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FREE TAKE ONE

Addison INDEPENDENT

VOL. 23 • NO. 17 WWW.THEINDEPENDENTNEWSPAPERS.COM THURSDAY, APRIL 9, 2026

District 88's Brink honored with inaugural Changemaker award

On March 27, District 88 Director of Community Relations Dani Brink was named as the "Celebrating the Women of Addison Township 2026 Changemaker of the Year."
 Brink was honored as the inaugural recipient of this award in recognition of her "outstanding excellence and dedication to the Addison Township community."
 The award was presented by Addison Township Clerk Maria Vesey

during the township's first "Women's Celebration Luncheon."
 "We greatly appreciate Vesey, Supervisor Bobby Hernandez and the entire Addison Township Board of Trustees recognizing Brink for her unwavering commitment to building strong partnerships," said Dr. Jean Barbosente, District 88 superintendent. "Brink is always ready to serve and go the extra mile, and we thank her for all she does for the District 88 community."



Pictured are (from left) State Sen. Suzy Glowiak Hilton, DuPage County Circuit Court Judge Peggy O'Connell, Addison Township Trustee Joey Moore, District 88 Director of Community Relations Dani Brink, Addison Township Clerk Maria Vesey and Addison Township Mental Health Board Chair Annie Jaworska. (Submitted photo)

Blazer Battalion hosts inaugural ball

On March 20, Addison Trail's Blazer Battalion U.S. Army JROTC program hosted the school's inaugural Military Ball. Instructor MSG William E. Jones and Battalion Commander C/LTC Sophia Barragan welcomed those in attendance; Village Mayor and military veteran Tom Hundley was the guest speaker. Members of the court were also named: Freshmen: Princess Samantha Manago and Prince Romeo Batalla; sophomores: Prince Fernando Mendez; juniors: Princess Kelsey Diaz and Prince Damian Sigaran; and seniors: Queen Sophia Barragan and King Trevor Sosin. (Submitted photo)



Judge orders detention for Addison minor accused of aggravated assault

DuPage County State's Attorney Robert Berlin and Addison Chief of Police Roy Selvik announced last week that a 16-year-old male Addison resident has been accused of illegally possessing a loaded gun with a high-capacity drum magazine and a laser sight.
 The juvenile recently appeared at a detention hearing where Judge Kishori Tank ordered that he be detained until at least his next court appearance. He has been charged with one count of unlawful possession of a firearm (Class 4 felony), two counts of aggravated unlawful possession of a weapon (Class 4 felony), one count of misdemeanor possession of ammunition without a FOID card, and one count of misdemeanor violation of order of protection. The juvenile is currently on juvenile probation for a 2024 criminal trespass to a motor vehicle.
 On April 1 at approximately 11:36 p.m. Addison police responded to the 200 block of S. Yale Avenue, in response to

a 911 call regarding a person with a gun. Following an investigation into the matter, it is alleged that a woman and her five children and other friends were on the woman's driveway when a car, later determined to be the juvenile's car, drove past them.
 It is alleged that as the car drove past them, the juvenile, who was a passenger in his vehicle, pointed a firearm equipped with a laser sight directly at the woman while flashing gang signs and yelling "king love." When officers arrived at the juvenile's residence, the juvenile's mother gave them permission to search the residence. It is alleged that when searching the juvenile's bedroom, officers found a loaded Taurus G3C handgun with a loaded drum magazine and laser sight attached to it on the juvenile's bed.
 "There is absolutely no reason whatsoever for a 16-year-old boy to be in possession of a loaded firearm, particu-

larly a gun equipped with a high-capacity drum magazine and a laser sight," Berlin said.
 "What I find particularly troubling is the fact that this juvenile was on juvenile probation at the time he allegedly possessed this weapon. I thank the Addison Police Department for their quick response to the initial call and for their efforts in identifying and apprehending the juvenile in this case which resulted in the removal of a dangerous, illegal weapon from our streets."
 "We are grateful for the swift actions of officers in locating the offender and taking this weapon off the street," Selvik said. "The thought of such a dangerous weapon remaining in the hands of a juvenile on probation is frightening. Thank you to State's Attorney Bob Berlin and his staff for their guidance and support."
 The juvenile's next court appearance is scheduled for April 10 in front of Judge Tank.

