



MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR!

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

The school year continues onward. Blazers, it's already the end of December. By the time this edition of the *Blazer Bulletin* ends up in your mailbox, you will be well on your way to a hard-earned Christmas Break!

We are almost halfway through the school year. When we get back from break, high schoolers will have a couple of weeks, and then it will be time for semester exams. Basketball and wrestling will be in full effect. Our gyms will be packed a few nights a week with the loyal Blazer fans!

We wish you all well during the Holiday

Season and can't wait to greet everyone back in 2024!

Christmas Break will be from December 20, 2023 – January 2, 2024. School resumes on Wednesday, January 3, 2024. School will be half-days on the following dates: February 16 (Professional Development, March 14 (P/T Conf.), and March 15 (half-day for everyone). Spring Break runs from March 22–March 31.

There is a great amount of ground to cover throughout the remainder of the



Kalkaska Upper Elementary performed its first-ever Holiday Concert on Thursday, December 14.

school year. Enjoy a wonderful break and we look forward to seeing you all in 2024.

Relax and recover! Thank you all for choosing to be Blazers!

KHS grad returns to share her mission of suicide prevention

By Baylin Morse

Last week, Kalkaska High School hosted suicide prevention speaker and Kalkaska graduate Shandy Longcore. She is the owner and founder of Embracing Imperfections, a company dedicated to suicide prevention and advocacy for those experiencing mental health issues.



Junior Aubrey Manchester introduces Shandy Longcore during the recent student assembly.

According to the Embracing Imperfections website, one person dies by suicide in the United States every 12 minutes. During her talk, Longcore also told her audience that suicide was the second leading cause of death among individuals between the ages of 10–14 and 25–34.

Continued on Page 8

INSIDE THIS EDITION

BULLETIN

Kalkaska Public Schools
315 S. Coral St.
Kalkaska, Michigan 49646

PRST STD U.S. POSTAGE PAID
CADILLAC MI PERMIT #147

BOX HOLDER
KALKASKA MI 49646

Rapid City wins spirit contest

Students, staff “rock out” with the Blazer Fight Song

Rapid City Rockstars won the Kalkaska Spirit Contest! Students were rewarded with an ice cream sandwich party provided by Superintendent Mr. Rick Heitmeyer and Administrative Assistant Mrs. Cari Jo Roberts.

The Rapid City Elementary Food Drive was a huge success! Students collected well over 1,000 items that were donated to our very own local food shelter. Congratulations to Mrs. Potvin and Mrs. Kari’s Great Start Readiness Program students for collecting the most items. Thank you to our local Village Market for

donating a dollar to RCE for every item collected, up to \$1,000!

Students worked together to assemble Blessing Bags before the Thanksgiving break. The bags were distributed to less fortunate individuals within our community.

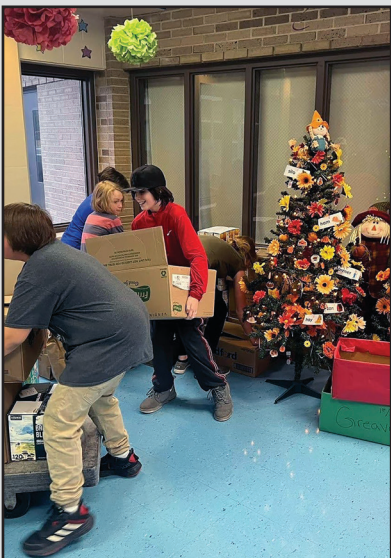
Mrs. Zamaites’ 5th graders were given the opportunity to experience the gratification of providing bread for the table this holiday season. Students walked away from this rewarding experience with a loaf of bread to share with their loved ones and a sense of pride

for their contribution.

1st Quarter Rockstar Honor Roll Recipients.

- ★ 5th Grade: Ammelia Amidon, Danica Burnham, Ransom Comfort, Aubrey Drinkwine, Gwen Finley, Alexis Freeland and Dayton Freeland;
- ★ 4th Grade: Dyson Dyell;
- ★ 3rd Grade: Glen Howe and Wyatt Maeder.

A Rockstar Welcome to Ms. Kluft! We are so excited to have her join our team.



ROCKSTARS BUSY IN NOVEMBER!

A great deal of activity happened at RCE in November. Students were recognized for accomplishments, enjoyed an ice cream treat, divided up some backpack items, and began the Christmas season! Great job, Rapid City!

Activities for break

Christmas Break Activity Ideas....

