about recent crimes in the area, or real time crime information. The Neighbors app by Ring is completely free to anyone and Addison residents do not need to have a camera in order to participate in this program. The Addison Police Department is among other agencies in Illinois to partner with Ring for this crime fighting tool. Like other social media sharing platforms, the Neigh-

bors app is not meant to replace 9-1-1. If Addison residents see a crime or suspicious activity occurring they are asked to immediately dial 9-1-1."

"We're excited to have the Addison Police join Neighbors to keep their community up-to-date on local crime and safety information," said Jamie Siminoff, chief inventor and founder of Ring. "Over the past few years, we have learned that when neighbors, the Ring team and law enforcement

all work together, we can create safer communities. Neighbors is meant to facilitate real-time communication between these groups while maintaining privacy first and foremost. By bringing security to every neighbor with the app, the Addison community can stay on top of crime and safety alerts as they happen."

How It Works

• Text addisonil to 555888 or click

here: <http://download.ring.com/addison> from your smartphone to download the app for free on iOS and Android.

• Opt-in to join your neighborhood.
• Customize the geographic area you want to receive notifications for (users must verify where they are located and cannot participate in other neighborhoods).

• Receive real-time alerts from your neighbors, local law enforce-

ment and the Ring team that inform of crime and safety alerts as they happen.

• View local crime and safety posts via a live feed or interactive map.
• Share text updates, photos and videos taken on any device, including Ring's home security devices.

• Work with your community to make neighborhoods safer.
For more information, visit ring.com/neighbors.



SUBMITTED PHOTO Addison Independent

Addison Trail's 'Little Blazers' graduate

Members of the 2019 Addison Trail Little Blazers Preschool class hold up their certificates during their graduation ceremony on May 9.

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SPORTS

MAY 23, 2019 • 26

Addison Trail boys volleyball team wraps up regular season

Blazers opened state playoffs earlier this week

By Mike Miazga
CORRESPONDENT

The Addison Trail boys volleyball team wrapped up the regular season with a trip to the Willowbrook invitational and a West Suburban Conference Gold Division match against Leyden.

Addison Trail took sixth at the Willowbrook event and dropped a three-setter to Leyden by counts of

25-17, 11-25, 26-24.

The Blazers finished the regular season 11-24 overall and went 3-3 and took third place in the WSC Gold.

Filippo Caccucciolo had a season-high 10 kills against Leyden and J.T. Daniels had a season-high five blocks in the contest.

Through the end of the regular season, Joe Mosny was leading the team in kills with 232. Nico Nasti had 581 assists, while Enzo Ciaccia was tops on the team in digs with 116. Michal Zdanowicz was leading the team in service aces with 20 and Mosny was leading in blocks with 60.

Addison Trail coach Chad Grant

was pleased with how his team played to close out the regular season against Leyden. "Our offense and defense put forth our best performance of the season in our last match," he said. "We had a season-high in-kills with 32 and digs with 48. We had a solid win against Glenbard East in the Willowbrook tournament. Glenbard East had been ranked in the top 25 all year and is the fourth seed in our sectional."

Grant has seen offensive output spike throughout his hitters. "At the beginning of the year we only had two guys who could get kills for us consistently," he noted. "Now, we are

comfortable going to all five hitters."

Grant also has been pleased with Ciaccia's play on defense. "Enzo has taken over the libero spot recently and has been solid," he said. "He is passing great and had a season-high in digs against Leyden with 11. That's also the most we have had from anyone in our libero spot this year."

Addison Trail has improved at the service line as well. "I like that we are accurate and we don't miss many serves," said Grant. "It seems to always allow us to be in the game, even though we are consistently challenging ourselves against great competition."

Grant added Addison Trail's record this season isn't quite indicative of the progress the team has made. "Our record doesn't indicate the kind of team we are," he said. "We have battled through injuries to our most important players, a very tough schedule and youth at a lot of positions. We are playing our best ball now and hopefully that carries over into the postseason."

Addison Trail opened the playoffs against Fenton earlier this week at St. Charles North.

If Addison Trail won that match, it faced Bartlett, the No. 3 seed in the sectional, Tuesday.

Fenton girls soccer team reaches regional final

Burch goes 3-for-3 in Fenton baseball game against Riverside-Brookfield

By Mike Miazga
CORRESPONDENT

The Fenton girls soccer team reached its own Class 2A Fenton regional championship game where it lost 7-0 to Chicago Latin School.

Fenton reached the title game after defeating Chicago Prosser 3-0. In that contest, Natalie Diaz had a hat trick for the Bison, accounting for all the team's goals.

Fenton finished the season 4-10-3 and went 1-5 in Metro Suburban Conference Red Division action.

Diaz led the team in scoring with five goals this season.

Fenton coach Victor Ruiz was pleased with how the team came together as the season wore on. "We have been playing and battling as a team," he said.

Ruiz said the Bison's biggest strides came this year on the offensive side of the ball. The Bison have continued to work on finishing scoring opportunities.

Individually, Ruiz noted seniors Jacqueline Noguera and Kimberly Reyes have been the team's most consistent players, while Jacqueline Casas and Lesly Mora have given the team a push on the wing.

"The girls don't quit and they don't give up," said Ruiz.

Fenton baseball

The Fenton baseball team played a recent two-game series against Riverside-Brookfield.

In a 10-3 loss to R-B, Fenton was down 9-0 after two innings. The Bison scored two runs in the third and another run in the seventh.

David Burch went 3-for-3 with a run scored and an RBI. Jose Alvarez went 1-for-3 with two RBI, while Angelo Mendoza also had a hit. One of Burch's hits was a double.

Andrew Pietrucha and Michael Rago pitched in the game.

Fenton then dropped a 4-1 contest to R-B. Fenton led 1-0 after five innings.

Burch went 1-for-2 with a run scored. Pietrucha had two hits and an RBI. Michael Rago had a hit. Burch stole a base.

Matthew Janovsky took the loss, but only allowed seven hits and three runs over six innings, while striking out seven.

Fenton boys volleyball

The Fenton boys volleyball team opened IHSA playoff action earlier this week at St. Charles North against Addison Trail.

Willowbrook's Palma competes at girls state track meet

Addison Trail softball defeats Proviso East

By Mike Miazga
CORRESPONDENT

Willowbrook senior Victoria Palma competed in the recent Class 3A girls track and field state finals meet at Eastern Illinois University.

Palma finished eighth in her preliminary heat of the 1,600 and did not advance to the finals race. Palma ran 5:03.73.

Willowbrook boys track

The Willowbrook boys track team took ninth at the recent Class 3A York sectional in Elmhurst.

The Warriors finished with 13 points and had no state qualifiers.

Tarell Regans was third in the triple jump at 43-9. Willowbrook's 1,600 relay took sixth in 3:38.55 with Alex Simmons, Liam Riessen, Mohammed Aly and Will Stout.

Simmons was sixth in the 400 with a time of 51.87.

Brandon Heselton was fifth in the 800 at 2:01.43, while Tyler King was sixth in 2:01.65. Stout was fifth in the 300 hurdles at 41.61. D'Onte Gholston was seventh in the long jump at 20-7.

Addison Trail boys track

The Addison Trail boys track team competed at the recent Class 3A York sectional. The Blazers had no state qualifiers.

The Blazers were seventh in the 1,600 relay with a time of 3:38.70.

Cesar Herrera was 10th in the 300 hurdles with a time of 43.19. Jonathan Ramos was 11th in the 800 with a time of 2:05.53.

Dylan Moran took 10th in the 3,200 with a time of 10:08.04.

The Blazers were 10th in the 3,200 relay in 8:56.01 with Randy Almarales, Cole Greaves, John Taci and Christopher Trujillo.

Addison Trail softball

The Addison Trail softball team won a pair of West Suburban Conference Gold Division games against Proviso East recently.

In a 12-0 win over Proviso East, Addison Trail scored six runs in the fifth inning to put the game

away. The Blazers had 13 hits.

Gia Napoli went 2-for-4 with a run scored and an RBI. Sophia Hawkins went 2-for-4 with two runs scored and two RBI. Anna Ruffolo went 2-for-2 with a run scored and an RBI. Taylor Gloms went 1-for-2 with a run scored. Maddie Biancalana went 2-for-2 with a run scored and four RBI. Dakota Zimmermann went 2-for-2 with an RBI. Lizzie O'Brien had a hit and Sam Bucher had a hit, two runs scored and two walks.

Ruffolo and Gloms each had a double, while Hawkins and Biancalana each had a triple. Zimmermann, O'Brien and Napoli combined to throw a five-inning one-hitter with nine strikeouts.

The Blazers also were 20-3 winners against Proviso East. Ruffolo, Madison Domek and McKenna Gayon each had a double, while Hawkins hit a triple.

Addison Trail baseball

The Addison Trail baseball team was victorious in a pair of West Suburban Conference Gold Division games against Proviso East.

In a 14-2 win, the Blazers led 7-0 after three innings. AJ Carlson had a hit, three runs scored and two RBI. Vince Daudelin had a hit, a run scored and an RBI.

Mike Scali had a hit, a run scored and two RBI. Nick Daudelin had a hit, a run scored and an RBI. Alex Conrad had a hit, two runs scored and an RBI. Lucas Hernandez had two runs scored and an RBI. Mark Rosal had two hits, two runs scored and an RBI. One of Rosal's hits was a double.

Vince Daudelin pitched a five-inning complete game and allowed one hit and no earned runs, while striking out seven.

Addison Trail also was a 13-0 winner against Proviso East. The Blazers scored eight runs in the third inning and had 12 hits overall.

Carlson went 2-for-3 with two runs scored and two RBI. Vince Daudelin went 3-for-4 with three runs scored and an RBI.

Scali had a hit, a run scored and three RBI. Nick Daudelin had a hit, a run scored and an RBI.

