

# Shepherd's Staff



## Farewell to Mr. Rincker!

By: Alex R.

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Some of you may be wondering, "Is Mr. Rincker retiring?" "What will Mr. Rincker do?" "Who is his replacement?" Here are answers to a few of your questions.

First, some information about Mr. Rincker's background. Mr. Rincker was born in Springfield, IL, and received his Bachelor of Science in Education in 1980 from Concordia Teachers College, Seward, Nebraska, and a Master of Science Education in 1997 from SIUE. Before coming to Good Shepherd, he taught at two schools both named Calvary Lutheran, one in Indianapolis, IN, and the other in Danville, IL.

Things that have changed at GS during Mr. Rincker's time here are technology, dress code, curriculum, and principals. When asked what he likes best about Good Shepherd, Mr. Rincker said, "The faculty is exceptional, students, for the most part, are eager to learn, and being able to share your faith with those you work with and teach." Mr. Rincker said his favor-

ite subjects to teach are math and science.

Two eighth-grade students were asked their thoughts about Mr. Rincker's retirement, and Elise K. said one of the most interesting things Mr. Rincker has done is, "He



touched a starfish with his bare hands." She also stated one of her favorite things about Mr. Rincker is that "He tells us great stories!"

Natalia B. thought the most interesting thing was, "He convinced us to dissect animals." They both agree that the funniest thing about Mr. Rincker was watching him trying to teach the eighth-grade boys to do headstands and hand-

stands.

During retirement, Mr. Rincker plans to spend more time with his wife and wants to travel more. Younger students may not be aware that Mr. Rincker is a hot sauce connoisseur, and he enjoys a good medium-rare prime rib when he goes to his favorite steakhouse.

Mr. Rincker offered the following advice to his replacement, "Pray for patience and understanding. Remember that they are still junior high students, and they have things going on in their lives." It was recently announced that Mr. Krueger is going to be the replacement teacher for Mr. Rincker. You're going to be a hard act to follow, Mr. Rincker! Best wishes for many enjoyable years of retirement! You've earned it, and we will miss you!

## The All-Illinois Junior Band

By: Dean H.

On May 21 and 22 of this year, 72 students from all around Illinois will play in the All-Illinois Junior Band. Although no one from Good Shepherd has ever qualified, this year, three of the participants will be from Good Shepherd.

AIJB was started to create a premier music experience for the state's best middle school students and to allow students to

perform quality pieces with an excellent band and notable conductor.

AIJB is the first state-wide middle school honor band in Illinois in more than fifty years. Each applicant must audi-

tion for the band to display skill and comprehension.

This year's AIJB festival will take place at the University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana, in the Harding Band Building, on Friday, and in the Foellinger Auditorium on Saturday. The band members will practice from approximately 1:00 PM-4:00 PM and 6:00 PM-8:00 PM on Friday and 9:00 AM-12:00 PM and 1:00 PM-2:15 PM on Saturday under the direction of Barry Houser, director of the University of Illinois athletic band. The concert will be at 3:00 PM on Saturday.

This year's songs are "Our Cast Aways" by Julie Giroux, "Urban Dances" by Erik Morales, "Shimmering Joy" by Tyler S. Grant, "New

Wade'n Water" by Adolphus Hailstork, and "Rough-Riders" by Karl L. King. James, a seventh-grader who qualified as eighth chair trumpet, says about this year's selections, "I like how there's a mix...of songs. I also like that they chose a bunch of songs."

AIJB is a highly selective band with a very rigorous audition procedure. This year, most applicants had to

Stegman, the choir and band director at Good Shepherd, says of this year's band members, "The students worked harder than ever for weeks to prepare their auditions, and I know they will do the same for their concert music."

About a month after the auditions were submitted, the applicants received their results. The festival was scheduled to be at the end of January; however, a

spike in COVID-19 cases caused the University of Illinois (where the festival was going to be) to temporarily close their campus. The AIJB festival coordinators said that it would be rescheduled. However, James said, "...I

knew of several events that I was told would be rescheduled that were eventually canceled." Thankfully, the festival was rescheduled for May 21 and 22.

In conclusion, there is no doubt that this year's AIJB festival will be a success. The repertoire and director are among the best, and the band members have been preparing for a long time. But what about those who would like to be in next year's band? Mr. Stegman says, "I think many of our students would have a good chance of being accepted if they put the time into the audition music."

