

FREE  
TAKE ONE

# Addison INDEPENDENT

FISCHER FARM  
**Farmside Christmas**  
2-5 p.m. | Sunday, Dec. 4  
16W680 Grand Ave, Bensenville  
[BvilleParks.org/FarmsideChristmas](http://BvilleParks.org/FarmsideChristmas)  
\$10 ages 3-15  
Ice Sculptures  
Photo with Santa  
Tree Lighting at 4:30  
And More!  
Bensenville BvilleParks.org @BvilleParks  
Winter-Spring program registration is now open!

VOL. 19 • NO. 50

WWW.THEINDEPENDENTNEWSPAPERS.COM

THURSDAY, DEC. 1, 2022



SUBMITTED PHOTO Addison Independent

## Addison Trail hosts International Fest

During the week of Nov. 7, Addison Trail hosted its annual International Fest Week, which culminated with a dance show, featuring dances that represented the various countries and cultures throughout the world. The event was sponsored by Addison Trail's International Club. Story and more photos inside.

## Juvenile guilty of all charges in Westmont BMW dealership burglary

On Wednesday, Nov. 23, DuPage County State's Attorney Robert Berlin announced that a Cook County juvenile had been found guilty of all charges including burglary and assaulting a police officer stemming from an incident at a Westmont BMW dealership on Dec. 31, 2021.

that involved an officer discharging his service weapon. The guilty verdict was handed down by Judge Anthony Coco following a two-day bench trial.

On Jan. 11, 2021, the juvenile appeared at a detention hearing where Judge Coco ordered he be detained. He has remained in custody since that time. In all, the juvenile was found guilty of two counts of Armed Violence (Class X Felony), one count of Burglary (Class 2 Felony), one count of Possession of a Stolen Motor Vehicle (Class 2 Felony), one count of Aggravated Assault with a Motor Vehicle (Class 3 Felony) and one count of Aggravated Assault on a Police Officer (Class 4 Felony).

The juvenile was one of four individuals charged in the case. The cases against the juvenile's co-defendants, Angel Martin, 24 of Dolton, Semaje Wheeler, 19 of Chicago and Brian Garrett, 19 of Chicago, are currently pending. Martin, Wheeler and Garrett have all been charged with eight counts of Armed Violence (Class X Felony), one count of Burglary (Class 2 Felony) and one count of Possession of a Stolen Motor Vehicle (Class 2 Felony).

On Dec. 31, 2021, at approximately 4:27 a.m., the Westmont Police Department received information of a burglary in progress at Laurel BMW located on Ogden Avenue. Two officers responded to the call

and upon their arrival allegedly encountered two individuals, later identified as the juvenile and Martin, exiting the showroom and entering a white Acura with two occupants, later identified as Wheeler and Garrett.

Following an investigation into the matter, it is alleged that after arriving at the dealership, the juvenile and Martin, armed with a pry bar, attempted to enter the building on the east side but were unsuccessful. It is alleged that the two then joined Wheeler and Garrett in the Acura, drove to the west side of the building, exited the vehicle again and attempted to gain entry to the building with

See BURGLARY, Page 4

### INSIDE:

Police Reports.....	5	Puzzles.....	15
Viewpoint.....	8	Classifieds.....	17

101 W HIGHLAND RD  
VILLA PARK IL 60181-3100  
DISTRICT 88  
042085-06/09/2023 CD11

PRINTED  
ON  
RECYCLED  
PAPER  
WITH  
NO  
ADDITIONAL  
POLYMER  
COATINGS



SUBMITTED PHOTO Rock Valley Publishing

Pictured here with District 88 students and staff are students and staff members from Helmholtzschule in Frankfurt, Germany, who visited District 88 in October through

the German American Partnership Program (GAPP) student exchange. As part of the GAPP, Addison Trail and Willowbrook students will visit Germany in June of 2023.

## District 88 welcomes visitors from Germany

### GAPP exchange promotes intercultural dialogue

From Oct. 16 to 30, District 88 hosted 22 students and two staff members from Helmholtzschule in Frankfurt, Germany, as part of the German American Partnership Program (GAPP) student exchange. GAPP's purpose is to provide information about cultural, social and political life in Germany by encouraging intercultural dialogue and enabling cultural involvement. This was District 88's second time participating in the program.

During their time here, the group visited Addison Trail and Willowbrook, where they toured the buildings and viewed extracurricular

activities. They also spent time in Chicago, visiting several landmarks.

"The purpose is to build a relationship between students of two countries and keep that relationship even after high school," said Nilay Woodbury, District 88 world language teacher. "One of District 88's greatest strengths is the rich diversity among its students and staff. The district has about 50 languages and more than 30 countries represented among its families, and almost half of the nearly 4,000 students in the district speak a language other than English at home."

"District 88 continuously provides opportunities for students to experience other cultures, and through the GAPP, pupils from Addison Trail and Willowbrook will visit Germany in

June 2023. Whether it's traveling to Europe or hosting guests from abroad, those interactions teach students life lessons and help them develop a global mindset."

## County approves FY2023 budget

### Includes reduction in property tax for homeowners

The DuPage County Board on Tuesday unanimously approved its Fiscal Year 2023 budget, which includes a balanced, \$584.1 million spending plan and a reduction in property taxes for homeowners.