AJ Conrad had three hits and two runs scored. Josh Meglio had a hit, a run scored and an RBI, while Rosal had a hit, a run scored and two RBI.

Meglio doubled in the game, while Carlson and Vince Daudelin each had two triples. Conrad stole four bases.

Nick Zuchero was the winning pitcher. He allowed two hits, no runs and struck out five.

Willowbrook girls soccer team wraps up season

Warriors take third in WSC Gold with 4-0-2 mark

By Mike Miazza
CORRESPONDENT

The Willowbrook girls soccer team wrapped up its 2019 season after a 3-0 loss to Chicago Whitney Young in the semifinals of the Class 3A Glenbard East regional in Lombard.

Willowbrook ended the year with an 11-10-2 mark. The Warriors fin-

ished third in the West Suburban Conference Gold Division with a 4-0-2 record.

Prior to the playoffs, Lizzy Florey was leading the Warriors in scoring with 21 goals and nine assists. Grace Tumilty had 12 goals and 12 assists, while Julianna Paulsen had 12 goals and two assists. Erin Fitzgibbon had eight goals and six assists.

Coach Julio Del Real noted position changes were made during the season and the results were quite positive. "We have adapted very

well to the positional changes that have happened within the team," he explained recently. "The girls are putting together the form and skill level necessary in the state playoffs. We continue to see contributions from many of our players and that will help us late in the games with substitutions."

Del Real added another area that has improved throughout the season has been players helping each other out on the field. "The girls' ability to cover for each other has gotten so much better," he said.

"Positioning also has been a big improvement. As much as we work on our passing and first touch, it is beginning to look a lot better."

Del Real said Florey, Tumilty and Sara Fitzgibbon have been sparkplugs on offense. "Lizzy, Gracie and Sara have been doing an outstanding job at getting our offense working," the coach said. "In most of the scoring that has happened, these ladies have had a lot to do with it."

Maura Heneghan has been a constant on defense for the Warriors.

"Maura has been doing a great job at keeping the defense together, and as a team, we have done a great job overall," said Del Real.

Willowbrook scored 61 goals as a team heading into the playoffs, something Del Real is proud of beyond just the sheer quantity. "Fifteen of the 19 on the roster have contributed with at least an assist," he said.

Chicago Whitney Young went on to win the Glenbard East regional title with a win against the host school.

Willowbrook boys volleyball team picks up pair of wins

Lowery cited for strong leadership

By Mike Miazza
CORRESPONDENT

Willowbrook boys volleyball coach Ryan Bazon sees a bright future for his team.

That was evident in victories against West Suburban Conference foes Lyons Township (2-set win) and fellow Gold Division member Hinsdale South (3-set win).

"We are a team with a ton of potential and that was shown in our

win over Lyons Township and our win over Hinsdale South," Bazon said recently.

"When the guys play with energy and confidence for a whole match, we can beat a lot of teams. However, we have struggled a bit with consistency and continue to work in practice to overcome this obstacle."

Willowbrook was 9-17 overall through 26 matches and stood at 2-2 in its first four WSC Gold contests.

Through 26 matches, Jevon Lowery was leading the team in

hitting percentage at .371. Michael Hay was tops in kills with 99. Jack Carey was leading the team in serving percentage at .977.

Jack Walsh was tops in aces with 21. Hay was leading in blocks with 57, while Walsh had a team-high 241 assists.

Jimmy Whiting was tops in digs with 159.

"After a tough middle of our season, I am encouraged by the growth I have seen over the past few weeks and I believe we can make some noise in our sectional," said Bazon. "We have used a number of lineups

this year and everyone has seen playing time this season."

Lowery was cited for his strong leadership this season. "I am highly encouraged by the leadership of Jevon, our senior middle blocker," said Bazon. "He plays with high energy, is a great leader for the young guys and is extremely coachable."

Walsh, a sophomore, has played well at the setting position. "Jack continues to adapt to the speed of the varsity game on a daily basis and continues to grow as a volleyball player," said Bazon. "He will be a huge asset in the years to

come."

Hay is a key weapon for the Warriors up front. "Michael is a 6-7 middle blocker who leads our team in blocks and kills," said Bazon. "When we pass the ball, he is a great weapon both offensively and defensively."

Willowbrook opened regional play earlier this week against WSC Gold opponent Morton in a match played at Hinsdale Central as part of the Naperville North regional. If Willowbrook won that match, it played against No. 1 sectional seed Wheaton St. Francis on Tuesday.

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VILLA PARK REVIEW

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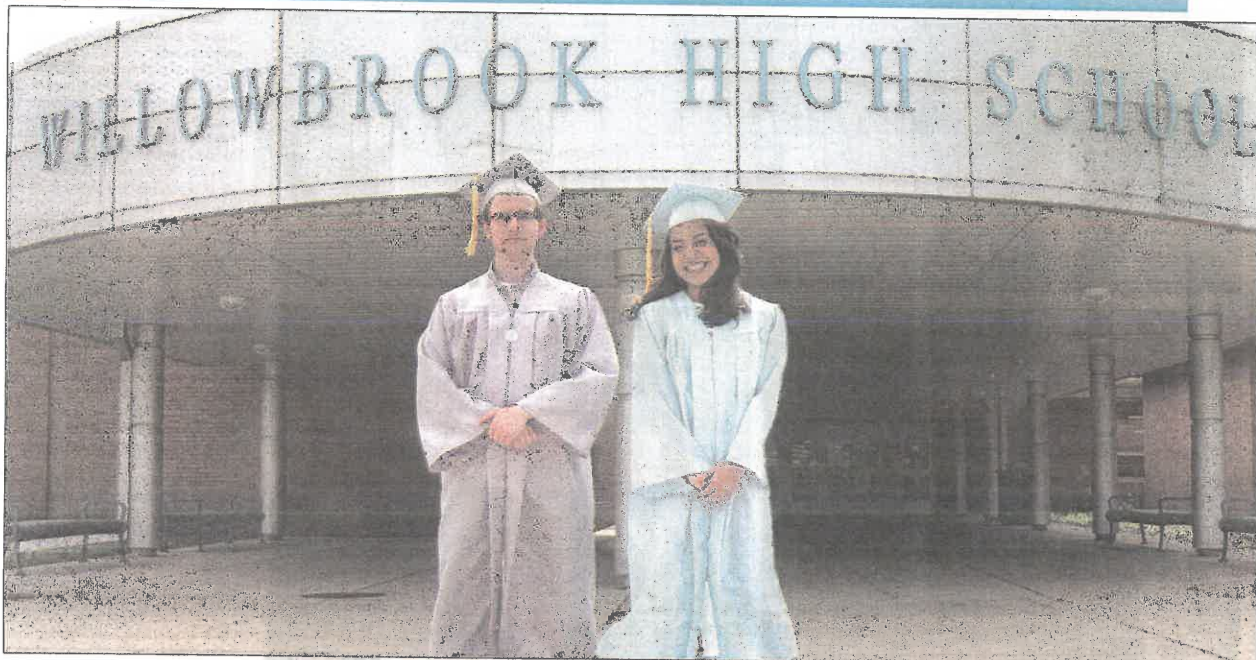
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Willowbrook High School seniors Max Polanek (left) and Victoria Palma (right) will speak during Sunday's graduation ceremony in the school's main gymnasium. Polanek is the senior class president and holds one of the highest academic ranks in the school's senior class. Palma holds the top academic rank in Willowbrook's Class

of 2019. Polanek and Palma will both attend the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Polanek will major in chemical engineering. Palma will major in mechanical engineering.

CHRIS FOX PHOTO Villa Park Review

An end, and a beginning, for Willowbrook's Class of 2019

Graduation speakers to talk about change and keeping an open mind

Willowbrook High School's Class of 2019 will hold its commencement service on Sunday, May 19. This year's graduating class includes about 500 students.

Two of Willowbrook's most accomplished senior students will speak during Sunday's ceremony in the school's main gymnasium. Victoria Palma, who earned the top academic rank in the senior class, will join senior class president Max Polanek in addressing their fellow graduates.

Polanek, who also holds an academic rank near the top of the school's Class of 2019, earned the highest possible ACT composite score—a 36. He took the test about one year ago.

Palma and Polanek will both attend the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Palma will major in mechanical engineering, while Polanek will major in chemical engineering.

Palma's speech is titled "Delta." The Greek letter delta represents a change or difference in many fields, including engineering.

"The more I thought about it, something that we're all going to experience very quickly, and something that we're all experiencing constantly, is change," said Palma in talking about her speech. "It's just going to be about, how, although change might not feel like the right thing, sometimes it's the best thing that can happen; whether it be small changes or

the giant changes like the one we're about to go into, change is probably one of the best parts of life."

Palma said she is a little nervous about speaking at the ceremony, but she is also proud to represent her class and describe its achievements.

"It's just an honor to be able to encompass so many experiences," said Palma.

When asked what she hopes her fellow classmates will take away from her speech, Palma said she wants them to be happy with what they've done at Willowbrook and cherish their memories.

"Take the change you're being faced with and turn it into something better," said Palma. "I know a lot of people are going to miss high school and kind of see it as their glory days. But they have such bright futures."

Palma said the lessons she has learned in her four years at Willowbrook include relaxing, taking risks and trying new things.

"Willowbrook has taught me to relax and trust myself," said Palma.

Palma, who is an Elmhurst resident, is the daughter of Jorge and Yurimia Palma. Before attending Willowbrook, she went to Albright Middle School in Villa Park.

In addition to her many academic achievements at Willowbrook, Palma is an accomplished athlete. She's a distance runner who has been a standout on the girls cross country and track teams.

She qualified for the IHSA Class 3A state cross country meet during her junior and senior seasons. As a junior, she finished 77th in the 2017 state meet. She placed 66th in the 2018 state meet, which took place in November.