*"The students worked harder than ever for weeks to prepare their auditions, and I know they will do the same for their concert music."*

—Mr. Stegman



perform two difficult etudes and a two-octave chromatic scale. The time span the applicants had to practice their auditions was only slightly more than five months. They had to practice very frequently to get in. In fact, James says he practiced "almost every day over the summer of 2021." But practicing isn't everything, according to James. You also need experience. James says, "I auditioned for the ILMEA [Illinois Music Education Association] band in 6th and 7th grade. I did not make it in 6th grade, but I got first trumpet in 7th grade. I also was nominated into Lutheran Honor Band and Madison County Jazz Festival, which I did not have to audition for." However, this year's band should be a good one. Mr.

## The Variety of Our School By: James A.

The students at Good Shepherd have an amazing array of talents that can be on full display in the annual variety show. This year's variety show took place on April 1, 2022. Talent shows like this are a great way to show your God-given talents and proclaim His glory.

In this year's variety show, there were 18 performances and 25 performers. Another astonishing fact is that three of these people actually performed twice. Dean H, a seventh-grade student, says this about Good Shepherd's variety show, "I think that Mrs. Maske, Mrs. Batty, and Mr. Stegman all did a great job organizing everything and getting it all set up."

Many people don't realize how many talents they have. They just assume that they aren't good enough if they can't

do as well at one thing as somebody else can. This is actually not true. When asked about his talents, Isaak B, a seventh-grade student, said, "I think I am good at playing

sixth-graders put together a quintet of four clarinets and a baritone and played the song "Invincible." Fred and Gus S., a first-grader and a preschooler, put on a skit with their dad, Mr. Stegman, much to the crowd's delight. Many people agreed that this was the best act and was very funny.

In conclusion, the Good Shepherd variety show is a great way to help show your gifts in front of an audience. Everyone has a talent. What is yours?



sports. I also think I am good at reading, and I like math."

Performances included strings, piano, vocal, brass, reed instruments, skits, duets, and even a martial arts demonstration. Five

## Apex Fun Run By: Andrew L.

The Apex fun run is a time of laughter and enjoyment for Good Shepherd students. Apex is an organization that comes to Good Shepherd Lutheran School for six days and teaches students about leadership and how to lead others in our community. This year's theme was "A.S. O.N.E." Each day, students learned about a new word or phrase from the acronym. The first day's word was "aspire," and the second day's word was "self-starter." On the third day, the phrase was "own it." On the fifth day, the phrase was "new day," and last, but not least, the final word was "energize." The Apex leaders came into the classrooms every day to teach students about that day's word or phrase; they explained what the words and phrases meant and how to use them in real life. In each lesson that the Apex Leaders taught, students would get a wristband with the day's theme printed on it.

At the end of all the lessons, students participated in the

Apex Fun Run. The Apex crew set up a 36-lap course, and for every lap a student completed, they earned money for the school.

The Apex Fun Run is one of Good Shepherd's most profitable fundraisers. Grayson G., a

year students had the pleasure of working with Awesome Ally, and she brought great enthusiasm to the school. Isaak B. was asked if he could change one thing about Apex, what would it be? He simply said to make it

longer, and I would have to agree with him.

My favorite week of the school year is when the Apex organization comes to our school. I also asked Addie L., an alumnus of Good Shepherd Lutheran School who now goes to Edwardsville High School, if the lessons that Apex taught her have stuck with her throughout high school. She said that they have and that the lessons have taught her good ways of be-

coming a leader and making new friends. So, all in all, Apex is the best fundraiser for Good Shepherd.



7th grader, said his favorite part of the Apex program was the energy that Awesome Ally brought to the lessons each day. Isaak B. said his favorite part of Apex was the fun run and the enthusiasm behind it.

This year, the two Apex volunteers were Jogging Jim, who is a returning Apex volunteer, and Awesome Ally. This was the first

## ALL Aboard!

By: Grace P.

The 8th-grade trip is an exciting time of year, especially for the 8th graders. They get to visit Seward, Nebraska, and take a tour of Concordia University. Some of the activities the students will participate in include: an art class, watching a movie, eating out, and swimming at the hotel pool. The trip is from Monday, May 16th- to Friday, May 20th.