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VOL. 23 • NO. 17

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Police Reports

ADDISON

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March 31

Andy Jaciel Guevara Hernandez, 21, of Addison, was charged with possession of a controlled substance, improper turn signal and two counts of DUI near Wisconsin and Wintthrop at 11:14 p.m.

A 35-year-old Addison man was charged with two counts of domestic battery in the 200 block of W. Parkview at 5:53 p.m.

March 30

Police said Angelo D. Navarro, 20, of Lombard, had a failure to appear warrant for driving while license suspended, and also was charged with aggravated fleeing and eluding police and attempted fleeing and eluding a police officer in the 100 block of Elizabeth at 8:42 p.m.

March 29

Police said Saul D. Lopez-Lucas, 33, of Addison, was issued a warrant at 9:45 p.m.

March 28

Police said Simon Juarez Garcia, 54, of Addison, was issued a warrant and also was charged with disregarding a traffic control device in the 500 block of E. Lake at 8:45 p.m.

Jorge L. Hernandez-Rodriguez, 26, of Addison, was charged with no valid driver's

license, no insurance and two counts of DUI near Michael and Lincoln at 1:33 a.m.

March 27

Police said Bryan A. Pines Rivas, 27, of Addison, was issued a warrant and charged with DUI, possession of a controlled substance and illegal possession-transportation of liquor in the 100 block of S. LaLonde at 8:07 p.m.

A 27-year-old Addison man was charged with two counts of domestic battery at 10:25 p.m.

March 26

Police said Alfredo A. Pantoja, 20, of Addison, was issued a warrant and charged with aggravated unlawful use of a weapon at 7:02 p.m.

A 37-year-old Addison man was charged with two counts of domestic battery in the 500 block of Macie at 11:07 p.m.

March 23

Eduardo Avila, 23, of West Chicago, was charged with theft and contributing to the delinquency of a child at 5:30 p.m.

Kimberly Cas Pec, 24, of Cicero, was charged with battery in the 1-100 block of W. Commercial at 1:57 a.m.

BENSENVILLE

The Bensenville Police Department recently reported the following arrests and citations. Persons who are charged with domestic battery are not named in order to protect the victim's privacy. Readers are reminded that an arrest does not constitute a conviction, and that suspects are considered innocent unless proven guilty in a court of law. Juveniles age 17-or-younger are not named.

There were no reports issued by the Bensenville Police Department last week.

Village of Bensenville hosts successful annual Meet the Easter Bunny event

The Village of Bensenville's annual Meet the Easter Bunny event was a springtime hit, welcoming families from across the community to Bensenville's Center Theatre for a festive and family-friendly fun. Guests enjoyed the opportunity to take photos with the Easter Bunny while indulging in sweet treats from Sundies Too Ice Cream Shoppe.

The free event drew a steady crowd throughout the day, as families gathered to capture special moments and enjoy a cheerful atmosphere. Ice cream treats and a relaxed, welcoming environment made for a memorable experience for attendees of all ages.

"This event is a great example of how simple moments can bring our community together," said Village President Frank Desimone.

"Seeing families enjoy time with one another and create new traditions right here in Bensenville is what makes these events so meaningful."

The Village of Bensenville looks forward to continuing this annual tradition and providing more opportunities for families to connect and celebrate throughout the year.

For more information on upcoming events, visit bensenville.gov or call 630-594-1010.

District 88 hosts Parents of Black Scholars event

District 88 recently hosted its third Parents of Black Scholars (PBS) gathering to strengthen engagement and collaboration between the district and families of Black students.

Parents/guardians attended a dinner meeting at Pinestripes in Oak Brook, where they participated in discussion and information sharing focused on student success.

The conversation was facilitated by District 88 Student Success Coordinator Dr. Va-Larie Humphrey, who provided resources and guidance to support families as they help their children navigate high school and plan for life beyond graduation.

A central focus of the evening was academic excellence and post-secondary pathways. Parents learned about opportunities for students to access rigorous coursework, including honors classes, Advanced Placement (AP) offerings and dual-credit courses. District 88 offers a comprehensive curriculum that includes credential career-based curricular tracks, more than 30 college-level courses and more than 50 dual-credit and collegiate-credit courses in 18 career pathway areas, along with award-winning fine arts programming.

Another key topic involved planning for life after high school. Families explored the variety of post-secondary options available to students, including four-year colleges, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), trade programs, military service and entrepreneurship.