On May 9, Palma qualified for the Class 3A girls state track and field meet, which takes place this week at Eastern Illinois University. She earned her trip to the state meet by achieving the state-qualifying standard in the 1,600-meter run at the Naperville North Sectional. Palma covered 1,600 meters (almost one mile) in 5 minutes, 6.30 seconds. The state-qualifying standard is 5:08.84.

Palma will continue running at the collegiate level as a member of the Fighting Illini's women's cross country and track teams.

Asked about her future plans, Palma said she thinks she would like to teach. She also might like to coach cross country and track.

Polanek's speech is titled: "Warriors: A Tale of the Future."

"I look at the Class of 2019 and I see a bunch of people destined for countless locations, countless connections and countless mindsets," said Polanek in discussing his speech. "The most I can think of saying to such a group of people is basically to just keep their minds open; apply what many look at as the scientific method as just a way of life. Never take anything without thinking about it. Look for understanding."

A Villa Park resident, Polanek is the son of Stephen and Mona Polanek. He attended Jackson Middle School before attending Willowbrook.

"I hope it helps them look at the rest of our lives in a more productive manner," said Polanek when asked what he hoped his classmates would take away from his speech.

Polanek had an interesting response to a question asking the most important lesson he learned in his time at Willowbrook.

"I have learned that I know basically nothing, and I have to look at the rest of my life as if I don't," said Polanek. "That's the only way I can learn more."

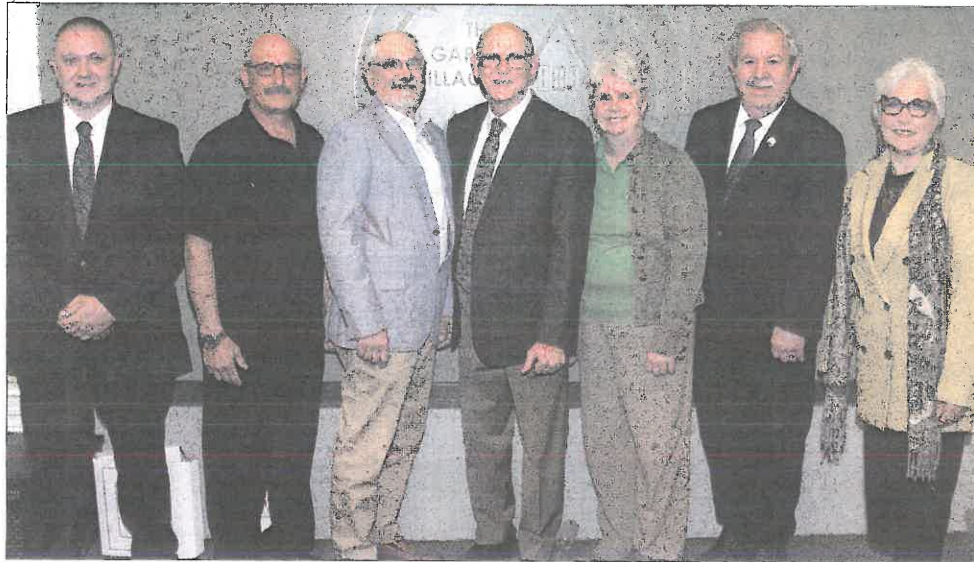
He said he knows basically nothing, but obviously Polanek must know something. He earned scores of 1,540 of 1,570 on the SAT—a standardized test used in the college admissions process. The highest attainable SAT score is 1,600. Polanek took the SAT in March and April of 2018. In June of last year, he took the ACT—another standardized test. A few weeks later, he learned of his score of 36 on the exam, which consists of tests in English, math, reading and science.

Only about one-tenth of one percent of the 2 million or so students who take the ACT each year achieve a score of 36.

Polanek, whose favorite subject is science (chemistry and physics are two particular favorites), said his long-term career plans may focus on the energy field.

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CHRIS FOX PHOTOS Villa Park Review

New members join the village board

The Villa Park Village Board's new members were sworn in to four-year terms during the May 6 village board meeting. David Cilella (above left), Christine Murphy (above right) and Kevin Patrick (left) were all elected to their four-year terms in the April 2 election. DuPage County Circuit Judge Robert Kleeman administered the oath of office to the three trustees during the meeting. Murphy and Patrick then joined Cilella and the rest of the board members on the dais. Cilella was already a member of the board. Villa Park Village President Albert Bulthuis appointed Cilella to the board about two years ago. He filled out the remaining two years of the seat left vacant when Bulthuis, who had been a trustee, was elected village president in 2017. Murphy and Patrick are both newcomers to the board. They replaced Chris Aiello and Donald Kase. Moments before the swearing in of the newly elected members, Bulthuis recognized both Aiello and Kase for their service on the board. Neither of the outgoing trustees attended the meeting. The group photo (top) from the May 6 meeting shows the entire village board. Pictured left to right are: Patrick, Cilella, Trustee Nick Cuzzone, Bulthuis, Trustee Cheryl Tucker, Trustee Robert Wagner and Murphy. The village board will hold its next meeting on May 20.

Police announce Click It or Ticket patrols through May 28

The Villa Park Police Department is partnering with the Illinois Department of Transportation to remind motorists to buckle up.

The Click It or Ticket seat-belt enforcement campaign began on May 10 and will continue through May 28. The campaign, which provides funding for additional police patrols, runs through Memorial Day weekend—one of the busiest travel weekends of the year.

Click It or Ticket enforces the proper use of seat belts and car seats to keep motorists safe.

"Our officers see first-hand the tragedy when people do not buckle up," stated Villa Park Police Sgt. James Cihak. "It's such a simple and effective way to protect yourself while traveling. As the Memorial Day weekend approaches, we want to make sure people are doing everything they can to stay safe while traveling."

According to information provided by the Villa Park Police Department, nearly 95 percent of motorists in Illinois use seat belts. A disproportionate number of motor-related fatalities, however, involve unbelted motorists and passengers. Seat belt usage reportedly decreases for back seat passengers, and for people traveling at night.

Villa Park officers will issue citations day and night to unbelted motorists and passengers during its Click It or Ticket patrols. Police will also arrest those who are caught while driving impaired.

"Please help us spread this life-saving message before one more friend or family member is killed simply because they failed to buckle up," added Cihak. "Seat belts save lives, and every vehicle occupant—front seat and back, child and adult—needs to remember to buckle up, every trip, every time."

For more information about the Click It or Ticket mobilization campaign, visit BuckleUpIllinois.org.

News briefs

Village's Spring Sweep recycling event on Saturday

The Villa Park Community Pride Commission and the Villa Park Environmental Concerns Commission are teaming up to hold a Villa Park Spring Sweep recycling and shredding event on Saturday, May 18. The event will take place from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m. Traffic for the event will flow down Home Avenue, entering at the intersection of Harvard Avenue and Home, and exiting toward Ardmore. (Use 42 W. Home Ave. as a general starting point). The event is free to Villa Park residents, although a fee will apply for paint recycling. Non-residents are welcome, but a fee will apply for document shredding, electronics recycling and paint recycling.

Volunteers will work to collect and sort all items straight from your car to ensure an easy and safe drop-off. Simply load your car, drive to the entrance of the event and volunteers will direct you from there.

If you are interested in volunteering for the event, send an e-mail to pride@invillepark.com.

Lauren M. Kiefer Memorial 5K takes place June 15

The 13th annual Lauren M. Kiefer 5K Family Run/Walk will begin at 9 a.m. on Saturday, June 15. The run/walk starts and ends outside of Willowbrook High School, 1250 S. Ardmore Ave. Registration is \$25 per participant. Children 12 and under can participate for free with a paid adult. A child waiver form must be completed. All proceeds from the event benefit the Lauren M. Kiefer Memorial Foundation, which provides funds to local families and groups. The foundation also provides scholarships to Willowbrook students. Registration for the run/walk can be completed online or through the mail. To register online, or to download a registration form, visit rememberlauren.com/events. Race day registration—\$25 cash—will also be available, starting at 7:30 a.m.

Senior of the Year

The Villa Park Senior Concerns Commission held its fifth annual Senior Fair at Villa Park Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post No. 2801 on May 9. Continuing its practice from previous years, the commission presented its Senior of the Year Award at the fair. The 2019 Senior of the Year Award recipient is Rae Rupp Srch (left), who is pictured with Villa Park Village Clerk Hosanna Korynscky (right). A former village president of Villa Park, Srch is active in numerous charities, including the Kiwanis Club of Villa Park. Srch is the vice president of the Villa Park Chamber of Commerce.



SUBMITTED PHOTO Villa Park Review

Conroy-supported bill would protect donors from retaliation

Continuing her years of advocacy for organ donors and their recipients, state Rep. Deb Conroy, D-Villa Park, helped pass legislation out of the House of Representatives to protect individuals making the selfless decision to donate their blood and organs. "Ensuring that people going through the long and difficult process of donating their organ to someone in need is an issue that's very close to my heart," said Conroy, who donated a kidney to her ex-husband last year. "Anyone in the situation that my family lived through should have the freedom to focus on recovery instead of worrying about whether they'll get time off from work or face a hike in insurance rates."

Conroy's House Bill 2847 would prohibit employers from retaliating against an employee asking for time off in order to donate an organ or blood. Under this legislation, insurance companies would be barred

from declining, limiting or raising the cost of insurance on a person because of their status as a living donor.

The secretary of state would be required to give nonprofit organizations Gift of Hope and Mid-America Transplant access to the state donor registry, allowing these groups to update and improve outreach about live organ donation.

"Over a third of all donations come from a living donor in order to save the life of a friend, family member or even a stranger," Conroy said. "The state of Illinois should be doing everything possible to spread the word to people who might consider live organ donation if they're aware of the options and ensure that donors don't fear losing their job or insurance as a result of their selfless actions."