Due to conservative financial planning, DuPage County is projected to finish the 2022 Fiscal Year with a surplus of \$40 million. Among the ways the County will utilize those funds include:

- \$3 million for major renovations at the DuPage Care Center;
- \$2 million for transportation infrastructure, including roadway improvements and enhanced pedestrian and bicycle pathways;
- \$6 million to replace the County's existing financial system which will soon reach end of life;
- \$3.25 million to replace aging vehicles;
- \$250,000 for the DuPage Neighborhood Revitalization Program;
- \$393,800 for solar panels to provide clean energy for part of the County campus;
- \$398,680 for a stormwater improvement project at Winfield Creek.

"During our financial planning process, my intention is always to create a budget that sets a strong foundation for the future," Cronin said. "As I prepare to leave the office of County Board Chairman, I am confident this budget will provide a foundation for success for the next generation of County leaders."

The total proposed budget for DuPage County is \$584.1 million, with a General Fund budget of \$234.6 million. The General Fund is the County's chief operating fund covering most personnel and program operations.

The proposed budget includes a \$69.9 million property tax levy and a property tax abatement of \$5 million, which will be automatically deducted from homeowners' property tax bills in 2023. Residents do not need to take any action to realize the savings.

The 2023 Fiscal Year begins on Dec. 1. DuPage County is AAA bond rated. The County's latest reported unemployment rate was 3.3 percent for the month of September.

To view the full FY2023 County budget document, visit [dupagecounty.gov/finance](http://dupagecounty.gov/finance).

**The Moreci Family Invites You to Experience**  
the Finest Selection of Italian Cuisine. Roberto's Ristorante Features  
One-of-a-kind Gourmet Specialties Custom Created by Experienced Chef.  
Inquire about our private party luncheons for Memorials, Corporate Meetings,  
Graduations, Confirmations, Weddings & Baptisms

**ROBERTO'S**  
RISTORANTE & PIZZERIA  
EST. 1962  
483 SPRING ROAD  
ELMHURST  
Reservations (630) 279-8474  
Pizzeria (630) 279-8474  
[www.robertosristorante.com](http://www.robertosristorante.com)

Enjoy Our Outdoor Dining Area  
**Roberto's Pizzeria**  
Established in 1962  
**FAST DELIVERY AND CARRY OUT SERVICE**  
483 SPRING ROAD, ELMHURST • (630) 279-8474 • [www.robertosristorante.com](http://www.robertosristorante.com)  
Open 7 Days A Week M-Th. 11am-10pm • Fri. 11am-11pm • Sat. 12pm-11pm • Sun. 12pm-10pm

<p><b>\$1.00 OFF</b> On Full Slab of Ribs Pick Up or Delivery Only One Coupon Per Visit Please Mention Coupon When Ordering Not Valid in Dining Room Expires Dec. 8, 2022 Roberto's Ristorante &amp; Pizzeria</p>	<p><b>\$1.00 OFF</b> On 14", 16" or 18" Pizza Pick Up or Delivery Only One Coupon Per Visit Please Mention Coupon When Ordering Not Valid in Dining Room Expires Dec. 8, 2022 Roberto's Ristorante &amp; Pizzeria</p>	<p><b>FREE</b> 2 Liter of Soda with \$15 Purchase or More Pick Up or Delivery Only One Coupon Per Visit Please Mention Coupon When Ordering Not Valid in Dining Room Expires Dec. 8, 2022 Roberto's Ristorante &amp; Pizzeria</p>	<p><b>\$1.00 OFF</b> On 14", 16" or 18" Pizza Pick Up or Delivery Only One Coupon Per Visit Please Mention Coupon When Ordering Not Valid in Dining Room Expires Dec. 8, 2022 Roberto's Ristorante &amp; Pizzeria</p>
---	---	---	---

**We want to print your news!**  
**What's new with you and your grad?**  
Special awards and recognition, Dean's list, graduations,  
scholarships, further education at graduate or professional  
schools... send your college news to [independent@rvpublishing.com](mailto:independent@rvpublishing.com) or FAX to (630) 834-0900.

# THE INDEPENDENT

Your Hometown Newspaper  
240 N. West Avenue  
Elmhurst, IL 60120

Main Phone 630.834-8244  
Fax 630.834-0900

The Independent is published every Thursday by Rock Valley Publishing, LLC, 240 N. West Avenue, Elmhurst, IL 60126.

Display Advertising:  
630.834-8355

Classified Advertising:  
630.834-8244

News:  
630.834-8244  
General Information:  
630.834-8244

## E-mail:

Advertising Department:  
ads1@rvpublishing.com  
News Department:  
Independent@rvpublishing.com  
Classified Department:  
Classifieds@rvpublishing.com

## Administration:

Dee Longfellow  
News Coordinator

Debra Hamilton  
Advertising Director

Pete Cruger  
Publisher

## Advertising:

Brenda Garcia

## Subscriptions:

The Independent is mailed to the 60101, 60106 and 60181 zip code areas for \$15.95 yearly. Out-of-area mail subscriptions are \$29.95 yearly. For home delivery information call 630.834-8244.

## Reprints:

Content appearing in the Independent may not be reprinted without permission of the publisher or editor. Requests should be directed to Independent@rvpublishing.com or 630.834-8244.