Families were encouraged to understand how course placement works and how they can advocate for their children when they believe their child is ready for greater academic challenge.

The discussion also addressed the importance of examining opportunity and achievement gaps, while ensuring that Black students have equitable access to academic supports and resources.

Parents were encouraged to monitor their child's progress and to remain actively engaged in conversations about graduation requirements and post-secondary goals.

Parents also received guidance on pursuing financial aid and supporting their students with scholarships, internships and career-exploration opportunities. Humphrey talked about the district's parent support platforms, including PaperSchool (the student information system used to monitor academic progress) and SchoolLinks (a college and career planning tool that helps track students' pathways and future plans).

Along with academics, the evening included discussion about social-emotional wellness and school climate. Participants reflected on the importance of ensuring that Black students feel seen, respected and supported within the school community. Conversations addressed student belonging, discipline practices and the need for restorative approaches that keep students engaged in learning. Parents also received information

about available supports such as counselors, social workers, mentoring and other culturally-responsive resources.

The meeting also highlighted the importance of leadership, identity and community empowerment. Parents learned about opportunities for students to develop leadership skills through student organizations, conferences, mentoring initiatives and community service. The discussion emphasized the value of cultural pride and historical awareness in helping students build confidence and a strong sense of identity.

These gatherings are designed to strengthen partnerships between families and the schools, while ensuring that Black students are supported academically, socially and emotionally as they prepare for their futures.

For more info contact Humphrey at vhumphrey@dpdpsd88.net or 630-428-1308.

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Zion Concord Lutheran School open house April 25

Zion Concord Lutheran School, located at 865 S. Church Road in Bensenville, will be having an open house from 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

Four the school and classrooms, meet the teachers and staff, ask questions and learn what the school has to offer to your children. There will be raffles and giveaways. Touch a truck will be available from 11 a.m.-noon. For more information, call 630-766-0228 or go online to: <https://zionconcord.org>.

Addison Trail names March recipient of 88's Best



Elias Aguilar (pictured at right, with Principal Jack Andrews) was the March recipient of 88's Best for his outstanding work in the performing arts/electives. Aguilar, a senior, was recognized during the March 23 Board of Education meeting. (Submitted photo)

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A central focus of the evening was post-secondary pathways. Parents learned about opportunities for students to access including honors classes, Advanced Placement (AP) college-level courses, comprehensive curriculum that includes career-based curricular tracks, m

Families were encouraged to understand placement works and how they can help their children when they believe their academic challenge.

The discussion also addressed the opportunity and achievement gap



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THURSDAY, APRIL 9, 2026

Taking a plunge for Special Olympics Illinois



Willowbrook High School administrators and staff members joined members of the Villa Park Police Department and the Village of Villa Park to participate in the recent 2026 Law Enforcement Torch Run Polar Plunge for Special Olympics Illinois. Participants took a brief plunge in a pond at the Oak Brook Bath and Tennis Club during the March 21 event, which took place in unseasonably warm weather, and raised funds and awareness to support Special Olympics athletes. Team members, including Willowbrook Principal Dan Krause and Villa Park Village President Kevin Patrick, dressed as Disney characters for this year's Polar Plunge. The team has collected more than \$5,800, and donations can still be made. For more information, including a list of the team members and a link to make a donation, go to <https://support.soill.org/team/785895>. The event exceeded its fundraising goal and has so far raised about \$285,000. (Submitted photo)

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Villa Park's Emily Hanson named Willowbrook's recipient of the 88's Best award for month of March

Willowbrook High School senior Emily Hanson of Villa Park was recently honored as her school's recipient of the 88's Best award for the month of March. Hanson was recognized during the District 88 Board of Education's March 23 meeting.

While speaking during the board meeting, Willowbrook Principal Dan Krause read comments from some Willowbrook staff members, who praised Hanson as a standout role model and a selfless leader.

"Emily's tireless work ethic and leadership serve as the backbone of our entire performing arts program," stated Willowbrook theater director and English teacher Regina Wathier in a portion of a comment read by Krause.

"She elevates every space she enters with her singular grit and grace," added John Epple, the head of the school's art department, in another comment that Krause read during the meeting.

Hanson has been a major contributor, on the stage and behind the scenes, in several of Willowbrook's music and theatrical productions. She is a member of the school's contest play team that recently won the state championship in the drama category of the IHSA drama and group interpretation state meet. Willowbrook's team of

69 students won the state title for its presentation of Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* at the state competition, which took place March 27-28 at Reavis High School in Burbank.