Editor's note: This is a press release from Rep. Conroy's office.

Sports

LOMBARDIAN
VILLA PARK REVIEW

Alone at the top; Warriors win West Suburban Gold Conference title A 17-1 mark locks up first championship in 17 years

The Willowbrook baseball team clinched its first West Suburban Gold Conference championship since 2002 with a nearly perfect season. The Warriors finished off a 17-1 conference campaign by sweeping both games of Saturday's doubleheader against Leyden.

Willowbrook swept a three-game series from five of its six conference opponents. The Warriors won two of three games from Downers Grove South. The Mustangs dealt Willowbrook its only conference loss of the season on Friday, beating the Warriors 3-1 in Downers Grove.

Through Saturday, Downers Grove South held a conference record of 13-3. In addition to losing twice to Willowbrook, the Mustangs lost once to Addison Trail. Downers Grove South will finish its conference schedule this week with two games against Morton.

Willowbrook improved its overall season record to 22-4 with Saturday's doubleheader sweep. The Warriors bashed Leyden 17-1 in five innings in the first game of the doubleheader. Willowbrook scored 12 runs in the third inning. Five Warriors—junior Sam Tumilty, senior Ryan Mintz, senior Trevor Jalszynski, junior Anthony Yannotti and senior Marshall McDonnell—connected for two hits each.

Mintz pitched all five innings of the opening game and earned the victory. He recorded 11 strikeouts while giving up two hits and three walks.

Willowbrook beat Leyden 5-1 in Saturday's second game. Senior Joey Guthrie pitched the first six innings and earned the victory. Senior Josh Roucka pitched a hitless seventh inning and struck out a pair of batters.

Guthrie, who threw only 76 pitches in six innings, gave up seven hits and two walks. He had one strikeout. Guthrie made only three pitches in the fourth inning. Three straight Eagles swung at the first pitch and put the ball in play for an out.

Sam Tumilty, who had two hits in the first game of the doubleheader, added two more hits in the second game. Seniors Jack Hines and Danny Holloway both contributed two hits.

The Warriors scored three runs in the fifth inning to break a 1-1 tie and take a 4-1 lead. Jalszynski walked with the bases loaded to bring in the go-ahead run. Willowbrook added another run when senior Scott Tumilty was hit by a pitch with the bases loaded. Se-

nior Jack Nilles drew a bases-loaded walk to bring in the third run of the inning.

The Warriors scored their only run of Friday's game at Downers Grove South in the second inning. The Mustangs scored single runs in the second, fourth and fifth innings.

Senior Ethan Pieniazek took the mound for the Warriors with no outs in the bottom of the fifth inning. The first batter he faced grounded into a 4-6-3 double play. Pieniazek gave up a single to the next batter, but retired the following hitter to end the inning. He then retired the side in order in the sixth inning.

Willowbrook delivered a promising start to the top of the seventh inning. Holloway led off with a single to right field. Sam Tumilty added a single to put runners on first and second base. Hines then grounded to the second baseman, who threw to the shortstop for a force-out. Tumilty slid into second base. The throw to first base was wild, which appeared to bring in another run and send Hines to second base. But the infield umpire ruled Tumilty and Hines out, apparently because of Tumilty's slide. Instead of scoring to cut the Mustangs' lead to 3-2, junior pinch runner Isaac Gaines returned to third base.

Mintz then struck out swinging, ending both the game and the Warriors' quest for an undefeated conference season.

Willowbrook's schedule this week includes non-conference games at Downers Grove North and Lincoln-Way West. The Warriors are the No. 1 seed in the IHSA Class 4A Glenbard West Sectional. They will begin the post-season by hosting a regional in Villa Park. Willowbrook will face either Bartlett or Addison Trail on May 22. If the Warriors win that game, they will advance to the regional final on May 25.

Rams sweep a doubleheader from Streamwood

Glenbard East completed a busy week by winning both games of Saturday's Upstate Eight Conference doubleheader against Streamwood. The Rams crushed the Sabres 17-3 in the opening game and prevailed 9-3 in the second game. The two wins gave the Rams an overall season record of 20-11 and a conference mark of 16-7.

The Rams began the week with a 6-3 conference loss to West Aurora on May 6. One day later, Glenbard East edged South Elgin 2-1 in another conference battle. The Rams scored two runs in the bottom of the seventh inning to pull out the victory.

Senior Jeremy Johnson singled to lead



CHRIS FOX PHOTOS Lombardian/Villa Park Review

The Willowbrook baseball team completed its nearly unblemished West Suburban Gold Conference season by sweeping Saturday's doubleheader against Leyden. The Warriors closed out their conference season with a 17-1 record and claimed the program's first conference title since 2002. Willowbrook swept three-game series from five of its conference opponents (Hinsdale South, Morton, Addison Trail, Proviso East and Leyden) and won two out of three games against Downers Grove South. The Warriors suffered their only conference loss of the season on Friday, when they dropped a 3-1 decision at Downers Grove South. Senior Ethan Pieniazek (pictured) took the mound in relief in the bottom of the fifth inning. The first batter he faced grounded into a double play. Pieniazek held the Mustangs scoreless in the fifth and sixth innings.

off the bottom of the seventh inning. Senior Mitch Glennon then drew a walk. Senior T.J. Riley walked to load the bases. Senior Jacob Bailey singled with one out to drive in the tying run. Sophomore Ben Elias hit a run-scoring

single to bring in the winning run.

Senior Jackson Rozinsky pitched the first four and two-third innings for the Rams. He gave up one unearned run while striking out six batters. He allowed two hits and three walks. Sophomore Carson Real pitched the last two and one-third innings and earned the victory. Real gave up one hit and one walk. He struck out three batters.

The Rams beat Elgin-Larkin 7-0 in a conference game on May 8. Senior Mary Schoenke pitched all seven innings and picked up her second win of the season. Schoenke gave up four hits. She had four strikeouts and allowed one walk.

Senior Jimmy Cotterill, sophomore Joe Hamilton and senior Bret Bushka—the Rams' top three hitters in the batting order, each provided two hits. Riley and senior Kevin Stallings also had two hits apiece, with Stallings driving in two runs.

The Rams lost 10-8 to Streamwood on Friday in the first game of the series between the two teams. Johnson went 2-for-4 and scored two runs. Sophomore Sam Greetis went 1-for-3 and drove in two runs.

Glenbard East held a 6-5 lead in the middle of the sixth inning, but Streamwood scored five runs in the bottom of the sixth to take a 10-6 lead. The Rams scored a pair of runs in the seventh inning. Freshman Jason Cousineau singled to drive in one run. Greetis picked up his second RBI of the game when he was hit by a pitch with the bases loaded.

The Rams scored 13 runs in the first inning of Saturday's opening game, which lasted five innings. They scored five runs in the second inning of the second game to take a 6-3 lead through two innings. Cotterill went 3-for-4 and drove in two runs in the second game. Hamilton went 1-for-3 and drove in three runs.

Glenbard East will complete its regular season with this week's conference game against Elgin-Larkin and a three-game conference series against Bartlett. The Rams are the No. 7 seed in the IHSA Class 4A Glenbard West Sectional. They will begin post-season play with a May 23 game against Wheaton Warrenville South at the St. Charles North Regional.



The Warriors are the No. 1 seed in the IHSA Class 4A Glenbard West Sectional. They will open the playoffs with a regional contest on their home field on May 22. Pictured above is senior catcher Marshall McDonnell.



CHRIS FOX PHOTOS Lombardian/Villa Park Review

Rams and Warriors compete at state meet

Three Glenbard East athletes and a pair of Willowbrook athletes competed at the IHSA boys gymnastics state meet at Hoffman Estates High School on Saturday. The gymnasts earned individual berths to the state meet with their strong sectional performances. Glenbard East junior Jamyllenn Miles competed in three events—floor exercises, the vault and the parallel bars—during Saturday's preliminaries. Miles is pictured above left during his routine on the parallel bars. Glenbard East senior Sean O'Hara (below right) and Glenbard East freshman Mateusz Rafal Piszczek (above right) are both pictured during their performances in the vault event. O'Hara also competed on the parallel bars at the state meet, while Piszczek performed on the horizontal bar.

Willowbrook seniors Brendan Bailey and Cooper Ross also competed at the state meet. Bailey qualified for the state meet in the parallel bars, while Ross qualified on the pommel horse. Below left; Bailey (left) and Ross (right) are pictured with Willowbrook coach Caleb Strejcek (center) after Saturday's preliminaries competition. None of the Rams and Warriors who took part in the individual preliminaries advanced to Saturday night's finals, which featured the top 10 preliminary-round scorers (plus ties) in each event. Bailey and Ross earned their state-meet berths with their efforts at the Lyons Township Sectional on April 30. Miles, O'Hara and Piszczek secured their trips to the state meet with their performances at the Glenbrook North Sectional on May 2.



Willowbrook softball team scores pair of wins

Warriors post 20 runs in two contests; Knudtson has two homers, six RBI against Taft

By Mike Miaza
CORRESPONDENT

The Willowbrook softball team moved its overall mark to 15-8 on the season with a pair of recent wins against Chicago Taft and Fenton.

In a 12-0 win against Taft, Willowbrook scored eight runs in the bottom of the fourth and had 12 hits in the game.

Sophomore Annemarie Knudtson went 3-for-4 with two runs scored, a double, two home runs and six RBI. Senior Amy Bussa went 2-for-3 with

two runs scored. Senior Emma Barrington went 3-for-3 with two runs scored. Freshman Caitlyn Kulczynski went 1-for-1 with two runs scored, an RBI and two walks. Freshman Kayla Neff had a hit, a run scored and two RBI. Junior Shannon Knudtson went 1-for-2 with two runs scored and two RBI. Senior Katie Pettjinger had a hit, a run scored and an RBI.