Postmaster: Please send address changes to:

THE INDEPENDENT  
240 N. West Avenue,  
Elmhurst, IL 60126

## Office Hours:

Monday-Friday 11am-3pm



# November 88's Best recognition presented to Hopkins

Malik Hopkins has been named as Addison Trail's November recipient of 88's Best recognition for his greatly improved performance in academics and beyond. Hopkins, a senior, was recognized during the Nov. 14 District 88 Board of Education meeting.

Throughout his time at Addison Trail, Hopkins has proven to be a positive role model for his peers and has spent his high school career balancing all of it with a positive attitude and a contagious Blazer spirit that has had a lasting impact on his teachers and classmates.

Hopkins grew up in a few areas, including Bellwood, Broadview, Maywood and the west side of Chicago. He attended Irving Middle School and Proviso East High School before moving to Addison and beginning at Addison Trail in his junior year.

When asked what advice he would give to incoming freshmen, Hopkins said they should be true to themselves and believe in their dreams. He added that a bad moment should never dictate your day, and you should always push through every single struggle.

## Involvement at Addison Trail:

- Founding member of Addison Trail's BEYOND club, which provides mentorship and academic support for black students to enable them to thrive holistically in high school and BEYOND
- Member of Addison Trail's student-led news channel, AT News
- Member of Addison Trail's

Link Crew, which welcomes freshmen and helps them feel comfortable throughout their first year of high school and guides them to discover what it takes to be successful in the transition to high school

## Future plans:

• Hopkins plans to obtain a commercial driver's license (CDL) and a real estate license and possibly earn certification in heating and air conditioning. He aspires to become a successful entrepreneur.

## Staff member comments

"Hopkins is truly one of a kind. Once you meet him, you will understand. He is the kind of person who will always put a smile on your face. He will lift you up when you are down. No matter what is going on in his life, he will come to school with a positive attitude. Hopkins never makes excuses. He is a doer. He is extremely hardworking and passionate about his future. He is the type of person who will go out of his way to make someone feel special or included. He is kind, selfless, motivated, genuine, true, dedicated, determined, resilient and ambitious. I have never met anyone like him in all my years of counseling. He will be whatever he chooses to be — he will be an entrepreneur. On top of his incredible personality and academic achievements, Hopkins has incredible style and musical talent. He is just a positive presence in our building. He creates motivational videos and spreads them through

**"(Malik) Hopkins is truly one of a kind. Once you meet him, you will understand. He is the kind of person who will always put a smile on your face. He will lift you up when you are down. No matter what is going on in his life, he will come to school with a positive attitude."**

— Counselor Tina Gatses

social media, inspiring students to be better and to do better. He has become a true leader here at Addison Trail. What is so surprising is he just transferred to Addison Trail at the beginning of his junior year, and he has had such an incredible impact on his peers and the staff. It has been an honor to be his counselor and a part of his journey."

— Counselor Tina Gatses

"From our very first conversation, I could tell Hopkins had ambition and wanted to create alliances in pursuit of creating a path forward for success. If he faced a setback, he always kept his eyes on the big picture and was relentless in his goal of becoming a better version of himself than the day before. Above all else, I will always remember Hopkins' magnetic personality. He has a zest for life, is generous and is always smiling from ear to ear. I genuinely miss having him in class, but I am happy to see him thriving in all facets of

the Blazer Nation."

— Social studies teacher Daniel Styler

"I haven't officially had Hopkins as a student, but we worked together frequently last year during ATR (resource period), so I could help him with physics. Hopkins is such a driven, hardworking, unique young man — I am not surprised he is winning this award. His positive attitude is contagious, and I am excited to see everything he will accomplish this school year and beyond."

— Science teacher Kira Bonk

"Hopkins is a beam of sunshine whenever you come across him. No matter what he's going through, if you ask him how he is doing, he will respond with, 'Good, but trying to be better.' This alone shows who Hopkins is. He is always striving to do better than yesterday, and he always sports a smile while doing it."

— Counselor Gia Kish

## • Burglary

(Continued from front page)

with the pry bar. It is further alleged that Martin eventually grabbed a landscaping rock and threw it through a pane of glass in the garage bay door. It is alleged that the juvenile and Martin then entered the building through the broken window. It is alleged that once alerted to the arrival of the police, the two suspects exited the building and entered the Acura to flee. Officers however, had blocked the driveway with their squad car.

Officers exited the squad car and, as the Acura attempted to flee, drew their weapons and ordered the offenders to stop and exit the car. It is alleged that the defendants attempted to flee in the Acura, which was driven by the juvenile, by driving directly at one of the uniformed officers, at which time the officer discharged his duty weapon striking the juvenile in the chest and grazing Martin, who was seated in the front passenger seat. As the vehicle allegedly approached, the officer ran out of the path of the Acura and used his free hand to push off the vehicle to avoid injury.

It is alleged that the vehicle then fled east on Ogden Avenue to northbound IL-83. Near 22nd Street in Oak Brook, it is alleged that the vehicle crashed into a ditch and the four occupants fled on foot. All four suspects were apprehended a short time later. The juvenile, who was the driver of the vehicle, was taken to a hospital for medical attention where he remained until Jan. 10, 2022, when he was discharged into the custody of authorities. It was later determined that the Acura had been stolen on Dec. 21, 2021, out of Lake County.