Hanson is an active member of the school's art department. As a sophomore, she was selected as the Willowbrook's Outstanding Student of that department, earning an award that's almost always reserved for seniors.

Hanson, who will graduate from Willowbrook next month, is an Advanced Placement (AP) Scholar and an Illinois State Scholar. She has been named to the school's Distinction Honor Roll each semester of her time in high school. Hanson is a member of the National Honor Society, the Thespian Society, and Willowbrook's social studies honor society—Civitas. She's also been involved in the school's New Beginnings program, which helps incoming freshmen with the transition into high school.

Hanson has been a member of Willowbrook's girls gymnastics and girls wrestling teams. Outside of school, she's worked as a lifeguard at Jefferson Pool.

Hanson plans to study either architecture at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, or interior design at Illinois State University.



Willowbrook senior Emily Hanson is her school's recipient of the 88's Best award for the month of March. Hanson, who is a Villa Park resident, is pictured (right) at the District 88 Board of Education's March 23 meeting with Willowbrook Principal Dan Krause (left). The District 88 Board of Education and administration created the 88's Best award to highlight students' achievements. The award recognizes nine Addison Trail and nine Willowbrook students each school year. Recipients are honored during a District 88 Board of Education meeting. They receive an 88's Best glass sculpture and a certificate to a local restaurant. (Submitted photo)

Egg hunt in Villa Park



The Villa Park Parks and Recreation Department held an outdoor egg hunt at the Villa Park Recreation Center on Saturday, March 28. The morning event included egg hunts for children in multiple age groups (2-3, 4-5, 6-7 and 8-10). The young hunters raced across the field outside of the VPRC to scoop up treat-filled eggs. Valley Rupelis (age 3) of Villa Park collected several eggs in the 2-3 age level's hunt. She then sat down to pose for this photo (top right) with a special guest. There was a golden egg included in each age level's hunt. Each child who retrieved a golden egg received an Easter basket. Leia Bruscher (age 5), who collected the golden egg in the 4-5 age level's hunt, is pictured with her Easter basket. (Photos by Chris Fox)

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Police Reports

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March 31

Noelia E. Frias Vega, 21, of Oak Park, was charged with battery on the above date for an incident that allegedly occurred at a fitness center in the 300 block of W. North on March 12.

Gael Rosas Hernandez, 19, of Villa Park, was charged with criminal trespassing to vehicles and possession of alcohol by a minor in the 300 block of N. Princeton at 11:12 p.m.

A complainant in the 400 block of N. Ardmore reported their vehicle's tires had been damaged twice within the last week.

March 30

A 23-year-old Villa Park man was arrested on the above date on an original complaint and warrant and held at the DuPage County Jail for domestic battery for an incident that allegedly occurred on March 21.

March 29

A complainant at a coffee shop in the 100 block of W. Roosevelt reported at 5:32 a.m. that a subject was back on the property after previously being trespassing. The subject was issued a citation.

A complainant in the 1600 block of S. Michigan reported that a subject is harassing them via telephone.

A complainant in the 300 block of E. Central reported that an unknown subject(s) removed the lock from their storage locker and removed their bicycle.

March 28

A complainant at a motel in the 1-100 block of W. Roosevelt reported at 12:41 a.m. that unknown subjects kept

knocking on doors, causing a disturbance.

A complainant at an entertainment center in the 700 block of W. North reported at 4:44 p.m. that a subject entered their unsecured vehicle and removed several items.

A 38-year-old Villa Park man was charged with domestic battery in the 1-100 block of W. Highland at 3:09 a.m. He was transported to the DuPage County Jail.

March 27

Curtis J. Hernandez, 30, of Wheaton, was charged with violation of pretrial release at a motel in the 1-100 block of W. Roosevelt at 4:26 p.m. Hernandez was transported to the DuPage County Jail.

A 51-year-old Villa Park woman was arrested on an original complaint and warrant and transported to the DuPage County Jail on the above date for a domestic battery incident that allegedly occurred on Nov. 20, 2025.

A complainant at a pharmacy in the 200 block of E. Roosevelt reported at 8:47 p.m. that a subject removed merchandise from display shelves and left without paying.

March 26

A complainant in the 1-100 block of S. Illinois reported that several items have gone missing from their home. The complainant believes the items have been stolen.