★ Countdown Craft

Make a countdown chain link to the holiday your family celebrates. Paste, tape, or staple the ends of the first strip together to form a loop. Place the second strip of paper through the newly made loop. Continue until you have reached the desired length. Hang your paper chain from the walls or ceiling and enjoy.

Items needed – scissors, glue, tape or stapler and paper.

★ Igloo Craft

Get creative and build an igloo with marshmallows and toothpicks. This is a fun, easy indoor activity where you can stay nice and warm.

Items needed – marshmallows and toothpicks

★ Snowflakes

Instructions: Fold the paper diagonally. Cut off the excess paper at the bottom. Fold the paper in half. Fold the paper in thirds. Flatten out the top of your paper by cutting off points. Draw a pattern for your



snowflake – get creative! Cut out your design and reveal your pattern.

Items needed – scissors and paper

★ Snow writing

Practice those spelling words or beginning sounds in the snow. Warm up inside with a nice cup of hot chocolate.

Items needed – You and your winter gear! Hot chocolate – yum!

THANK YOU:

- ★ A huge **THANK YOU** to the parents who volunteered to help out with the Secret Santa Workshop!
- ★ Mrs. Muraida for all of her hard work in organizing and bringing back the Holiday Concert!
- ★ Thank you to our grounds and maintenance crew, along with our custodial staff, for making sure our sidewalks and parking lots are taken care of as winter has arrived.



STUDENTS AT BSE ENJOY THE FESTIVITIES!

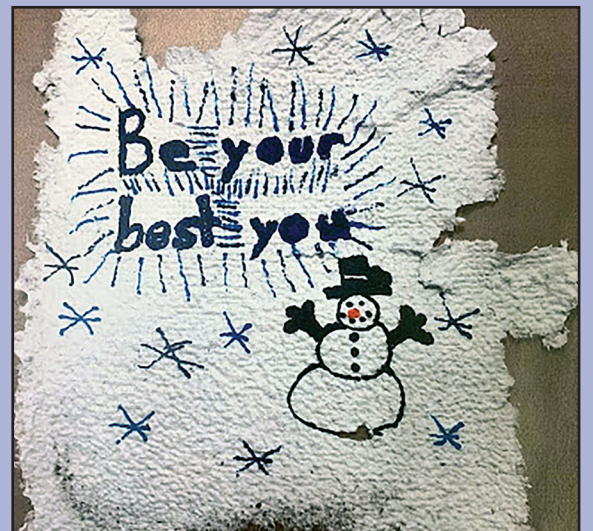
Kids are having so much fun enjoying all of the activities during the busy, busy month of December. Thank you to everyone who has supported BSE and helped to make everything work! Enjoy the holiday season!

Students learn art of paper making

Creative writers work with Conservation District

Mrs. Crawford's end of day Creative Writing class has been hard at work learning the process of paper making with the assistance of Ms. Sarah Shroeder from the Kalkaska Conservation District. They began by shredding the paper, blending in with water,

pouring the "slushy" into flat trays, screening the fiber from the water, removing the pulp from the screen then letting it dry for one week. They chose a quote or saying, then using permanent markers they wrote on their finished product.



KMS ACTIVITIES

Clockwise from top — Paper making in the middle school. KMS November Students of the Month were Isabella W (7), Aurora V (6) and Ava G (not pictured) (8). November Musicians of the Month were Isabella W (7), Lily W (8), and Xavier H (6). December SOM were: Alivia P (8th), Skyler G (7th) and Joe M (6th). KMS December MOM were Kaylee H (8th), Elizabeth E (7th), and Zane W (6th).

Happy Holidays from everyone in the KPS athletic department

CELEBRATING SUCCESS

The following athletes were selected as Kalkaska High School Athletes of the Week during the months of November and December. Congratulations to all of our winners!

- ★ Tripp Wagner (varsity boys soccer) and Kara Olds (varsity girls cross country)
- ★ Coltrane Paryani (varsity boys cross country) and Kali Anderson (varsity volleyball)
- ★ Hunter Wilkinson (varsity football) and Xiana Buyze-Prieto (freshman volleyball)
- ★ Michael Corbello (varsity wrestling) and Kiera Curry (JV girls basketball)
- ★ Jackson Shetler (JV boys basketball) and Alyssa Colvin (varsity girls Basketball)



Sophomore Michael Corbello wins his match against his Mancelona opponent during a home wrestling meet on December 13.