When processing the scene, officers located three firearms inside the Acura; a Glock 23 40 caliber with an extended magazine, a Poly 80 gun with a round in the chamber and a Glock 17 9mm with a fully loaded 24-round magazine. Officers also found a Glock 19 with an extended magazine just outside the Acura near the driver's side door. Three of the firearms appeared to have switches which could render the firearms fully automatic. Inside the vehicle, officers also found a 50-round drum magazine that was nearly full, twenty-eight key fobs for various automobiles and two pry bars.

"Judge Coco's finding of guilty on all charges send a clear message that the type of violent behavior exhibited by the defendant in this case will not be tolerated in DuPage County," Berlin said. "The fact that the defendant is a juvenile will not deter law enforcement from protecting the public and will not deter my office from aggressively prosecuting anyone accused of such violent behavior."

Members of the public are reminded that this complaint contains only charges and is not proof of the defendants' guilt.



SUBMITTED PHOTO Rock Valley Publishing  
Pictured here with Principal Jack Andrews, Malik Hopkins has been named as Addison Trail's November recipient of 88's Best recognition for his highly-improved performance in academics and beyond.

# Addison Trail hosts International Fest Week

During the week of Nov. 7, Addison Trail hosted its annual International Fest Week, during which 12 presenters spoke with students about their travels and experiences around the world.

Through the presentations, students were able to learn about a variety of countries, cultures, topics and perspectives. Addison Trail partnered with Junior Achievement of Chicago to help coordinate and organize the speakers. Prerecorded videos and a virtual world language fair also were available.

During the event, Addison Trail's International Club also hosted Games From Around the World and a Spirit Week, with each day featuring a different travel theme. The group offered a Dec-A-Door contest as well, where resource classes chose a country and decorated their door to represent that location and culture. The goal was to show that Addison Trail encompasses many nationalities but is one Blazer Nation.

The decorations were judged, and the winner was special education teacher Jessica Sokolowski's class, which showcased France.

International Fest Week culminated with the school's annual International Dance Show, which featured dances that represented various countries/cultures.



At International Fest Week, visitors to Addison Trail performed dances representing their various nations and cultures around the world. Sponsored by Addison Trail's International Club, these dancers celebrate with the flags of their countries.

SUBMITTED PHOTOS: Rock Valley Publishing



This woman wears a gorgeous dress with a full circle skirt as she dances and twirls to the music of her country. It was one of many performances during International Fest Week at Addison Trail High School.

## Coming events

*Editor's note: Unless otherwise specified, learn more about these events and programs at: [addisonlibrary.org/events](http://addisonlibrary.org/events) or call 630-543-3617.*

### Friday, Dec. 2

#### Digital converting: VHS to MP4

From 1-2 p.m. at the Adult Program Room of the Addison Public Library, learn how to preserve your VHS tapes by converting them to digital MP4 files. During this class, you will get a demonstration of the Creative Studio's digitizing equipment and ElGato Video Capture software.

### Saturday, Dec. 3

#### Las Posadas story time

From 2-3 p.m. at the Addison Public Library, join The Language Labs for a story time celebrating Las Posadas!

### Tuesday, Dec. 6

#### Conflict management

From 10-11 a.m. on Zoom via the Addison Public Library, it is more critical than ever to effectively navigate workplace conflict. In this workshop, you will learn strategies to identify the root of conflict and to resolve differences in a positive way.

### Wednesday, Dec. 7

#### Let's get together story time

From 10-10:30 a.m. at the Addison Public Library, celebrate everything that makes your family special with songs, stories, and crafts!

#### Talking politics

Starting at 7 p.m. at the Large Meeting Room of the Addison Public Library, get out of your echo

chamber! Discuss and debate political issues with your neighbors in this safe space.

### Thursday, Dec. 8

#### Zumba!

Starting at 7 p.m. at the Large Meeting Room of the Addison Public Library, instructor and performer Erika Ochoa leads this fun, fast-paced, musical exercise practice. No previous experience required. Instruction is bilingual, English/Spanish.

#### Chair yoga

Starting at 10 a.m. at the Large Meeting Room of the Addison Public Library both Dec. 8 and Dec. 22, certified yoga instructor Marti Lahood will guide you through one of the gentlest forms of yoga.

#### Drawing with Mark Anderson (for teens)

Starting at 3:15 p.m. at the Addison Public Library, professional illustrator and cartoonist Mark Anderson brings your drawings to life and helps everyone from newbies to experts improve their skills.

### Thursday, Dec. 8 through

### Sunday, Dec. 11

#### Jigsaw puzzle exchange

Swap out the jigsaw puzzles you have completed for something "new to you!" Drop-off dates are Dec. 8, 9 and 10 at the Adult Service Desk of the Addison Public Library. For each puzzle you donate, you will get a ticket to receive a different puzzle during the exchange.

Pickup is Dec. 11 at the Large Meeting Room.

See EVENTS, Page 14



Here is the 2022 Suburban Life Girls Volleyball All-Area Team.