In past years the students have visited Washington D.C., but Mr. Rincker, the 8th-grade teacher, states, "I would like to go to D.C., but it is not a good place to go right now." Washington D.C. has very high Covid rates at the current time, with over 146,000 cases and 1,342 deaths (*The New York*



*Times*).

Kylie, an 8th-grade student, explains why she is excited about the trip, "Even though it isn't D.C., it is an opportunity to hang out with friends."

This year will be Mr. Rincker's last class trip. He is retiring after 33 years of teaching at Good Shepherd. He is excited about this trip; he stated, "It will be my final class trip. I've gone 31 out of 33 years." He hopes his students will realize how important this trip really is, other than the fact that it gets them out of school.

In the end, this class trip is a fun journey for the people who decided to go, and when it is your turn, I hope you will go, too!

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## The Fourth Grade Musical

By: Kaitlyn Pe.

The first showing of the fourth-grade musical "A Not So Terrible Parable" was on March 24, 2022. Many people wondered if the kids liked the musical or even if they liked the director. They also wondered who the overall favorite character was, what the favorite scenes were, and so much more!

Multiple fourth graders were asked different questions about the musical, including how well Mr. Stegman, the musical director, did in teaching them their lyrics and their songs. The average out of ten, ten being the best and one being the worst, of how Mr. Stegman worked on the musical with them is a 9/10.

Most people liked the song, "Because He First Loved Us," including Mr. Stegman. According to Mr. Stegman, "My favorite song was called 'Because

He First Loved Us' because it shared the Gospel and included the Bible verse 1st John 4:16-19." A few of the fourth graders who agreed with Mr. Steg-

ing job, and all of the students of Good Shepherd are super excited to see what the musical will be next year!!



man on that were Kaelyn and Caroline.

It was unanimous that everybody had a good time getting ready for the musical. Whether they had big parts or small parts, they all loved working together to do the musical. They all did an amaz-

## Spring Concert

By: Serena P.

Spring concerts are an annual affair at Good Shepherd. Every year each grade performs an original program for their families and friends, and every performance has one thing in common: they have all been organized and arranged by Mr. Stegman. I interviewed the musical director and pianist, Zach Stegman, and he told me what really inspired him to be a pianist; he stated, "Lots of people have inspired me, but I was especially inspired by Mr. Lynn Mueller, whose wife Sylvia taught 4th grade at GS. He was my teacher at Zion Belleville." It's really cool that a few or more people can just inspire other people to do skillful things and then soon turn them into a career.

I also asked Mr. Stegman what he likes about music and how he felt about setting up the spring concert. He said, "I like how music offers solo opportunities and large group opportunities. There

are opportunities for every single person, no matter how old. It has been used for thousands of years to help people learn and memorize the Word of God and helps us with that today. Even music that is secular (not religious) is a gift from God for us to use to express emotion and improve the lives of ourselves and others. Music is important in the church, in schools, even in sports, on TV shows, and in commercials; it permeates every aspect of our culture and almost every culture in the world throughout all of history. Finally, the Bible says there will be music in heaven. It is a good gift from God for everyone on earth."

He also said, "I am excited about the spring concert. The 4th-grade band got to play at the Christmas concert, and they are practicing some fun songs for the Spring Concert also. The 5th-8th grade band has improved so much this year, and I can't wait for them to get to play. The choirs will also sing songs that they have worked on all year long and help us hear the Word of God at the

concert." Stegman also talks about when he liked music, "I really started to enjoy music when I was in the band at Zion Lutheran School in Belleville."

Then he talked about when he started to set the whole spring concert. He said, "Last summer, I began choosing choir music that would go along with the readings in church and band music that would challenge our students and be fun for them to play."

## GS Track 2022

By Kaitlyn Pi.

The Good Shepherd Track team has started the 2022 season and has been working very hard to make it successful. Track is a sport that has running events, sprints- 100meters to 400 meters- and long-distance running-800 meters to 1600 meters- and field events such as shot put, discus, long jump, high jump, and triple jump. The Track team consists of 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th graders.

Even though track is an individual sport, all of the people on the Good Shepherd track team cheer and encourage everyone. Seventh-grader, Emily K., explains what the team does to cheer each other on at track meets, "We all wait around, and when it's our turn or someone else's, we cheer for them." Eighth-grader Kylie B. also says, "I like that we have teamwork. It's not that some of the sports are individual like the running events, but even if you are doing individual events, we still all cheer each other on as a team."