- ★ Ethan Schaub (varsity boys basketball) and Sarah Morgan (JV girls basketball)

FRIENDLY REMINDERS

At our events, your safety and security is of paramount importance. With that in mind, we kindly ask for your cooperation on these items:

- ★ The main access drive between the

high school and the elementary school is ONE WAY. Do not exit our events to Birch Street. For safety, please obey all posted signs and exit to Dresden Street.

- ★ Please park in designated lots and spaces only. Emergency responders depend on having access to our venues.

- ★ Do not park on the grass, or in spaces not marked for parking. This restricts emergency

vehicles from having the access we depend upon.

- ★ Please do not bring your pet to our events. For safety and sanitary reasons, pets are restricted from campus. Working guide dogs are the exception.
- ★ We thank you for your help on these items, and wish you a safe and enjoyable holiday season!

Have a wonderful Holiday Season and Happy New Year!

#BLAZERPride

K

SUPPORTING FAMILIES TO BUILD
SUCCESSFUL STUDENTS.

Students participate in STEM projects

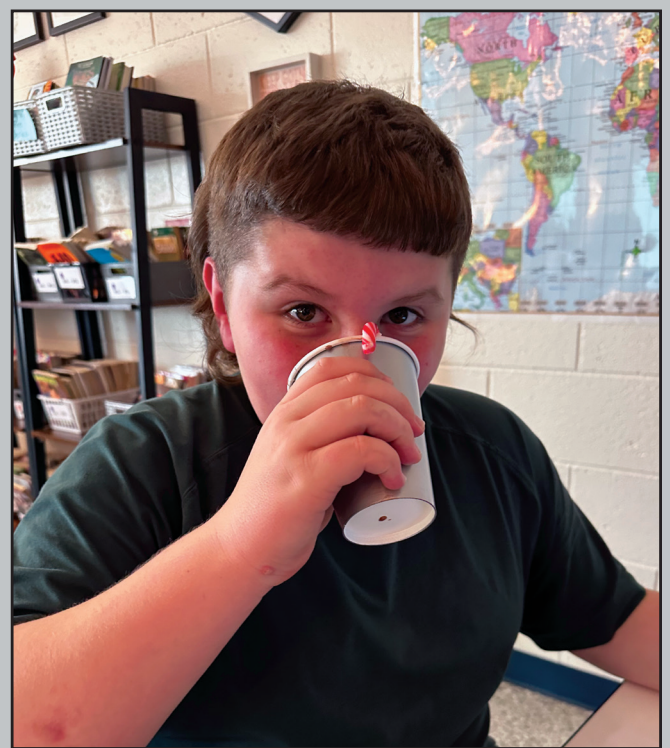
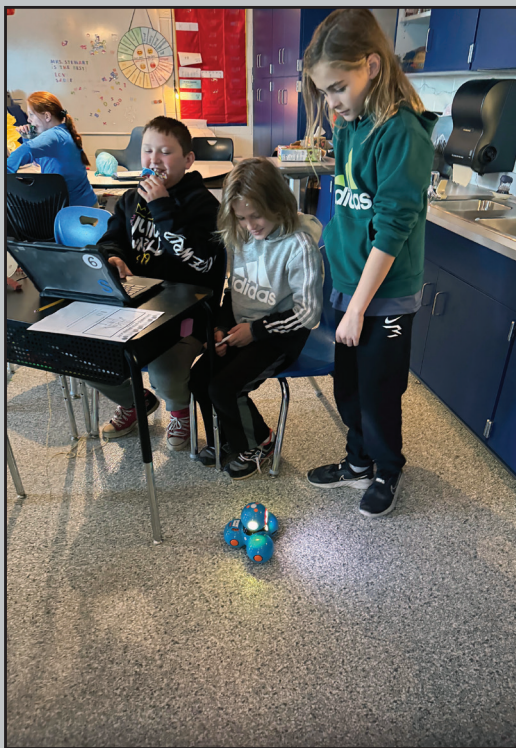
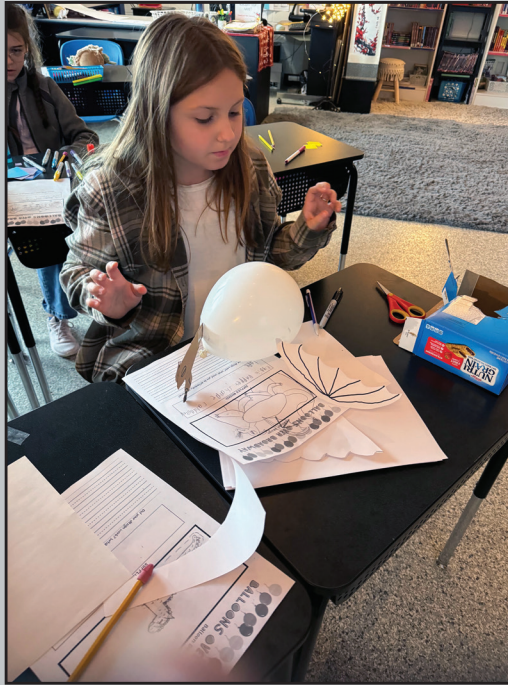
Fifth graders have been working hard for the past seven weeks to improve their reading fluency. This past week they finished the Read Live program with stellar results. We are so proud of their hard work and focus!

