



TROJAN TODAY

YOUR SCHOOL TOWN OF HIGHLAND SOURCE FOR NEWS AND EVENTS | OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2023

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT



Pictured from left: Gabriella Garcia, Bianca Jones, Esperanza Talavera, Isabel Ivy, Salma Mahmud, Raine Guzman, Nayehli Torres, Emily Miranda, Miranda Gutierrez, Alondra Barajas, Jacob Mikolajczyk, Emma Padilla, Spencer Nelson and Eamon Colgazier. [Photo provided]



Scholars pictured from left: Selena Lopez (NHRA), Gabriella Garcia(NHRA), Cecelia Baker (NHRA), Martin Topp (NHRA), Andrew Peterson (NAARA), Spencer Nelson (NHRA) and Isabel Ivy (NHRA). [Photo provided]

LATINOS COUNT

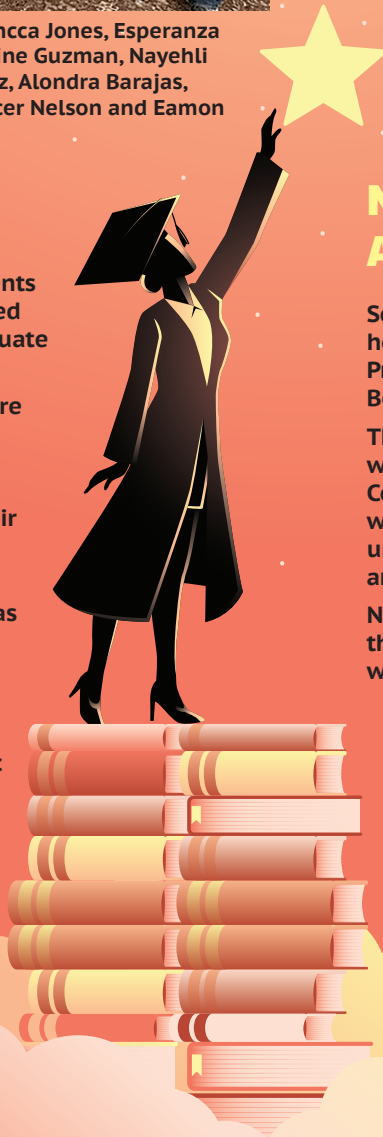
A group of 14 students in the top 25 percent academically of Latino students at Highland High have been motivated and empowered to pursue post-graduate education at local universities.

The “2023 Scholarship Meet the Future Luncheon” hosted by Latinos Count and NIPSCO, provided students the opportunity to meet with recruiters looking to encourage diversity at their institutions of higher learning.

Assistant Principal Cristina Campos said the event had the impact she was hoping to see in her students.

“Before they attended the event at Avalon Manor, many of our students couldn’t imagine how they would afford college despite high academic achievement,” she said.

“The scholarship luncheon showed them they could, that there are quality colleges and universities that want to help them reach their goals– both academically and financially.”



NATIONAL HISPANIC & AFRICAN-AMERICAN HONORS

Seven Highland High juniors and seniors have received honors through the College Board’s National Recognition Program based on strong performance on their College Board assessments and hard work in the classroom.

That number is nearly double the four Highland students who received the prestigious award last year. In 2023, the College Board is honoring 72,000 students nationwide who meet the academic criteria and belong to an underrepresented student group – Black, Indigenous, Latin and those who hail from rural areas.

New this fall: The College Board added a fifth program – the National First-Generation Recognition Program – that will have its first designees in 2024.

Although there is no scholarship attached to the National Recognition Program, Highland High Counselor Jason Quigg said students are encouraged to include the award with their college applications.

“Our recipients are all great kids who are well-deserving of this prestigious award,” he said. “Savvy recruiters, particularly those looking for diversity in their programs, take note of what these students have done.”