An 18-year-old Villa Park man was charged with two counts of domestic battery in the 400 block of W. Division at 11:54 p.m. He was transported to the DuPage County Jail.

March 25

A complainant in the 200 block of N. 3rd reported at 10:53 a.m. that a subject is harassing them via telephone.

A complainant in the 100 block of S. Ardmore reported that several items were removed from a residence sometime in November.

A complainant at a store in the 1-100 block of E. North reported at 5:26 p.m. that a subject removed merchandise from display shelves and left without paying.

Villa Park to participate in Conservation Foundation's River Sweep on April 18

Volunteers to assemble in Rotary Park before cleaning up along Salt Creek

The Conservation Foundation's annual River Sweep is a self-coordinated stream cleanup held each spring throughout DuPage County and parts of Will County along the DuPage River. The purpose of the one-day event is to encourage volunteers to help "sweep our rivers clean" by picking up debris in and along local waterways.

Over the past 30-plus years, more than 16,000 volunteers have removed over 300 tons of garbage and waste from the DuPage River and the Salt Creek waterways.

The 35th annual River Sweep will take place from 9 a.m. to noon on Saturday, April 18.

Villa Park will participate in the event.

The staging area of Villa Park's effort will be the shelter at Rotary Park, 600 E. Wildwood Ave. Participants will clean-up along Salt Creek going north from Rotary Park along the Salt Creek Greenway.

For more information, call Villa Park coordinator Bob Wagner at 630-484-8856.

District 88 hosts Parents of Black Scholars event

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The conversation was facilitated by District 88 Student Success Coordinator Dr. Valarie Humphrey, who provided resources and guidance to support families as they help their children navigate high school and plan for life beyond graduation.

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These gatherings are designed to strengthen partnerships between families and the schools, while ensuring that Black students are supported as they prepare for their futures.

For more info contact Humphrey at vhumphrey@dupage88.net or 630-628-3308.

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Sports

Rams win title at their own 16-team invitational

Steady efforts in singles and doubles propel Glenbard East to a first-place finish

Glenbard East's badminton team won the championship plaque at its own Ram 16 Invitational on Saturday. The Rams piled up a first-place total of 153 points in the 16-team competition. Waubonsie Valley claimed second place in the team standings with 134 points. York finished third with 128.5 points, while Hoffman Estates landed in fourth place with 118 points.

Each team's lineup at Saturday's event featured two singles players and four doubles teams. The Rams delivered consistent play in the invitational, winning 18 of 30 matches.

Glenbard East senior Gabi Jackonyte played singles and won her first two matches of the invite. She lost her next two matches before closing out the day with a win in the seventh-place match.

Senior Sam King also played singles for the Rams on Saturday. After opening the competition with a win, she lost her second match. King then won two straight matches before completing the invite with a loss.



Glenbard East's badminton team won the championship at its own Ram 16 Invitational on Saturday. The Rams took first in the 16-team competition with their total score of 153 points. Waubonsie Valley placed second with its score of 134 points. (Photo by Chris Fox)

See RAMS, Page 15

Broncos pick up three wins during their four-game spring trip to Florida

The Montini Catholic baseball team won three of four games during last week's spring break trip to Florida. The Broncos, who played all four games of their road trip at the Jackie Robinson Training Complex in Vero Beach, held an overall season record of 6-3 at the end of their road trip.

Montini began its Florida visit with a 17-0 win over Edgewood (Ohio) in a four-inning contest on March 31. The Broncos suffered a 2-0 loss to Springboro (Ohio) on April 1. Montini defeated Kings High School (Ohio) 10-2 on April 2. The Broncos closed out their trip with a 14-4 win over Plymouth High School (Wisconsin) on April 3.

Montini scored 10 runs in the top of the first inning of its win over Edgewood. The Broncos added seven more runs in the top of the second inning. Junior Julio Ayala hit a three-run home run in the top of the first inning to give

Montini a 9-0 lead. Junior Johnny Louise went 3-for-4 and drove in three runs for the Broncos in their decisive victory. Montini senior Nick Mandra went 2-for-2 and drove in three runs.

The Broncos and Springboro waged a scoreless battle until the Panthers scored two runs in the bottom of the sixth inning. Springboro connected for six hits in the April 1 contest. The Panthers' pitcher delivered a complete-game performance, allowing two hits and one walk while recording nine strikeouts over seven innings.