Many students in Mrs. Biehl's and Ms. Molenkamp's classes earned hot chocolate as a reward for keeping their pencil for the month of November. Great job being responsible for the Pencil Challenge!

Blazer Boost Peer Mentoring has kicked off its second season pairing fifth grade students with second graders. Under the guidance of Ms. Bridson and Mrs. McGlone, students are engaging in a variety of activities involving movement, experimentation, and creativity!

Students in Mrs. Stewart's and Mrs. Boger's classes have recently participated in two STEM days designed to motivate and inspire innovative thinking, encourage creativity, as well as fostering communication and collaboration. They learned basic coding skills via Dash robots, and even designed their own Thanksgiving 'float,' engaging in a lesson called, 'Balloons Over Broadway.' The Regional Educational Media Center has graciously donated their time to come to our site and prepare these lessons for today's learners.

The Upper Elementary had its first Holiday Concert since the COVID shutdown. We are extremely proud of the students' performance. Thank you, Mrs. Muraida for the time and effort you put into this concert.



FUN AT KUE

Several fun events have been happening at Kalkaska Upper Elementary School in November and December. Some students are even working hard on academics, leading to fun learning. Great job, KUE students!

Our brilliant *Blazers* have read an incredible

10,087



BOOKS

so far this school year!

Need more to read? Visit the KCL over Christmas Break to stock up on even more great books! We'd love to see you!

Teen Health Corner

Helping kids find the help they need.



COME SEE US!

3 Locations:

- 419 South Coral St
Kalkaska, MI
231-258-7791
Monday-Friday
- 7741 Shippy Rd
Fife Lake, MI
231-369-2000
Mon, Wed, and Thurs
- Kalkaska Middle School, Behavioral Health Services ONLY
231-258-7922
Monday-Friday

We provide medical care to 10-21 year olds and their children at our Kalkaska location and 5-21 year olds and their children at our Forest Area location. We also provided Behavioral Health services at our Kalkaska Middle School location. We accept all insurances, provide Medicaid enrollment assistance, offer a sliding fee scale for the uninsured, and do not turn you away for an inability to pay.

Teen Health Corner would like to wish you and your family a happy and healthy holiday season.

COVID-19 or Flu?

There are **no hard-and-fast rules** about COVID-19 symptoms because the coronavirus tends to affect people differently. Here's what experts know:

- A sudden loss of smell or taste may be the first sign of COVID-19.
- Flu symptoms tend to strike abruptly.
- Flu can present with nasal congestion and a productive cough while coronavirus is associated with a dry cough.
- Shortness of breath is common with both the flu and COVID-19.
- Nausea, vomiting and diarrhea is more common in COVID-19.

Visit your PCP, Urgent care, or ER for any question or concerns regarding your health and symptoms, or for testing and plan of care.

The single best protection against COVID-19 and the flu is to get your vaccinations. Call Teen Health Corner with questions and to make an appointment for your vaccine.

K 231-258-7791/FA 231-369-2000



New teacher joins Rapid City

Ms. Lauren Klafft is joining Rapid City Elementary School for the 2023-2024 school year. Klafft, a recent CMU graduate, finished student teaching in November. She will teach a first/second grade split at RCE.

A Traverse City West and NMC graduate, Klafft enjoys spending time with her family, hiking, rock collecting, and biking in the great outdoors, and crafting.

"I already love each and every student! I am very excited for this school year," she said.

Welcome to Kalkaska, Ms. Klafft.