### First Team

**Ava Falduto, IC Catholic Prep, junior, outside hitter:** Committed to Penn State as a libero, Falduto's offensive production in leading the Knights to second place in Class 2A is even more impressive when taking into consideration that she's not a trained attacker. Falduto, the 2022 Suburban Life Girls Volleyball Player of the Year, finished the season with 477 kills, averaging over 13 per match. She also had 311 digs, 31 aces, 36 assists and 29 blocks. The Metro Suburban Blue Player of the Year and IVCA First Team All-Stater has 802 career kills.



Ava Falduto

**Jordan Heatherly, Montini, senior, setter/right side hitter:** The Memphis recruit reached 1,000 career assists and 1,000 career kills this season, hit at a .566 percentage and was an IVCA First Team All-Stater and Third Team All-American and a third-time GCAC all-conference pick. Heatherly this season had 467 kills, 459 assists, 355 digs, 60 aces and 32 blocks. Finished with career totals of 133 aces, 1,029 kills, 64 blocks, 1,289 assists and 693 digs.



Jordan Heatherly

"Jordan is a high-level, high-energy player that changed the pace of our program with her strength, maturity, volleyball IQ and relentless commitment," Montini coach Patricia Linnig said. "Her passion for the game and this program is what put her in a position to be a captain for the last two years and her selflessness showed in everything she did for the team and program. She has been a game changer for Montini volleyball."

**Addy Horner, St. Francis, sophomore, setter/right side hitter:** Horner led St. Francis to the Class 3A state championship, the program's 13th state title. She had 321 kills, 372 assists, 145 digs, 80 aces and 65 blocks.



Addy Horner

"She has the ability to take over a match," St. Francis coach Lisa Ston said. "She sees the floor well and can mix up her shots in the right situations to score."

**Marin Johnson, Glenbard West, junior, outside hitter:** The 6-foot-2 third-year varsity starter led the Hilltoppers to their first West Suburban Silver title since 2016 and a regional championship. Johnson had 292 kills, 33 blocks, 43 aces and 162 digs through regionals, with a +365 in plus/minus statistics. The all-conference pick has five all-tournament selections in her career.



Marin Johnson

"Marin Johnson is the most athletic 6-foot-plus hitter I've seen come through our school in the 17 years I've been there," Hilltoppers coach Dan Scott said. "She is the girl every opposing team game plans for, and they still can't stop her. Marin is also the first kid to set up the net every single practice. A coach's dream."

**Calli Kenny, Willowbrook, jr., setter/right-side hitter:** Repeat all-area selection led Willowbrook to a 36-3 record, West Suburban Gold title, a 29-match win streak and sectional final. Kenny had a team-high 260 kills, 236 digs (second on Willowbrook), team-high 79 aces (breaking her school record), 323 assists and 29 blocks. Three-time all-conference pick.



Calli Kenny

"Calli is a nationally recognized setter who rises under pressure and finds a way to score from anywhere on the court," Willowbrook coach Irene Mason said. "She has excellent tempo, ball placement and covers the court with ease. She is also a dominant hitter who can mix up her shots and score the ball efficiently. She has a refuse-to-lose attitude, which allows her to perform at her best during our most challenging, meaningful matches. Her athleticism, court presence and volleyball skill set are undeniable."

**Kamryn Lee-Caracci, Lyons, senior, outside hitter:** Georgetown recruit, three-year varsity starter and IVCA First Team All-Stater led 30-8 Lions to regional title. Lee-Caracci, a six-rotation pin, had 414 kills, 181 digs and 33 aces. All-conference and all-tournament at Wheaton Classic, Lee-Caracci finished her career with 703 kills.



Kamryn Lee-Caracci

**Kitty Sandt, Nazareth, senior, setter/right-side hitter:** Clemson commit played in every set for Nazareth and led Roadrunners to second place in Class 3A a year after winning program's first state title. IVCA Second Team All-Stater, ESCC all-conference and AVCA best and brightest first team, the 6-foot-1 Sandt led team in assists with 639 but also was Nazareth's main attacker with 262 kills at a .385 hitting percentage. Sandt also had 243 digs, 29 aces and 38 blocks. She was a starter on three Nazareth state teams.



Kitty Sandt

"Kitty was our leader on and off the court," Nazareth coach Melissa Masterson said. "Her experience, leadership and skills were a big reason for our success."

**Aniya Warren, Benet, sophomore, libero:** IVCA First Team All-Stater helped lead 37-5 Benet to second place in Class 4A in second season as varsity starter. Warren led Benet in digs with 384 and in serve receive rating and was second in aces as one of three Redwings to play six rotations. Two-time all-conference pick and MVP of the Scholastic Cup tournament, all tournament at three others and one of 16 selections to IVCA All-Tournament team.



Aniya Warren

### Second Team

**Audrey Brcka, Wheaton North, senior, outside hitter:** William & Mary commit was a two-time IVCA All-State honorable mention selection, two-time all-conference pick and four-time all-tournament selection. Brcka had 342 kills, 292 serve receptions, 196 digs, 47 blocks, 33 aces and 13 assists. Finished her career with 712 kills. Leaves Wheaton North owning the record for most kills in a career and in a season. Six-rotation player contributed solid defense from the back row.