Montini senior Blake Heyer pitched five scoreless innings against Springboro. Heyer, who was the Broncos' starting pitcher in the game, allowed four hits and one walk while striking out four batters. Sophomore Eddie McCarthy took the mound for Montini in the bottom of the sixth inning. He retired the first two batters he faced. Springboro then strung together a single, a walk, and another sin-

gle during its two-run rally. A Montini error helped the Panthers score their second run of the inning.

Louise went 2-for-3 and drove in two runs in Montini's 10-2 win over Kings High School on April 2. Sophomore Sonny Mateja went 2-for-2 with two RBIs. Ayala went 2-for-3 and drove in one run. Sophomore Kameron Cox went 2-for-4 and drove in one run.

Louise pitched the first four innings of the April 2 contest and picked up the win. He allowed one earned run, five hits and three walks. Louise recorded four strikeouts. Senior Drake Palmer pitched two scoreless innings in relief and allowed one hit. Montini sophomore Grayson Carrigan pitched a scoreless frame in the top of the seventh inning to close out the Broncos' victory.

Mandra went 2-for-3 with a two-run double and drove in six runs in Montini's six-inning

win over Plymouth on April 3. Louise went 3-for-3 and drove in one run while scoring four runs in the game. Mateja went 2-for-3 with one RBI. Junior Drew Chrastka went 2-for-2 with one RBI and scored three runs.

Mateja pitched the first three innings of the Broncos' win over Plymouth. He allowed one earned run, two hits and two walks. Mateja struck out four batters. Senior Nick Kois relieved Mateja and pitched two scoreless innings. Kois did not allow any hits. He issued two walks and recorded three strikeouts. McCarthy pitched one scoreless inning for the Broncos. He gave up one hit and struck out one batter in the top of the sixth inning.

Montini's schedule this week includes games against Lemont and Hanover Central at the Wintrust Crossroads Sports Complex in New Lenox, along with this Saturday's home contest against Riverside Brookfield.

Warriors notch three straight wins in Tennessee during successful spring break trip

The Willowbrook baseball team traveled to Tennessee last week and earned three straight wins to even its overall season record at 4-4. The Warriors defeated three teams from central Ohio during their spring break road trip.

Willowbrook began its stay in Tennessee with a 3-2 win over Big Walnut on March 30. One day later, the Warriors beat Pickerington Central 10-0. Willowbrook finished its road trip with a 12-2 victory over Hilliard Bradley on April 1.

The Warriors and Big Walnut were tied at 2-2 after one inning of last week's matchup. Willowbrook scored one run in the top of the fourth inning to take a 3-2 lead.

Senior Noah Edison pitched the first five and one-third innings and earned the win for the Warriors in their triumph over Big Walnut. Edison allowed eight hits, one earned run and

one walk. He recorded six strikeouts. Senior Jory Crocker pitched the final one and two-third innings and picked up a save after striking out five straight batters. Crocker took the mound with two runners on base and one out in the bottom of the sixth inning. He struck out the next two batters to end the inning. In the bottom of the seventh inning, Crocker retired the side in order with three straight strikeouts.

Senior Ryan Dasbach drove in Willowbrook's first run of the game with a sacrifice fly in the top of the first inning. Moments later, senior Alek Ramey hit an RBI double to give the Warriors a 2-0 lead.

Senior Charlie Roelle drove in Willowbrook's third run of the game on a groundout in the top of the fourth inning.

The Warriors scored seven runs in the bottom of the fourth inning of their five-inning

win over Pickerington Central. Willowbrook added two more runs in the bottom of the fifth inning to end the game.

Senior Jake Bonino went 1-for-4 and drove in two runs for the Warriors in their win over Pickerington Central. Crocker went 1-for-1 with two RBIs and drew three walks. Senior Alex Dew went 2-for-2 and drove in one run. He scored three runs.

Junior Mikey Garner pitched the first four innings of Willowbrook's March 31 contest. Garner allowed one hit and two walks while piling up seven strikeouts. Senior Jacob Bylsma took the mound in the top of the fifth inning and pitched one scoreless inning for the Warriors.

Willowbrook scored five runs in the bottom of the second inning of its 12-2 win over Hilliard Bradley. The Warriors piled on six more

runs in the bottom of the fourth inning, and closed out their five-inning victory with one more run in the bottom of the fifth inning.