Kulczynski had a double, while Barrington hit a triple. Kulczynski struck out five and allowed two hits over five innings to pick up the win.

Willowbrook also downed Fenton 8-2. The Warriors had 10 hits. Bussa went 1-for-4 with a run scored and an RBI. Barrington had a hit and a run scored. Kulczynski had two hits and three runs scored. Neff had two hits and an RBI, while Shannon Knudtson had two hits, a run scored and three RBI. Junior Mikayla Tomaszewski had a hit and a run scored, while junior Loren Perry had a triple and two RBI.

Neff was the winning pitcher. She struck out nine over seven innings

and allowed two hits.

Coach Rachel Karos lauded the recent work of sophomore Caroline Dooley, who was the winning pitcher in a game against Morton and came up big on defense with a diving catch against Leyden. "Caroline is hitting the ball hard," said Karos. "She homered against Addison Trail."

Kulczynski threw a no-hitter against Addison Trail recently and a one-hitter against Leyden. Annemarie Knudtson hit .455 during a recent

stretch with seven RBI that also included a home run against Addison Trail. Barrington hit .500 during a recent one-week timeframe.

Karos also was pleased with the pitching during a recent stretch of games where Dooley and Kulczynski didn't give up a run. She's also seen progress at the plate and in the field.

"We are hitting well and more importantly able to drive in runs at the right time," Karos said recently. "We definitely are playing better defense lately and doing a better job at getting outs when our pitchers do their jobs to get our defense grounders and popups. We have been playing much better all-around softball."

Through the first 16 games of the season, Bussa and Kulczynski were leading the team in hits with 23 each. Dooley and Barrington each had 19.

Dooley was tops with eight doubles, while Bussa had three triples and Kulczynski had two. Barrington and Annemarie Knudtson each had three home runs, while Dooley and Neff each had two. Annemarie Knudtson and Barrington each had 21 RBI.

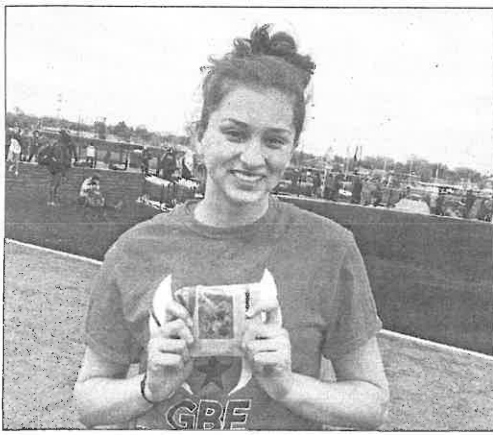
Bussa was tops with 19 runs scored, while senior Samantha Mishlove had 17 runs scored.

Kulczynski was hitting .479, while Barrington was at .475. Annemarie Knudtson was at .451 and Dooley was at .442.

Kulczynski had a 1.63 ERA with 73 strikeouts in 43 and one-third innings of pitching work. Dooley had 56 strikeouts in 38 and two-third innings.

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State qualifier

Glenbard East senior Emma Ludwig earned a trip to the IHSA Class 3A girls track and field state meet when she won a sectional championship at the Naperville North Sectional on May 9. Ludwig won the title in the high jump; she cleared 5 feet, 3 inches in her best effort of the event. Willowbrook senior Victoria Palma also earned a state-meet berth at the Naperville North Sectional. Palma ran the 1,600-meter run in 5 minutes, 6.30 seconds, good for an eighth-place finish. Palma's time came in under the state-qualifying standard of 5:08.84. The Class 3A state meet takes place this week at Eastern Illinois University in Charleston.



CHRIS FOX PHOTOS Lombardian/Villa Park Review

Warriors vs. Dukes

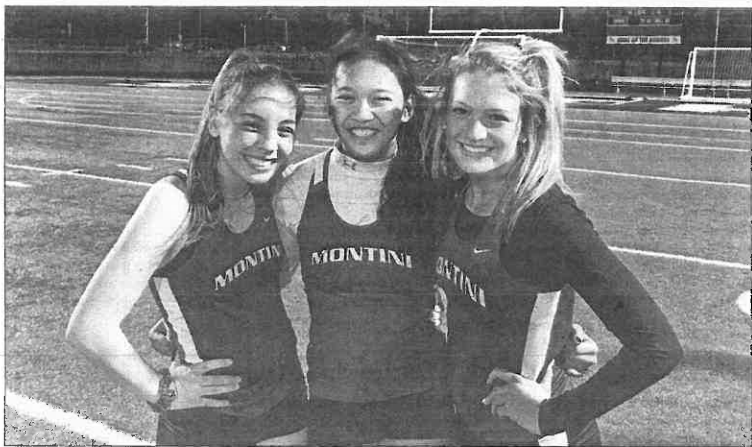
The Willowbrook girls soccer team finished its regular season with last week's 2-0 non-conference loss to York in Elmhurst. The Dukes scored both of their goals in the second half of the May 9 match. One photo from the match shows freshman Erin Fitzgibbon (No. 5) of the Warriors heading the ball. Also pictured is sophomore Gracie Tumilty (No. 13). Willowbrook finished the regular season with an overall record of 11-9-2. The Warriors completed the West Suburban Gold Conference season with a 4-2 record, good for third place. Willowbrook finished its conference schedule with a 4-2 victory over Hinsdale South on May 7 in Villa Park. Junior Lizzy Florey scored two goals. Tumilty and junior Julianna Paulsen each provided one goal. Senior Caitlyn Owen assisted two of Willowbrook's goals. Tumilty and sophomore Abbey Spada each had one assist. The Warriors will open the post-season with this week's match against Whitney Young at the IHSA Class 3A Glenbard East Regional.



CHRIS FOX FILE PHOTO Lombardian/Villa Park Review

Konrath plays in her third straight state meet

Willowbrook senior Hanna Konrath (pictured) played in the IHSA state badminton meet, which took place Friday and Saturday at Eastern Illinois University. Konrath played a total of five matches in the singles draw of the double-elimination tournament. She won her first two matches before losing in the third round to the eventual state singles champion—Bhaavya Manikonda of Naperville North. Konrath then won one match in the consolation draw before losing in the next round. Konrath played in three consecutive state singles tournaments. She won three matches at the 2018 state meet. As a sophomore, she won two matches at the 2017 state meet. Willowbrook senior Charlotte Dewyer joined Konrath in this year's state singles meet, which featured 64 players. Dewyer lost her first match but won two straight matches in the consolation round before suffering a loss. Glenbard East senior Kat Furst also played at this year's state singles meet. She suffered a narrow loss in the first round and lost a three-game battle in the consolation round.



SUBMITTED PHOTO Lombardian/Villa Park Review

Broncos qualify for state meet

Three members of Montini's girls track and field team will compete at the IHSA Class 2A state meet, which takes place this week at Eastern Illinois University. The Broncos earned their trips to the state meet with second-place performances in Friday's Glenbard South Sectional in Glen Ellyn. Junior Maggie Connelly (left) qualified for the state meet in the 100-meter high hurdles event. She ran to a second-place finish at the sectional, finishing the race in 17.29 seconds. Junior Julianne Billote (center) secured her state-meet berth with her second-place finish in the triple jump. Billote's best sectional effort covered 32 feet, 1 1/4 inches. Junior Christine Jarvis (right) qualified for the state meet with her second-place showing in the 200-meter run. Jarvis finished the race in 27.67 seconds. The top two finishers in each sectional event automatically qualified for this week's state meet.

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A robot may one day perform your colonoscopy

By [Daniel Strain](#) • Published: May 28, 2019

Banner image: Graduate student Gregory Formosa inspects a robot that could one day change how doctors perform colonoscopies. (Credit: CU Boulder/Glenn Asakawa)

A team from CU Boulder is taking a page from *The Magic School Bus* and journeying inside the body.

The researchers, led by engineer Mark Rentschler, aren't traveling by shrinking bus like the one in the cartoon and book series. Instead, they're using a robot that can navigate the squishy and often-unpredictable terrain of the intestine.

Rentschler and his colleagues have already built several prototypes of their gastrointestinal explorer, although they're still a long way from testing it in people.

Called "Endoculus," this machine is about the size of a C battery and moves on four motorized treads. It's designed to crawl through a mammalian colon, seeking out and even taking biopsies of intestinal polyps and other signs of illness.

The group hopes that the robot will one day change how millions of people across the United States get colonoscopies, making these common procedures easier for patients and more efficient for doctors.

And, Rentschler said, the project might be a first step toward a new era of medicine. He envisions a future in which a wide range of medical procedures will be carried out not by doctors but by pill-sized machines—all from the comfort of your home.

"One of the things I've always wanted to enable is for people to swallow robots to do procedures on them," said Rentschler, an associate professor in the Department of Mechanical Engineering. "I think the science is aligning to allow that, whether it's in five years or 50."

First, his team must learn how to master an environment that, in many ways, is harder for a robot to navigate than an alien planet.

“You have to forget about everything you know from a locomotion standpoint because driving around inside the body is very different than driving around in a car,” Rentschler said. “The environment is highly deformable. It’s very slick. There are sharp peaks that you have to go over.”