**Hannah Kenny, Willowbrook, sophomore, setter/right side hitter:** Explosive 5-foot-7 hitter and like her sister Calli a nationally-ranked setter led Willowbrook to 36-3 record, West Suburban Gold title and sectional final. Kenny had 247 kills, second on Willowbrook, team-high 376 assists, 205 digs, 59 aces and 29 blocks. Two-time all-conference pick is ranked by PrepVolleyball.com as the No. 68 player in the nation for the Class of 2025.

"Hannah is a nationally ranked setter who was a consistent, reliable playmaker for us every night. The confi-

dence and leadership abilities she exudes as a sophomore is beyond impressive," Willowbrook coach Irene Mason said. "Her tempo, ball placement and court presence are excellent. Even though she is only 5-7, her explosiveness, athleticism, ball control and court awareness allows her to dominate when hitting and scoring in the front row. She's a beast!"

**Abby Markworth, Lyons, junior, setter:** IVCA Second Team All-Stater and three-year varsity starter led 30-8 Lions to regional title. Markworth's 814 assists were second-most in Class 4A, tops for juniors in Class 4A. Markworth, an all-conference pick who soared past 1,000 assists for her career, also had 192 digs, 80 kills and 31 aces.

**Ava Novak, Benet, junior, outside hitter:** IVCA Second Team All-Stater led Benet to second place in Class 4A. Novak led Benet in kills with 240, was second in serve receive rating and third in digs. Two-time all-conference pick, MVP of Wheaton Classic and all-tournament at Wheaton North and Autumnfest, she was one of three Benet players to play six rotations.

**Lauren Salata, Nazareth, junior, outside hitter/setter:** True six-rotation player led Nazareth in kills and did a lot for the Class 3A state runners-up - serve receive, defense, attacking and even setting. The 5-foot-9 Salata led Nazareth in kills with 370 and also had 222 digs and 95 assists along with 38 aces.

"She was our go-to player and we relied on her to score many points," Nazareth coach Melissa Masterson said. "When she was out with injury, we felt her absence significantly."

**Grace Ulatowski, Lemont, senior, outside hitter:** Two-time MVP of the South Suburban Blue Conference led Lemont to three conference titles and two regional championships as a three-year varsity athlete. In two seasons, the 5-foot-9 Ulatowski had 548 kills, 443 digs, 250 service points, 69 aces and 39 blocks. "Grace is a hardworking athlete that raises the level of play during matches and at practice," Lemont coach Chris Zogata said. "She looks to improve every match she plays."

**Abby VanderWal, Timothy Christian, sophomore, outside hitter:** Trojans' 6-foot-3 sophomore was driving force for a 31-8 sectional finalist. VanderWal had team-high 440 kills with a .441 hitting percentage and 54.3% kill percentage, team-high 276 digs, team-high 52 aces, 31 blocks and .909 serve receive percentage. All-conference and all-tournament at Manteno and Plainfield Central.

"She is an extremely talented and versatile player that can do anything we ask her to do," Trojans coach Scott Piersma said. "Even when teams were able to plan for her, she was still able to be a dominant player finishing with multiple matches of 15-plus kills."

# Warriors secure first win of the season

**Strong finish leads Willowbrook to a 37-32 victory over Lockport; Warriors go 1-3 at their season-opening invite**

## STAFF REPORT

The Willowbrook girls basketball team earned its first win of the season when it closed out its Thanksgiving invitational with last week's 37-32 triumph over Lockport.

The Warriors, who improved to 1-3 with the victory, lost their first three games in the five-team, round-robin event. They lost to Plainfield East, Montini Catholic and East Aurora before completing the invitational with their win over Lockport on Nov. 22.

Junior Elle Bruschk scored a team-leading 14 points in the Warriors' win over the Porters. Senior Rimona Kari added 10 points. Senior Yazmin Setaram scored five points, while senior Sara Stout provided four points with a pair of fourth-quarter baskets. Senior Nina Nytko and junior Tia Kelly scored two points each.

Willowbrook led Lockport 14-5 after one quarter. The Porters cut the Warriors' lead to 19-16 by halftime. The Porters made a 3-point shot with about five minutes left in the third quarter to take a 22-21 lead.

Willowbrook regained a 25-24 lead when Bruschk sank a 3-point shot with a little more than two minutes left in the third quarter. The Warriors held that 25-24 edge at the end of the period.

Stout's second basket of the fourth quarter gave Willowbrook a 30-28 lead with 3:10 to play.

Bruschk pushed the Warriors' lead to 33-28 when she drained a corner 3-point shot with about 2:15 left in the game. Bruschk's inside basket extended the lead to 35-28 with 1:33 remaining.

Lockport made a 3-point shot with about one minute to play to trim Willowbrook's lead to 35-31. The Porters added a free throw with about 40 seconds on the clock to cut the Warriors' lead to three points.

Lockport missed a 3-point shot that could have tied the game in the closing seconds. The Porters rebounded the missed shot, but subse-

quently turned the ball over.

Lockport fouled Kari with 3.7 seconds to play. Kari went to the free-throw line and made a pair of shots to seal the Warriors' first victory of the season.

One night before playing Lockport, Willowbrook suffered a 55-33 loss to East Aurora. The Warriors trailed the Tomcats 21-3 after one

quarter and 27-11 at halftime. East Aurora's lead grew to 45-19 by the end of the third quarter.

Stout scored a team-high 12 points in the Warriors' loss to East Aurora. Setaram contributed six points by making a pair of 3-point shots in the second quarter.