Junior Alex Rodriguez went 2-for-3 and drove in three runs in Willowbrook's April 1 win. Crocker went 1-for-2 with a bases-loaded double and drove in four runs.

Crocker hit his bases-loaded double in the second inning and added a sacrifice fly in the bottom of the fourth inning. Ramey went 2-for-2 and drove in two runs.

Senior Bobby Biggs pitched all five innings of the Warriors' 12-2 victory over Hilliard Bradley.

Biggs allowed three hits, two runs and two walks. He struck out three batters.

The Warriors are opening their West Suburban Gold Conference season with this week's three-game series against Leyden.

Alsobrook, Pilafas awarded Evans Scholarships for golf caddies

BY CHRIS FOX

Two area students—Glenbard East senior Ryan Alsobrook and Willowbrook senior Jadyndy Pilafas—were awarded the Evans Scholarship late last year. They are among the 102 Chicago area students who recently received the Evans Scholarship, which provides a full housing and tuition college grant to golf caddies.

According to the Western Golf Association (WGA), which is located in Glenview and oversees the Evans Scholars Program, each Evans Scholarship is valued at more than \$125,000 over four years.

Alsobrook and Pilafas will both attend the University of Kansas in Lawrence, Kansas—the home of the Jayhawks—this fall.

Alsobrook, who lives in Lombard, is a caddie at Glen Oak Country Club in Glen Ellyn. This summer will mark his fifth year as a caddie. His scholarship interview took place at Glen Oak Country Club.

"Not everybody has it at their home course," said Alsobrook while speaking about his interview, which took place in December. "It was almost like a press conference. They introduce you, and you are asked questions about caddying, and life, and the essay that you wrote."

A few days after the interview, Alsobrook received a package in the mail that informed him he had been awarded an Evans Scholarship.

"I was very excited," said Alsobrook of his reaction to learning that he was an Evans Scholar.

Students who were awarded Evans Scholarships provided a ranked list of their preferred schools. In March, the Evans Scholars Program informed those students what universities they would attend.

Alsobrook's older brother, Zach Alsobrook, was also awarded an Evans Scholarship. Zach, who caddied at Glen Oak Country Club, is now a junior at Marquette University.

"My brother [Zach] did it; my mom did it when she was a kid," said Alsobrook in explaining how he became a caddie. "I like everything about it. The pay is really good. You're meeting new people and connecting with golfers. It's outside, and it's a great source of exercise."

Alsobrook said he's had positive experiences with nearly every golfer he's caddied for.

"Golfers really like the caddies," he said. "We build great connections with them. They are all out there to have a good time."

Alsobrook, who is interested in studying construction management, stated that while he does like to golf, he did not play for Glenbard East's boys golf team. He has been a mem-



Jadyndy Pilafas



Ryan Alsobrook

ber of the Rams' boys cross-country and track and field teams.

Before he heads to Kansas in a few months, Alsobrook plans on doing plenty of caddying at Glen Oak Country Club this summer.

"I try to get out there as much as I can," said Alsobrook, who explained how he arranges his work on the course. "The night before, I text my boss, and say that I'm available. He gives me a time. I show up an hour before [the tee time of the player or players he will caddie for]. It's pretty pre-determined."

Like Alsobrook, Pilafas also learned in December that she had been awarded an Evans Scholarship. In March, she learned she would be attending the University of Kansas, which happened to be her top choice. Her older brother, Troy Pilafas, also attended the University of Kansas on an Evans Scholarship.

Pilafas, who is a Villa Park resident, is a caddie at Butterfield Country Club in Oak Brook. She is preparing to start her fifth summer as a caddie there.

"I didn't know anything about golf," said Pilafas while discussing how she became a caddie. "My brother, who is five years older than me, got me into it. It was overwhelming

at first, but after a month or two, I started getting the hang of it. I started to really enjoy it and wanted to be there the next summer."

Pilafas stated she didn't play golf before she began caddying, but after a couple of years of working at Butterfield Country Club, she joined Willowbrook's girls golf team before the start of her junior year.

"I love being outside, and I love meeting people," said Pilafas while describing the benefits of caddying. She also stated that the golf course is a great place to make connections with others.

"They are mostly very sweet, and open to talk," Pilafas said of the people she has caddied for.

Pilafas, who wants to pursue a career in business, stated that the process of applying for an Evans Scholarship included obtaining references from Butterfield Country Club, and from a teacher or counselor.