Test track

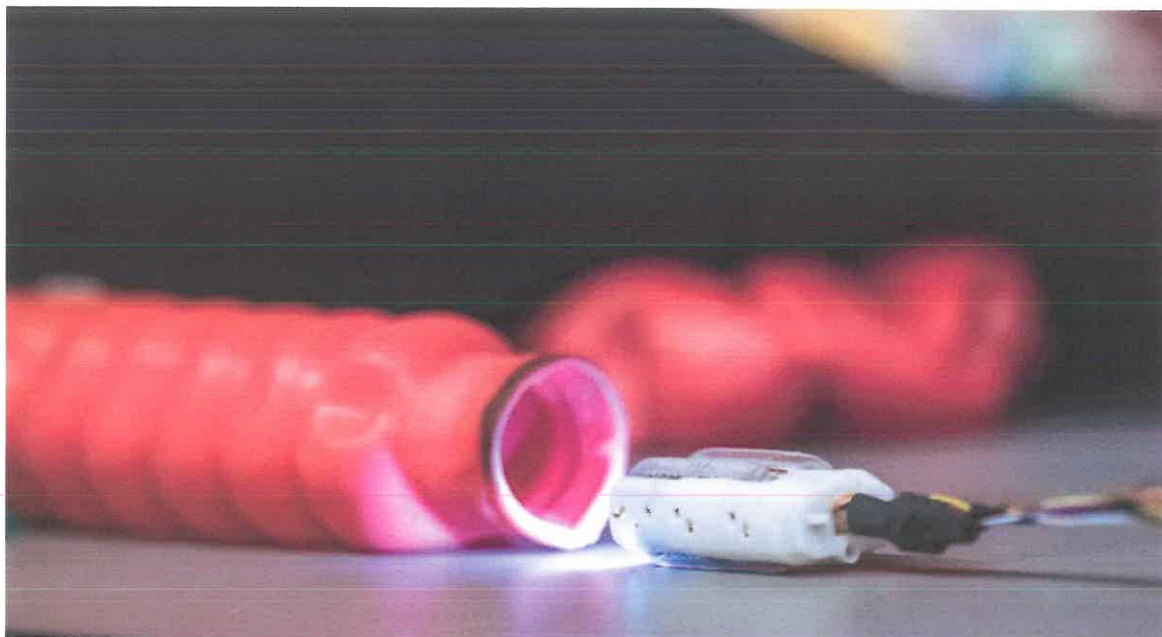
Gregory Formosa, a graduate student in Rentschler’s lab, is getting a look at such an environment now. Formosa is taking the team’s latest version of Endoculus on a test drive through a pink plastic tube. It’s a medical training device that is meant to mimic the size and shape of a human colon.

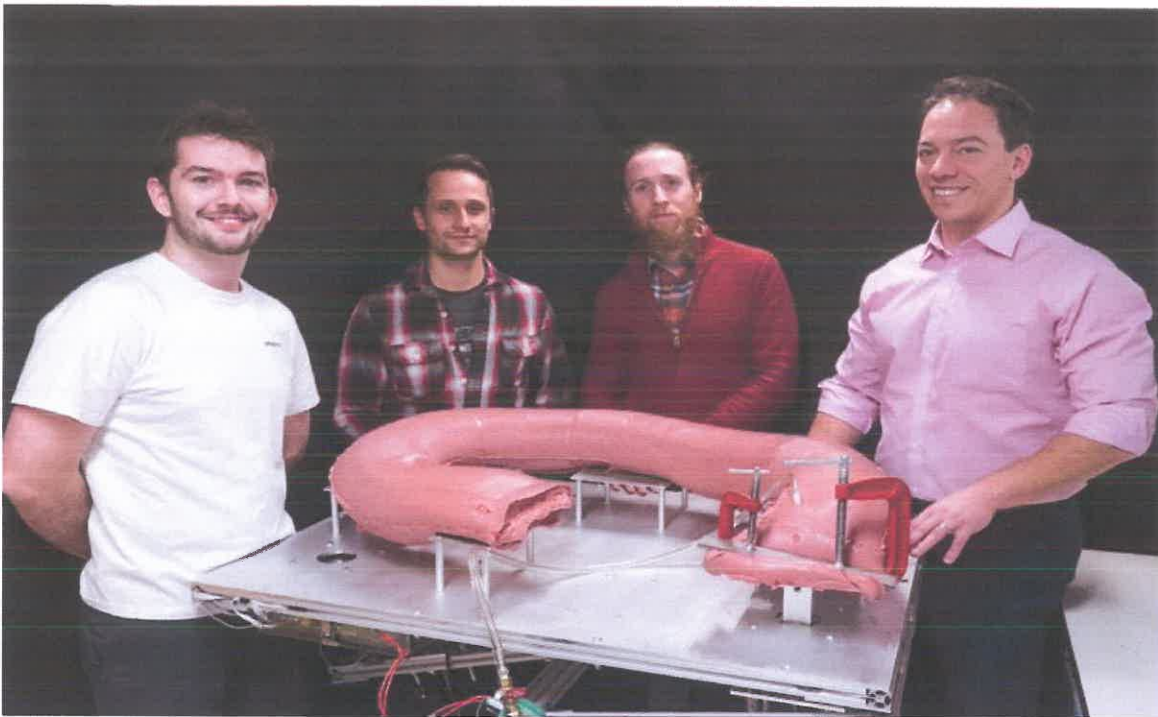
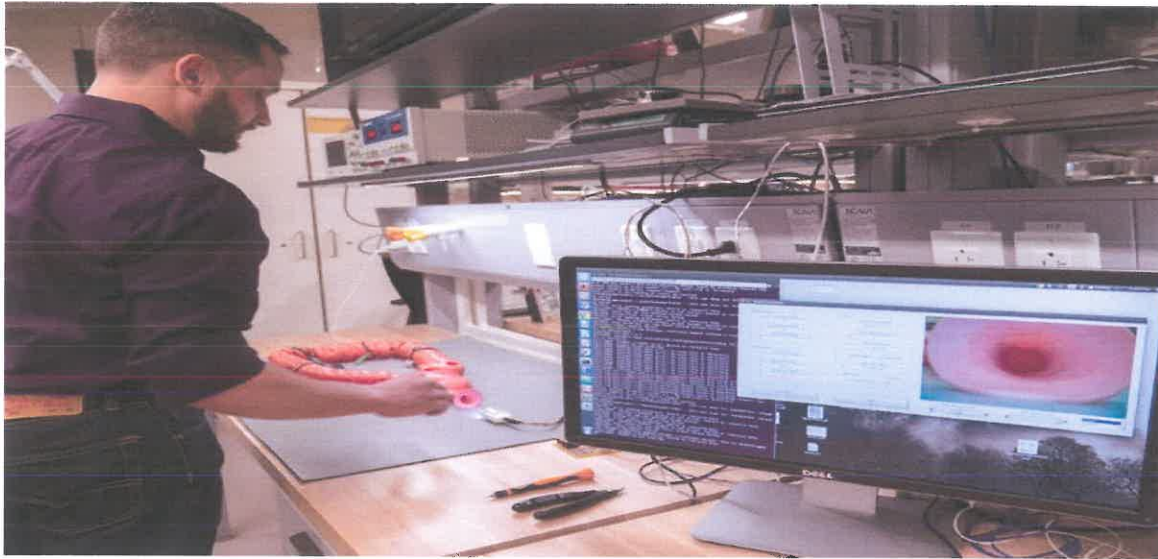
The robot, which Formosa controls using an Xbox gaming controller, is making quick work of this unusual track. It trundles forward, bouncing over the folds, or “haustra,” of the colon—its progress visible by the glow from its LED lights.

One of the tricks to the machine’s maneuverability lies in its treads, which have been specially-designed to gain traction on slippery digestive tissue.

“It turns using skid steering, like a tank,” Formosa said.

That robot, which moves like a tank but looks more like a mouse, is also a fully-packed medical device complete with a camera, an air pump for inflating the colon, a water pump for cleaning and a tool port for holding biopsy snares. And, Formosa estimates, it could be built even smaller using custom parts.





Top: Endoculus flips on its lights in front of a medical training device meant to mimic a human colon; middle: video from Endoculus' camera streams on a computer; bottom: Mark Rentschler (far right) stands with students (left to right) Levi Pearson, Gregory Formosa and Micah Prendergast behind an oversized synthetic colon that the team fabricated to test its robots. (Credits: CU Boulder/Glenn Asakawa, CU Boulder/Patrick Campbell)

[Read a profile of Gregory Formosa.](#)

The group knows that jokes about the project are inevitable. But it's also serious business. Every year, tens of thousands of Americans die from colorectal cancer.

Regular colonoscopies for people age 45 and older are widely considered to be the best way to catch such cancers early.

Pill-cams, or tiny cameras that patients can swallow to record video of their insides, are currently on the market. But, unlike Endoculus, those devices can't stop or swivel around, said Micah Prendergast, also a graduate student in Rentschler's group.

"For our robots to be able to reach those regions that you reach with a pill-cam but also be able to stop and look around—that could be a big paradigm shift in the way we view these procedures," Prendergast said.

[Read a profile of Micah Prendergast.](#)

The researchers are currently partnering with gastroenterologist Steven Edmundowicz and his team at CU Anschutz to test Endoculus in anesthetized animals.

They've reported some of their recent results at the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) [International Conference on Intelligent Robots and Systems](#) in 2018 and in the journal [IEEE Robotics and Automation Letters](#). Tests in human patients are still several years out, Rentschler said.

Robot doctors

In the meantime, the engineer is imagining ways to take the human element out of Endoculus. His team is working to design a robot that can drive through the intestine, find worrisome polyps and biopsy them—all without a doctor at the steering wheel.

One of the biggest challenges with such autonomous driving comes down to mapping. Human intestines, Rentschler explained, are dynamic structures that move and change shape constantly.