Montini Catholic won the title at Willowbrook's invite. The Broncos

went 4-0 in the event, scoring double-digit wins over each of their opponents.

Bruschk and Nytko were named to the invitational's all-tournament team.

The Warriors opened their West

Suburban Gold Conference season with this week's game at Hinsdale South. This week's schedule also includes a non-conference battle at Lake Park, as well as Saturday's conference matchup at District 88 rival Addison Trail.



CHRIS FOX PHOTOS Rock Valley Publishing

Willowbrook's girls basketball team captured its first victory of the season last week when it completed its own Thanksgiving invite with a 37-32 win over Lockport on Nov. 22. The Warriors lost their first three games in the five-team, round-robin invitational. Willowbrook led Lockport 25-24 through three quarters of last week's game. Junior Elle Bruschk (No. 33 - above) is pictured while launching and making a 3-point shot that gave the Warriors a 33-28 lead with about 2:15 to play. Bruschk added an inside basket to raise the Warriors' lead to 35-28 with about 1:30 left in the game. Senior Rimona Kari (No. 30 - bottom left) is pictured at the free-throw line in the game's closing seconds. Kari made a pair of free throws with 3.7 seconds to play to lock up the win for Willowbrook. Another photo shows Bruschk and senior Nina Nytko (No. 21 - right), who were both named to the invite's all-tournament team. Willowbrook's schedule this week includes West Suburban Gold Conference games at Hinsdale South and Addison Trail.

## Warriors tip off their season at St. Charles East's tournament

**Willowbrook wins one of four games and finishes sixth in the eight-team event**

## STAFF REPORT

The Willowbrook boys basketball team began its 2022-23 season by winning one of four games and earning a sixth-place finish in St. Charles East's eight-team Thanksgiving tournament.

The Warriors opened the event with a 68-54 victory over South Elgin on Nov. 22. One day later, Willowbrook dropped a 73-61 decision to Plainfield East. The Warriors completed play in their four-team pool with a 65-49 loss to Benet Academy on Friday. Willowbrook then faced St. Charles East in Saturday's fifth-place game. The Saints defeated the Warriors 72-48.

After beginning their season with a 1-3 start at the Thanksgiving tournament in St. Charles, the Warriors' season continues with this Friday's West Suburban Gold Conference opener at Morton. Willowbrook will play its first home game of the season on Dec. 7, when it will square off against Naperville Central in a

non-conference contest.

Willowbrook senior Noah Campbell was named to St. Charles East event's all-tournament team. Campbell scored a team-leading 25 points in the Warriors' victory over South Elgin. He also had three rebounds and three assists in the 14-point win over the Storm.

Senior Isaac Sobieszczyk provided 15 points, seven rebounds, four assists and three steals in Willowbrook's win over South Elgin. Senior Luke Davis supplied 10 points, five rebounds, two assists and two steals. Junior Kenyon Rhodes and senior Tyler Royal delivered eight points each.

Campbell poured in 31 points in Willowbrook's loss to Plainfield East on Nov. 23. He added six rebounds and three assists. The Warriors trailed Plainfield East 28-25 at halftime, but the Bengals pulled away in the second half to earn a 12-point win.

See **WARRIORS**, Page 14



## Warriors kick off season with three victories

**Team delivers three straight wins at its own quad meet**

Willowbrook's wrestling team opened its season by defeating all three of its opponents in Saturday's quad meet in Villa Park.

The Warriors defeated Chicago's Gray Corner College Prep (75-6), Marian Catholic (60-22) and St. Rita (42-32) on Saturday. The Willowbrook wrestlers who posted perfect 3-0 records during the day included senior Elijah Smith, senior Charlie Hayes, senior James DaNey, sophomore Josh Palanitis and sophomore Elias Samayoa.

The Warriors' season continues with this Friday's West Suburban Gold Conference home meet against Morton. The Warriors will compete in a tournament at Plainfield North High School this Saturday.



Villa Park calling. I am appalled to see on Facebook the number of cats and dogs that go "missing" every few days or so. I can't help but point to owner irresponsibility; not having the pet chipped or otherwise wearing a collar and tag, guarding the doors against escape or making sure fences are secure and gates are closed, etc. And I do speak from experience. The rescue where I adopted my dog warned us he was a "runner." He managed to slip out of his collar on a walk and took off lickety-split. Luckily, I nabbed him when he stopped to do his business! But after that, it was walking with a harness and always making sure he couldn't get out when we opened a door to the outside. And for people with an "indoor-outdoor" cat, those especially should be chipped and definitely spayed or neutered. But do you really think the animal can take care of itself against a coyote or fox? Then you wonder why the cat never came home? If you think a cat should be allowed to roam outside, you might consider either not owning one or moving to a farm.

I see there was a UN Climate Change Conference in Egypt. Never mind how much carbon was emitted into the atmosphere flying representatives to these talks. They agreed to establish a fund to pay developing countries for loss and damage caused by global warming. Hooray! China has the world's second largest economy and emits more carbon than the U.S. and the European Union combined, but guess who's not going to contribute to this fund? China! The Chinese climate envoy has already said China won't contribute, and China is still classified by the U.N. as a developing nation. Great job, U.N. (By the way, if anyone thinks I'm spreading misinformation, be my guest and check all of this out.) You can bet the U.N. and those who attended this conference like John Kerry will let China slide, like they

always do.