"I think I will continue to caddie there [Butterfield CC] as long as I can," said Pilafas, who, like Alsobrook, will live at the Evans Scholarship House in Lawrence, Kansas. In 2025, the Evans Scholars Foundation and the University of Kansas celebrated the opening of the school's completely rebuilt Evans Scholarship House. The 13,000-square-foot Scholarship House at 1314 Jayhawk Boulevard features three levels of space for studying and recreation, and has the capacity to house 53 students.

Thompson places 2nd at Ram 16 Invitational

Senior Maisie Thompson of the Willowbrook badminton team won the second-place medal in the singles level of Glenbard East's Ram 16 Invitational on Saturday.

Thompson won her first four matches of Saturday's event to advance to the championship contest.

Glenbrook South senior Sanju Purayil defeated Thompson to win the singles title.



Maisie Thompson advanced to the finals Saturday. (Chris Fox photo)

Willowbrook names Curtis Hudson next baseball coach

Willowbrook High School recently announced the appointment of Curtis Hudson (Class of 2007) as its next varsity baseball coach. Hudson will officially take the helm at the conclusion of the Warriors' current 2026 season. He will replace longtime head coach Vic Wisner—a 1985 Willowbrook graduate—who is retiring at the end of this season.

Hudson, who was a standout pitcher for Willowbrook, has been a member of the Warriors' coaching staff since 2012. He currently serves as a team assistant and pitching coach.



Curtis Hudson

"I am honored to follow in the footsteps of Coach Wisner and continue the tradition of excellence here at Willowbrook," said Hudson.

"My focus will be on protecting the culture we've built while ensuring our players are prepared to compete for championships every single year."

Glenbard East's twosome of juniors Ava Ebner and Alexis Roimicher opened Saturday's event with two straight wins in the 3-4 doubles level. The pair of Rams lost their next two matches, but ended the day with a win in their division's seventh-place match.

The Rams' schedule this week includes Upstate Eight Conference East Division dual meets against West Chicago and Glenbard South, along with this Friday's quad meet and Willowbrook, and this Saturday's Redhawks Invite at Naperville Central.

Willowbrook senior Maisie Thompson won her first four matches of Saturday's Ram 16 Invite to advance to the singles division's championship match.

Thompson lost to Glenbrook South senior Sanju Purayil in the title contest and claimed the second-place medal in the singles level.

Israel Abrams commits to Hurricanes

Montini Catholic junior quarterback Israel Abrams, who led the Broncos' football program to IHSA state titles in 2024 and 2025, announced last week that he has committed to continue his academic and football careers at the University of Miami in Florida. Abrams has started 24 games at quarterback for Montini. The Broncos have won all 24 of those games. As a sophomore, Abrams started Montini's final 10 games of the 2024 season.

The Broncos won the IHSA Class 3A state championship in 2024. They beat Monticello 49-8 in the title contest. Montini posted a perfect 14-0 record and won the IHSA Class 4A state championship in 2025. Abrams was the starting quarterback in all 14 of the Broncos' 2025 games.

The Hurricanes played in the CFP National Championship Game last season, losing 27-21 to Indiana on Jan. 19.



Montini Catholic quarterback Israel Abrams looks to throw while on the move during the team's win over Morris in last year's Class 4A semifinal. (Chris Fox photo)

•Rams (From page 14)

The Rams' doubles duo of juniors Betsy Facchini and Daniela Romero opened the invite with three straight wins before losing in the semifinal round. Facchini and Romero then lost in the third-place match and settled for a fourth-place finish in the event's 1-2 doubles level.

Glenbard East juniors Marija Cheeks and Taylor Washick teamed up to win their first two matches of the day in the 1-2 doubles division. The two Rams lost their next three matches and wound up placing eighth in the 1-2 doubles level.

Seniors Hervi Patel and Abhia Syed earned three straight victories for Glenbard East in the invite's 3-4 doubles level. Patel and Syed lost in the semifinal round before closing out the event with a victory in their level's third-place match.



Junior Betsy Facchini (foreground) teamed with junior Daniela Romero to win three of five matches in the 1-2 doubles level of Saturday's Ram 16 Invitational. Facchini and Romero won their first three matches of the event. After losing in the semifinal round, the two Rams finished the invite with a loss in the 1-2 doubles division's third-place match. (Photo by Chris Fox)