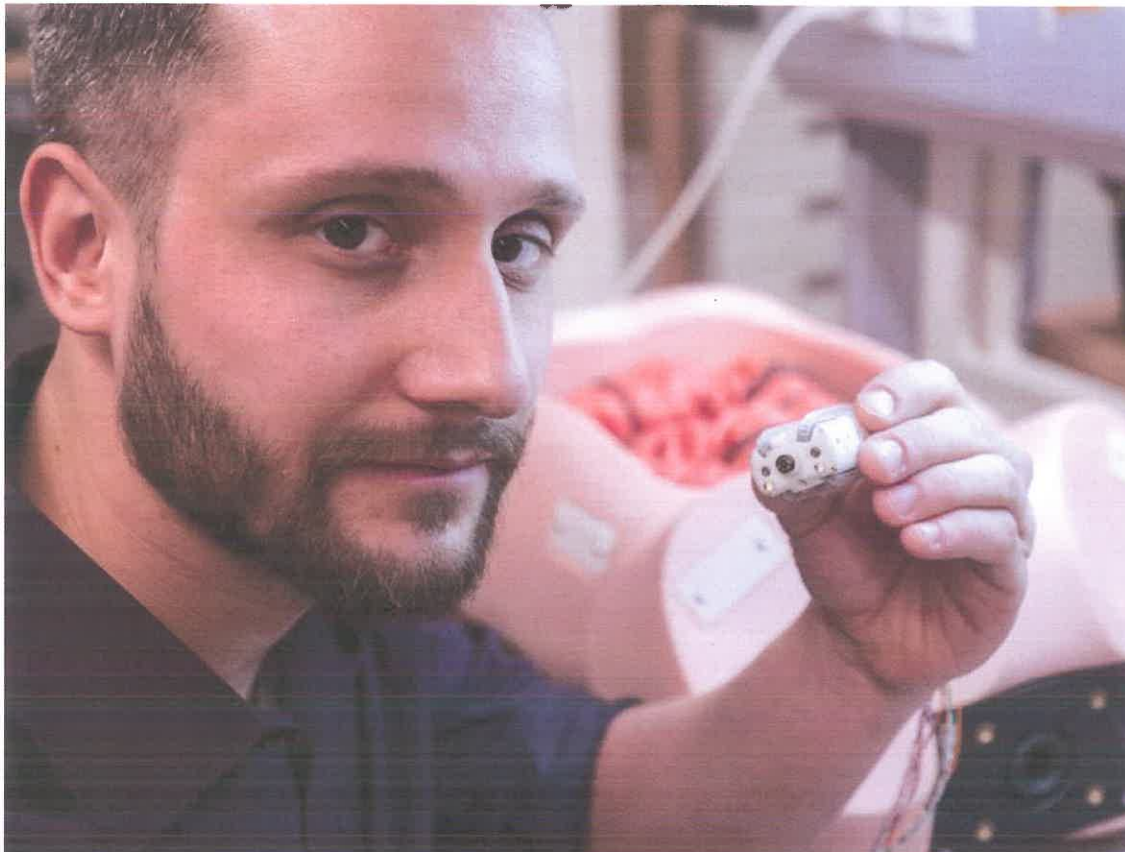
"How can you tell where you are and where you're going in a place that doesn't have GPS, that doesn't have road signs, that doesn't have any distinguishing marks?" he said.

Rentschler's team recently landed a \$900,000 grant from the U.S. National Science Foundation, which has funded previous stages of this project, to continue its work in [solving automation problems](#)—part of his self-described mission of creating "the operating room of the future."

He's also quick to point out that his aim for Endoculus isn't to get rid of physicians entirely. "But it is going to get rid of a lot of routine stuff, so that they can focus on the root causes of disease and, ultimately, treatment," Rentschler said.

Greg Formosa, Design and Controls Mastermind

May 28, 2019 • By [Oksana Schuppan](#)



Mechanical engineering PhD student Greg Formosa holds the Endoculus, a robotic capsule endoscope that he designed. Photo credit: Glenn Asakawa/CU Boulder

Meet PhD student Greg Formosa, the design and controls mastermind who engineered [the Endoculus, a robotic capsule endoscope capable of performing autonomous colonoscopies](#). The Endoculus is a product of [Associate Professor Mark Rentschler's](#) Advanced Medical Technologies Lab.

Formosa grew up in Addison, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago, where he excelled in math, science and music thanks to teachers who promoted hands-on learning. One of his favorite high school projects as part of Science Olympiad was the creation of a mousetrap-powered car.

Formosa went on to study mechanical engineering at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where he also minored in music.

"Engineering doesn't close any doors," Formosa said. "If I studied engineering, I could use those skills to be successful in many other fields, even music."

For five years following graduation, Formosa worked as a transmission design engineer for Caterpillar where he completed a rotational program and learned how aspects of product development fit together.

"Since I worked in many different roles—design, testing, manufacturing and beyond—I understood what each person was working on. This allowed me to get more specific with my questions in ways that were valuable to others on the team," he said.

Though he most enjoyed his work as a design engineer, he found every rotation to be valuable. While working with customer service, he even parallel-parked a house-sized vehicle perfectly on his first try.

While at Caterpillar, he also served as president for Peoria's Heart of Illinois Professional Chapter of Engineers Without Borders. He and his team worked together with rural communities in northern Guatemala, providing them with access, storage, filtration and distribution of clean water.



Photo credit: Glenn Asakawa/CU Boulder

Formosa said he feels his experiences before applying to graduate school enabled him to apply with greater purpose and clearer direction.

"I wanted to be sure I was going back to school for the right reasons," he said. "I wanted to be the kind of engineer who enhances his knowledge for the purpose of enhancing the rest of the world."

This led Formosa to search for PhD programs where he could further his expertise in dynamics and control while simultaneously working on something impactful. This is why he believed the [Advanced Medical Technologies Lab](#) would be a perfect fit.

Formosa recalled his first meeting with Rentschler, his advisor, upon joining the team in August 2015. He was given free rein over the development of a smaller robot that could reliably propel itself through a scaled synthetic colon.

Perhaps the only thing Formosa finds more invigorating than engineering is teaching engineering, a passion that stems from his experiences as a student. One teacher who was particularly influential is Mr. Steven Nelson, Formosa's high school chemistry teacher.

"He's probably the biggest reason I want to go back and teach," Formosa said. "His science puns were unmatched, he was personable and cared about his students, and there was always something on fire to make class exciting."

Formosa also met role models as a Boy Scout and Eagle Scout, learning from volunteer fathers who were actively choosing to give back to younger generations. Now, Rentschler plays an important role in shaping Formosa's understanding of all that he can accomplish.

"As someone who is just as business savvy as he is technical, Dr. Rentschler reminds me that becoming a research professor doesn't limit me to just research and teaching but can also include starting your own business, consulting and volunteering," Formosa said.

In both 2016 and 2018 Formosa won the Mechanical Engineering Outstanding TA Award, and in 2018 he completed CU's College of Engineering Mentoring Certificate Program. He said he loves helping students, watching their gears turn and making learning both exciting and long-lasting.

Upon graduation in May 2020, Formosa hopes to continue his career in academia as a research professor.

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IMPACTFUL ADVENTURES WITH AT-RISK YOUTH: A SSW GETS CREATIVE TO REACH HER TEENS

Posted by Nadia Gomez-Moran | May 28, 2019 | Community, Interventions, Reflections on Practice, Resources We Love, Tier 3, Tools for Practice | 0 | ★★★★★



"This program has changed me in many ways . . . one way being my leadership skills. Emotionally, mentally, physically — it's done a lot for me to be honest with you."

Jairo, 16 years old, Addison Trail student, discussing the impact of Chicago Voyagers

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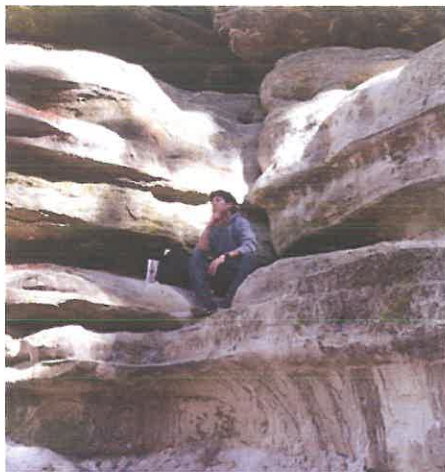


Nadia Gomez-Moran,
SSW & Loyola SMHAPP
Student

Editor's Note: Our author Nadia Gomez-Moran is a school social worker in suburban Chicago and is also completing the School Mental Health Advanced Practice Program (SMHAPP) certificate at Loyola University Chicago School of Social Work, which is a 15-credit, 99% online 2-year professional learning community that helps school clinicians sharpen their skills and become social-emotional leaders in their buildings. She is working on a 2-year project to build stronger trauma-informed care practices in her school. Today, she is writing about another area of interest she explored through our SMHAPP certificate: how creative school social workers can access community resources to build meaningful clinical experiences for hard-to-reach adolescents, using the example of the outdoor education Chicago Voyagers program.

STRETCHING MYSELF TO REACH MY STUDENTS

As school mental health practitioners, we always use our clinical skills to determine what intervention would work best for our students depending on their presenting issues. Whether it is well-researched interventions like CBT or DBT, we find the best evidence-based intervention that we believe will yield positive outcomes. Although sometimes it may feel like it should be a no-brainer when choosing an intervention, I have sometimes felt challenged by students who are not responsive to the traditional interventions I wanted to use with them.



"I knew that I needed to be creative if I wanted to engage my students."

When working with at-risk youth, it may be sometimes challenging to find interventions that will engage students. When I first was hired as a Tier 3 school social worker, I knew that one of the main challenges that I would encounter would be lack of student engagement in social work services. I knew that I needed to be creative if I wanted to engage students that have never been receptive to socio-emotional curriculum

or even meeting with a school social worker. Luckily, I found out that my building was partnering with Chicago Voyagers to provide experiential interventions to students in tier 3 programming.