Board of Education

Rachael Birgy	—	President
Regan Foerster	—	Vice President
Wendy Watson	—	Secretary
Mary Scobey	—	Treasurer
Richard Hodgman	—	Trustee
Sarah Dudek	—	Trustee
Steve Ordway	—	Trustee

Central Business Office — 258-9109

Rick Heitmeyer, Superintendent	1120
Cari Jo Roberts, Executive Assistant	1101
Jeffrey Scroggins, Director of Finance	1104
David Tucker, Human Resources Director	1116

Senior High — 258-9167

Staci Short, Principal	2103
Aaron Ostrander, Assistant Principal	2170
Mary Deb Rabourn, Secretary	2173
Rhonda Wurtz, Secretary	2102

KPS

Published by KPS

Superintendent: Rick Heitmeyer

The *Blazer Bulletin* is published during the school year from September—June. If you have any suggestions, or questions, please contact the office at (231) 258-9109 between the hours of 8 a.m.—4 p.m. Editorial assistance provided by Kalkaska County Library Director John P. Roberts.

All content copyright © MMXXIII by Kalkaska Public Schools

BLAZERS

Middle — 258-4040

Scott Morey, Principal	3205
Sara Waterman, Secretary	3201
Nickey Torrey, Secretary	3203

Birch Street Elementary — 258-8629

Arica Zenner, Principal	4204
Tracy Dimon, Secretary	4200
Melissa Patnode, Secretary	4202

Kalkaska Upper Elementary — 258-9146

Ryan Moore, Principal	5106
Sue Woodruff, Secretary	5107

Rapid City Elementary — 331-6121

Laura Gehman, Principal	6103
Robyn Czuk, Secretary	6101

Athletics — 258-9167

Bryan Hawkins, Athletic Director	2236
Linda Colvin, Secretary	2185

Continued from Page 8

The most powerful part of her talk came when she shared her personal experience with suicide when she was 10 years old. A hush fell over the auditorium as she told her story about getting in a fight with her father about cutting her hair. When he left, she went directly to his gun cabinet, grabbed a rifle, and shot herself in the chest. Her mother, a nurse, came home and found her and was able to get her the help she needed. She eventually made a full recovery.

Now, she encourages students to avoid making impulsive decisions like hers and to talk to someone trustworthy. Her message engaged many of the students and

staff alike.

“I just want all of my students to know that there are ways and resources to get help,” said KHS Principal Staci Short. Short

also thanked Live Well Kalkaska Coalition for Substance Free Living and The Academia Club who helped fund this event.

Counselor Jeremy Guggemos said he

felt like it was a lively event for such a somber topic. Longcore did invite audience participation by asking questions about their own feelings and encouraging them to ask questions about her experience as well.

Junior Elizabeth Trombley appreciated how difficult it must be to tell a story like this to a large group of people.

“Shandy seemed like a very sweet woman,” she said. Her message was influential and motivated a lot of students.”



Shandy Longcore, formerly Shandy Atwood, brought her message of suicide prevention and mental health advocacy to KHS on Dec. 5. The Kalkaska grad also gave a talk geared toward parents in the evening of Dec. 4. Junior Aubrey Manchester introduces Shandy Longcore and her mission during the student assembly.

Senior standouts to compete in college

Seniors Gavin Guggemos and Ally Sutton made big leaps into their future recently when they declared their intentions to play their respective sport at the collegiate level.

Sutton signed her letter of intent to play volleyball with North Central Michigan College in Petoskey on Nov. 7. Although the official signing took place on the college campus, the ceremony in the library allowed those who have supported her throughout her athletic career to celebrate her accomplishments. She said there are many things she likes about playing at North Central.

“I really like the environment of the place, and everyone was really nice,” she said. “I really look forward to a new

coach. Coach Shannon is really positive, trains well, and focuses a lot on hitters, and since I play hitter, I look forward to what I will learn.”



Lake Superior State University announced over Thanksgiving break that Gavin Guggemos has committed to run Cross Country and Track for their programs beginning in the fall. Since they are in the same conference, Gavin will face off against his brother, Tyler Guggemos,

a '22 KHS grad and current runner at Davenport University, for at least two races next year.

“It will be a new experience,” Gavin said. “I’ve never competed against him before.

We’ve always been on the same team.”

Although he had other offers, Gavin said he thought LSSU was his best option.

“The coach seemed pretty interested in me, and he believed I would help his team a lot,” he said.

The entire Blazer Nation wishes them both well.