ADMINISTRATION

Brian Smith
Superintendent
bsmith@highland.k12.in.us

Ryan Erdelac
Asst. Superintendent
rerdelac@highland.k12.in.us

Cindy Adams
Chief Financial Officer
cadams@highland.k12.in.us

Britni Luster
Food Service Administrator
bluster@highland.k12.in.us

Andrea Warner
District Nurse Coordinator
awarner@highland.k12.in.us

Kris Besch
Special Education Director
kbesch@highland.k12.in.us

Mike Sukta
Facilities Manager
msukta@highland.k12.in.us

Dominic Nieblas
Transportation Director
dnieblas@highland.k12.in.us

John Zack
Highland High School Principal
jzack@highland.k12.in.us

Scheryl Corman
Highland Middle School Principal
scorman@highland.k12.in.us

Amy Harrington
Johnston Elementary Principal
aharrington@highland.k12.in.us

Eric McMahon
Merkley Elementary Principal
emcmahon@highland.k12.in.us

Kevin Beveridge
Southridge Elementary Principal
kbeverid@highland.k12.in.us

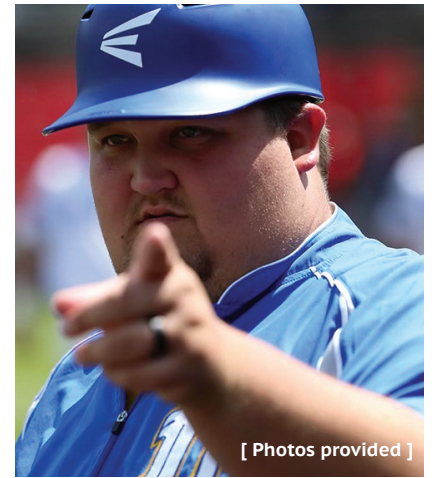
Christina Davis
Warren Elementary Principal
cdavis@highland.k12.in.us

SCHOOL BOARD

Victor A. Garcia, President
Patrick Krull, Vice President
Allencia Ballard, Secretary
Robert Kuva, member
Erica Smith-Gomez, member

The school board meets the third Tuesday of the month at 6 p.m. in the Administration Building, 9145 Kennedy Avenue, Highland.

INFO: Visit highland.k12.in.us for the latest information, including meeting agendas, school policies, board mission, beliefs and values.



[Photos provided]

New head coach for boys high school baseball – only 7th in district's history – lands dream job

Zak Pizer has been named the new head coach for Highland High School Boy's Baseball, the seventh coach in the 60-year history of the district and only the third head baseball coach in the last 35 years.

For Pizer, a U.S. history and sociology teacher at the high school, coaching is the realization of a dream.

"I loved playing catcher but had to give it up after I tore the menisci in both knees," he said. "Even before that, though, I was seeing my dream of being a coach come

into view. I love helping kids grow as individuals and ball players. My goal is to see these kids develop into great baseball players – and even better young men."

Athletic Director Ryan Harrington said Pizer is a great fit for Highland baseball.

"We were looking for someone familiar with our program. Zak is that person," Harrington said. "Zak is already working with kids in the younger grade levels. His plan: to up their level of play and get them ready for high school ball."

LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

'New students, teachers, coach, tennis courts add up to whole lotta fun and discovery for our Trojans this year'

Planning for the 2023-2024 school year, we knew to expect a heaping helping of "new" – an abundance of new teachers, new students, a new head baseball coach, even a new tennis venue. The administrative team was hopeful – if not just a bit nervous. As it turns out: All that new is working out fine.

NEW STUDENTS ...

In addition to the 135 new students who now attend one of the town's five public schools but live outside the district, we welcomed additional new faces who moved into Highland over the summer. These students are finding their way and becoming familiar with the new routine. We are seeing them immerse themselves in the entire student experience and in many cases, demonstrating academic excellence.

NEW TEACHERS ...

In addition to a nearly complete turnover in the high school math department, we welcomed new teachers to nearly every school building. The new staff has settled in and found a nice rhythm.

NEW TENNIS COURTS ...

By the time you read this, the new tennis venue should be ready for play. It will be too late for boys tennis, which is played in late summer and early fall. It will, however, be ready for the girls tennis season, which begins in the spring.



Brian Smith
Superintendent
School Town of Highland

Kindness



Record numbers joining K-KIDS clubs

When it comes to learning, many Highland students are taking home academic learning – and so much more.

In increasing numbers, students are joining K-Kids at the elementary level, Builders Club at the Middle School and Key Club in High School.

As they spearheaded the drive for food donations for local families in September, Warren K-Kids coordinator Mandy Johnsen said students, who join the network of clubs supported by Highland Kiwanis, are learning about leadership, philanthropy and the many ways they can contribute to their community.

“Warren Elementary has 42 students in K-Kids this year, which is a record high for us,”



she said. “We love seeing so many kids participating in service learning this year! Helping their community and our school is important to each one of these kids.”

With the list of items most needed by those without the resources to feed their families divided between participating schools, students were able to collect loads of donations to fill local pantries.

“Our kids take this effort to heart,” Johnsen said. “These clubs help kids see what they can accomplish when they work together.”

THE SPIRIT OF GIVING

Highland’s K-Kids, Builders and Key clubs set the bar high this year for the Highland Kiwanis 3rd Annual Food & Supply Drive.