To be completely honest, I was a bit



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nervous knowing that I would have to canoe (ps. I do not know how to swim), complete a high-ropes course 30 ft above the ground, or rappel down the impressive cliffs in Devil's Lake, WI. The closest I had ever come to outdoor adventure was



"The closest I had ever come to outdoor adventure myself was walking the paths of local forest preserves..."

walking the paths of local forest preserves, never venturing out of the asphalt path. I was hopeful that even though I was nervous and inexperienced both the students and I would bond and grow together. Together with Chicago Voyagers staff, we developed a schedule of experiential field trips, starting with a focus on team building activities at the school and moving towards overnight camping trips aimed at building leadership and confidence.

I could not have imagined the impact Chicago Voyagers would have on students. In every experiential field trip, I saw students step outside their comfort zone, learn to trust themselves and others, and conquer their fears. I saw countless moments of leadership, friendship, and growth. My own nervousness dissipated and I was validated time after time again that outdoor experiential interventions are effective and a strong option when working with at-risk adolescents.



**CHICAGO
VOYAGERS**
GUIDING YOUTH ON THEIR JOURNEY

[Chicago Voyagers](#) is a positive youth development program that empowers at-risk youth through outdoor experiential adventures such as, hiking, canoeing, or rock-climbing to foster healthy relationships and responsible behavior. Current research indicates that utilizing adventure therapy or experiential therapy promotes pro-social behavior and decreases depression in adolescents (Norton, 2010). Findings show that these interventions may also be effective in reducing adolescent substance abuse and have been found effective in different settings and populations, including community settings and youth grief groups (Russell, 2008; Vankanegan et al., 2019; DeDiego et al., 2017). Experiential or adventure therapy has shown an overall increase in social skills and overall decrease in problem behaviors in youth with Autism

Spectrum Disorder (Karoff et al., 2017). Furthermore, adventure (experiential) therapy has been found effective for at-risk youth, families, and those that have experienced abuse and trauma (Harper et al., 2007).

Chicago Voyagers utilizes outdoor adventure-based group work focused on positive youth development to promote the development of pro-social skills, empathy, and self-regulation. Chicago Voyagers empowers at-risk youth through outdoor experiential adventures that foster healthy relationships and responsible behavior. The organization provides opportunities to explore, grow, and take risks outside their comfort zone. All of the outdoor adventures are guided and planned by Chicago Voyagers staff.



OUR EXPERIENCE: CHICAGO VOYAGERS AND ADDISON TRAIL HIGH SCHOOL

Over the past five years, Chicago Voyagers has worked with two tier 3 programs (self-contained special education program and a general education alternative program) in our building. Chicago Voyagers worked with school staff to identify areas of improvement for both students and the programs. Themes such as increasing motivation or building leadership skills can be chosen to focus on. Students participated in outdoor experiential activities such as cross-country skiing, canoeing, rappelling, and hiking. Students were also invited to participate in overnight field trips and the culminating Mississippi River 3-day canoeing trip.

To measure the success of the program Chicago Voyagers collected data on 1) school-based behavioral indicators including attendance, grades, and discipline referrals 2) agency chaperone's evaluation of each sub-program and 3); student testimonials. Data was also collected for students on a control group. Chicago Voyagers also administered the [Positive Youth Development Inventory, Full Version](#), survey. This survey is a collection of 58 Likert scale items designed to measure changes in levels of positive youth development (PYD) that measures confidence, competence, character, caring, and connection. You can download a copy [here](#). This survey was administered as a pre-post measurement with all participants.

OUR INTERVENTION OUTCOMES

Engaging youth in experiential activities such as cross-country skiing, hiking, and canoeing pushes youth outside their comfort zone. Some of the students that participated had never been on a hike, canoed, or rock climbed. These activities taught youth team building skills, communication, and to trust others. Most importantly, students showed empowerment and determination.

"I am really outdoorsy and I love doing stuff outdoors. It really helps with my ADHD too. .."

Junior, 18 year-old Addison Trail student



"Our intervention groups' overall GPA improved from fall 2014 to spring 2015 compared to the control group."

Results from 2014-2015 data collected on attendance, grades, discipline referrals indicated no statistically significant differences in between intervention and control groups on attendance and discipline, but our intervention group kids' overall GPA improved from fall 2014 to spring 2015 compared to the control group. (As with any applied program evaluation project, limitations regarding data collection, student attendance, and student dropout rates impacted the results.)

Although the quantitative data showed mixed results (and to be clear, our intervention group kids'

scores didn't get worse over time but just didn't show statistically significant improvement compared to the control), our qualitative data (student interviews) indicated strong effects on positive youth development. Additionally, the quantitative data for the PYDI yielded significant results for the intervention group, compared to the control group on overall positive youth development, as measured by the 6 C's.

SOME STUDENT TESTIMONIALS



DAVID, 16 YEARS OLD:

In school, David struggled with anxiety, attendance and speaking up.

Throughout the program, he was pushed outside of his comfort zone and was able to engage staff and peer in discussions, was able to speak up more, and was able to feel more connected with his peers. Back at school, David's attendance improved and he is now motivated to graduate!

"The program has made me more social, in a way – it has made me talk more to my peers than I used to. It has made me stronger, and more persuasive (aggressive) toward my goals."

David, Addison Trail Student on his Chicago Voyagers' experience

"One of my challenges this year was my attendance – not having the motivation to come, and to follow through in my classes. But this program has taught me to keep going and to make sure to follow through with things. I was even transferred to the GOAL program at school – that really helped me a lot – I was able to achieve in my classes and finished them."

JAIRO, 16 YEARS OLD:

Jairo struggled with self-control, exhibited impulsive behaviors in and out of school, and was struggling academically. Jairo has shown great improvements regulating his emotions and impulsivity. Throughout the program Jairo took on leadership roles and was able to process his emotions and behaviors. In school, his behavior improved, he developed self-advocacy skills, and became involved in extra-curricular activities. His absences dropped by 50%. He went on to become vice president of a school club and graduated high school!

"This program has changed me in many ways . . . one way being my leadership skills. Emotionally, mentally, physically — it's done a lot for

me to be honest with you. As for a highlight — I don't know where to start – canoeing, repelling, camping, teambuilding – all of that was awesome. I learned to push through my limits – to piece it out – just do it, like Nike . . . just do it.”

There's been many challenges at school for me – one of them being my grades, my attendance – focusing, I know I couldn't focus – I was thinking to myself, 'I'm gonna need this pill, I'm gonna need this pill that I used to take when I was little' – but here I am without the pill. All because — I'm pretty sure that it's because of this – 'cuz without this, I'd be regular me – always getting in trouble, always in the Dean's office, always doing stupid things.

I stopped going to speech class, and at the end of the year, I talked to my teacher, and I said – dude, I'm totally sorry that I had to . . . that I made the decision to stop coming to your class. I told him that I am going to be here next year . . . that it's my choice to be here next year and pass your class.”

HAILEY, 18 YEARS OLD

Hailey has struggled with self-efficacy and positive decision making in her high school years. She struggled with anxiety and depression and had multiple suicide attempts. Hailey is now in her 2nd year of college studying psychology and leading a productive happy life. During one of our overnight trips we were processing our successes/trials from the day and she shared a personal story. Reflecting on this months later, she noted:

“I confronted myself about self-destructive behaviors and the shaky ground of my recovery from alcoholism. I became extremely emotional about the subject. One after the other students, teachers, and Bess (Chicago Voyager staff member) offered me not only support but sincere, useful feedback. I was reminded that when I feel alone, there will be someone I can fall back on.”

This student needed to be reminded that she is not alone, and through Chicago Voyagers this was realized.

“(In this program) I confronted myself about self-destructive behaviors and the shaky ground of my recovery from alcoholism. ”

Hailey, Chicago Voyagers program member, now college student studying psychology

JUNIOR, 18 YEARS OLD

Junior struggled with impulsive behavior, low-self-esteem, and lack of motivation. He had a difficult time trusting others and opening up due to a history of trauma. As a result, Junior exhibited defiant behaviors in and

outside of school. Junior has become a great leader in Chicago Voyagers in the past two years. He is now employed and on track to graduate. Emotionally, he has learned to open up and express his emotions and thoughts. Junior shares:



"I am really outdoorsy and I love doing stuff outdoors. It really helps with my ADHD too. I feel like I have a lot more confidence because before this I didn't have a lot of confidence. So partially because of Chicago Voyagers I feel like I can do more things now. I feel like I can accomplish more things. My view about my future has changed so much. Before I felt like I wasn't going to do the best I can in life and now I want to become a fireman. These field trips have motivated me to do more in my life than just scrape by."

Junior was recognized with the Fighting Spirit Award this year at the Chicago Voyagers gala.

A PARENT'S PERSPECTIVE (TRANSLATED FROM SPANISH)

"Your program has been helpful with Victor. Our son spends more time with us and his family, and he no longer isolates himself like he used to. He allows us to get close to him and we are now able to have communication with him. We want to thank you for all your help – thank you for your patience and dedication. We really hope that he continues to participate next school year."

As a school social worker, it is highly important to be able to develop positive relationships with the students that I work with. Chicago Voyagers gave me the opportunity to interact with these students outside of the school environment, and it also allowed me to connect with them in a different way. On a personal level, it pushed me outside my comfort zone – this allowed me to share my personal fears with the students and be able to process/progress with them in and out of school. Seeing the impact and growth in the students was amazing.

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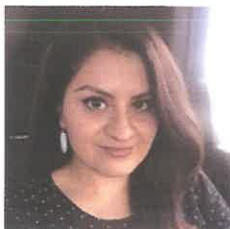
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Nadia Gomez-Moran

Nadia Gomez-Moran LCSW is a School Social Worker at Addison Trail High School in Addison, IL, where she has been working since 2014. She says, "Prior to practicing in a school, I worked in child welfare for four years and have done extensive volunteer work with survivors of sexual assault. My

passion is working with at-risk youth to overcome barriers and reach their full potential."

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