Does anyone remember before Trump was elected it was politically incorrect to say Merry Christmas? If Americans don't stand up for freedom of speech, they will lose their freedom and culture. As Superman used to say, "Truth, justice and the American way."

Hello, I'd like to see these officials stop using the language that there's "no danger to the public." Well, of course at that minute when they're making the announcement, there's no danger to the public, but had you been at the area of a shooting before, during, after, you're in danger. Quite frankly, you're in danger with all these nut jobs with guns every time you go out anywhere. Let's face reality.

Hello, and well, thank goodness the midterms are over. Is it too early to start saying "Lock him up"?

Did you see the leftist *Washington Post's* recent report about the FBI raid on Trump's Florida home? According to the report, there's no evidence that Trump had any "nuclear secrets" or was trying to give or sell information to Russia, Saudi Arabia or any other country. Of course, that won't stop the dim bulbs in Speak Out and elsewhere from parroting the left-wing nonsense that Trump had "nuclear secrets" at his house. Those people still believe the Russia collusion hoax, which was cooked up.

President Biden did one thing I can agree with: He pardoned turkeys Chocolate and Chip.

Based on the election results in Illinois, I get the impression that most Illinoisans do not understand the magnitude of the fiscal crisis in this state. Please do some research on this. You can look at Truth in Accounting's Financial State of the

States 2022 that just came out. They explain the crisis in detail. Illinois is ranked 48th on their list.

The McHenry County coroner recently announced that the woman who was driving the wrong way on I-90 in a fatal crash this past summer had a blood alcohol level of .164, twice the legal limit. The crash killed a family of six and their 13-year-old family friend. What a senseless tragedy. Why aren't we hearing more about the driver, who also died in the crash? Where was she coming from, and how did she manage to drive the wrong way on an interstate?

President Biden blames everything from inflation to energy on Putin. Evidently, Putin is the one running our country.

The quality of life is going down the toilet in DuPage County. It takes 10 stop lights to pass I-355 after 2 p.m. on many days from North Avenue. The amount of time the drivers in this county have to sit in their cars because of the traffic is too much. I-355 was supposed to help traffic, not cause more of it. Recently, a truck fell and all lanes were closed on northbound 83 in Bensenville. You could only go half a mile in 15 minutes. What is going on and what is being done to alleviate the traffic in this county?

I saw an interesting story published online. The headline was: Movement to create a new state in southern Illinois gaining momentum. The story stated that there's a

growing list of Illinois counties disenchanted with what goes on in Cook County, and they have voted in nonbinding resolutions to leave Illinois and form a new state. The group called New Illinois seeks state split, following the procedure provided in the U.S. Constitution (Article IV, Sec. 3). This is because the Illinois General Assembly would have to pass a resolution consenting to the state split and only Congress has the power to create new states. But I have say my heart is with them. I appreciate their efforts and understand their frustrations. If I lived in any of these counties, I'd be attending their meetings.



SUBMITTED PHOTO: Rock Valley Publishing

## Leslie Avila Torres earns 88's Best honor for November

Willowbrook High School senior Leslie Avila Torres was named her school's recipient of the 88's Best award for the month of November. Avila Torres was recognized during the District 88 Board of Education's Nov. 14 meeting. She is pictured (left) at the meeting with Willowbrook Principal Dan Krause. The 88's Best honor recognizes students for their achievements in and out of the classroom. Avila Torres received the 88's Best award for exhibiting the continuous growth and improvement that educators hope for in students. Her counselor at Willowbrook—Lourdes Pina—described Avila Torres as focused, responsible and engaged. "Her senior year has been a wonderful example of how far she has come," stated Pina in her comments congratulating Avila Torres on receiving the 88's Best award. "She embodies the tenacity and perseverance of a Warrior and has overcome her initial obstacles." While English is her second language, Avila Torres has successfully completed courses with and without additional support. Avila Torres is a member of Willowbrook's Students for H.O.P.E. (Helping Organ Procurement Education). She is enrolled in the cosmetology program at Technology Center of DuPage (TCD). Krause noted during the recent board meeting that Avila Torres is assisting West Chicago High School's theater department by serving as the makeup artist for its upcoming productions. Avila Torres plans to pursue a degree in nursing. She's also looking forward to opening her own salon with her sister and uncle.

## •Warriors (Continued from page 7)

Davis contributed 14 points in the loss to the Bengals. Sobieszczyk had six points and 13 rebounds.

Campbell scored a team-leading 26 points in Willowbrook's loss to Benet on Friday in St. Charles. Benet, one of the area's top-ranked teams, led the Warriors 32-21 at halftime.

St. Charles East led Willowbrook 37-20 at halftime of Saturday's fifth-place contest.

Campbell, who averaged 24 points

per game during the tournament, provided 14 points, five rebounds, three assists and two steals against the Saints. Sobieszczyk delivered 11 points and 11 rebounds. Rhodes scored eight points, while junior Andrew Ciesinski tallied six points, five rebounds and two blocked shots.

Benet won the tournament title at St. Charles East with a perfect 4-0 record. The Redwings defeated Proviso East 68-59 in Saturday's championship game.