Each club collects specific items, which are then distributed to local pantries in Highland and Sojourner Truth House in Gary.

“Our clubs have helped hundreds of families the past three years,” said Mandy Johnsen, K-Kids sponsor for the Warren Elementary Club.

Here’s what the students collected:

WARREN ELEMENTARY K-KIDS ...

Pasta sauce, pasta

SOUTHRIDGE ELEMENTARY K-KIDS ...

Canned past, mac-n-cheese

MERKELY ELEMENTARY K-KIDS ...

Toothpaste, mouthwash, deodorant

JOHNSTON ELEMENTARY K-KIDS ...

Shampoo, body wash

OUR LADY OF GRACE K-KIDS ...

Oatmeal, cereal

MIDDLE SCHOOL BUILDERS CLUB ...

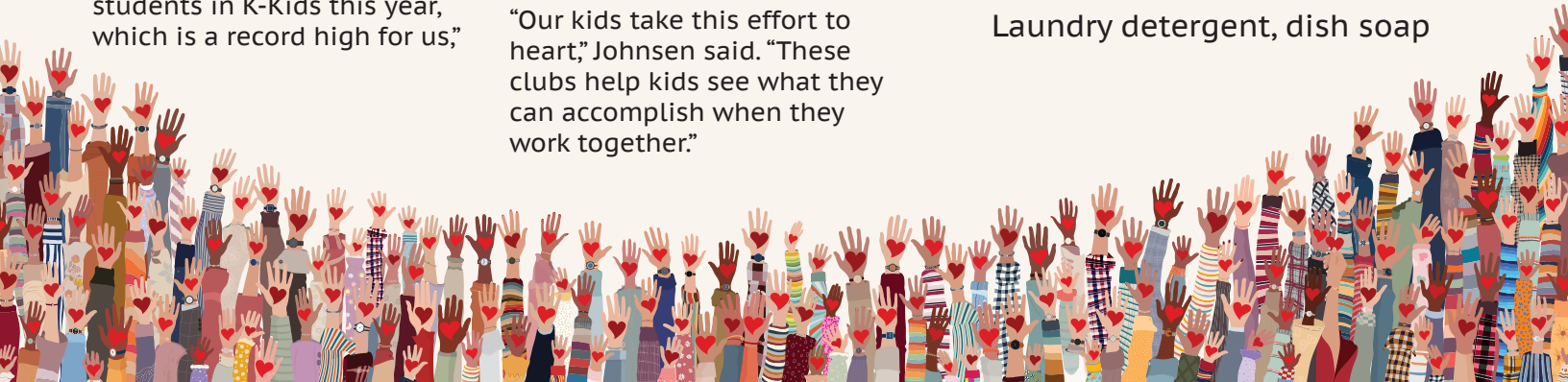
Pancake mix, syrup

HIGH SCHOOL KEY CLUB ...

Hamburger Helper, canned fruit

KIWANIS OF HIGHLAND ...

Laundry detergent, dish soap





**Monbeck
Auditorium**

**HIGHLAND THEATRE COMPANY
PRESENTS ...**

Agatha Christie's
**Murder on
The Orient Express**

Friday | November 17 | 7 pm

Saturday | November 18 | 7 pm

Sunday | November 19 | 2 pm

HighlandTheatreCompany.org

FOR MORE INFORMATION & TICKETS

CRAFT & VENDOR FAIR

Get a jump on your holiday gift shopping at the Highland Band Boosters' Fall Craft & Vendor Fair. Help support these talented students. This year's event features an amazing collection of talented artists, crafters and vendors. Plus, we'll have a few Spooktacular surprises!

WHEN: 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
October 28

WHERE: Highland Middle School, 2941 41st Street

ADMISSION: Free

INFO: highlandbandindiana_craftfair@gmail.com

MADRIGAL FEASTE

The Highland Performing Arts Boosters will present a Madrigal Feaste with all the pomp and circumstance of a royal feast. In true madrigal form, each course of your dinner is announced with fanfare and song as carolers, dancers, jugglers, and more perform right in front of you.

WHEN: 6 p.m. **December 2** and 4:30 p.m. **December 3**

WHERE: Highland High School Cafeteria, 9135 Erie St.

TICKETS: Purchase tickets – \$32 for adults, \$12 for kids under 5 not eating – from November 1-25 at hpabi.org.

HOLIDAY SPECTACULAR

Join us as we celebrate the season with performances from our high school and middle school bands, choirs and orchestras.

WHEN: 6:30 p.m. **December 12**

WHERE: Monbeck Auditorium at Highland High, 9135 Erie St.

ADMISSION: Free