Even though many of the events are individual, there are also a few different relay teams working together. They are working hard to make good running times and meet specific goals. For example, the seventh-grade girls' relay team aims to make it to state. Emily K., a seventh-grader on the relay team, states, "I think the whole entire relay's goal is to get to state." Another seventh-grader, Grace P., says, "I hope we make it to state." Everyone on all relay teams has been working very hard to make it to state, and all are coming close.

The track team has started something new this year. The eighth-graders are in charge of certain groups that they have been assigned. The groups consist of a 7th, 6th, 5th, and the one 8th grade leader. The eighth-graders lead every practice and track meet by starting warm-ups. Eighth-grade leader Kylie B. explains, "They have the 8th graders who all have

leadership. We help our students who are in track and our fellow athletes, help stretch them and get ready for the meets as a team."

Track is an overall amazing activity to participate in for many reasons and more. Seventh-grader Grace P. says that this sport is a way for her to hang out with her friends and stay active. This year only one track member made it to state. Kaitlyn Peterson qualified in the high jump and hurdles and is very excited to go.

The GS track team is a hard-working team with its own goals. They encourage each other on and off the track. They are one team with 8th-grade leaders. The track team has set out to reach goals and will not be held back.

*Mr. Mayhew said, "When our school started a track team, other schools saw that as a great idea and made a team of their own. That's where we got our competition from."*



## Madison County Young Authors Conference

By: Emily K.

April 30, 2022, was the date when five students from Good Shepherd and one teacher went to Edwardsville High School for the Madison County Young Authors Conference. Anyone from grades one through eight was able to write a book in the hopes that they would be selected to go to the conference. When the students leave the conference, they will find new ways to write their books. The Young Authors program has been going on here and at other schools for a long time. Mrs. Hasamear, the seventh-grade reading and English teacher, says, "Yes! I did Young Authors as a kid, and I was selected in second

grade to go to the St. Clair County Young Authors Conference."



At this fun-filled event, the students from schools all over Madison county shared their books with others in their grades. They also received a snack and a goodie bag that included many

trinkets and writing materials. Lastly, they met an Author and received a certificate. One of Good Shepherd's Young Authors, Alexis K., said, "I have been doing Young Authors for two years, and this is the first year I won! It was fun to go, and I got to meet an Author and had a snack!"

This program is a great way to help kids in elementary and middle school learn how to write stories of their own. Teachers at Good Shepherd encourage their students to write stories and poetry to help them grow as writers. Many students can't wait for this next year and already have ideas for their new books.

*"I have been doing Young Authors for two years, and this is the first year I won! It was fun to go, and I got to meet an Author and had a snack!"*

*-Alexis K.*

## The SIUE Regional Science Fair

By: Ava G.

Students in the 5th and 7th grades who were selected at the Good Shepherd Science Fair were allowed to participate in the SIUE Regional Science Fair. Four students decided to do it. SIUE sponsors the Regional Science Fair, and students with the best projects from the local area participate. Normally, the competition is held at SIUE. Because of Covid, the competition this year was virtual. Students had to submit their materials by March 19, 2022.

This competition allows the students to showcase their projects to a group of judges. When the fair is in person, the students can also tell others about their research. For the virtual competition, each student was required to submit a copy of their abstract, their safety sheet, their research paper, and a five-minute video presentation of their project. For the optional paper competition, each student was required to submit a copy of their abstract, their safety sheet, their research paper, and a narrated PowerPoint describing their project.

Mr. Rincker has been teaching science at Good Shepherd Lutheran for 33 years. In those years, there were only one or two years that Good Shepherd did not have a student go to the Regional Fair. Mr. Rincker also has been a judge at many fairs. He said, "I judged school fairs in Indianapolis, IN, when I began teach-

ing." He went on to say that while he has been at Good Shepherd, he has "judged at the regional and state science fairs." He also has been "a safety judge at both levels, as well as the IJAS Chairman of the Safety Committee for the State of Illinois."



Dr. Friend began participating in science fairs in high school and has been judging and mentoring science students for nearly 50 years. Both Mr. Rincker and Dr. Friend agree that students learn a lot by participating in science fairs. Mr. Rincker noted, "The basic knowledge gained from books and discussion is good. Doing science labs with other students helps you learn and understand because of group collaboration. When an individual decides on a topic of interest for the science fair, they have made the decision to increase their personal knowledge about the subject. Dr. Friend also

stated, "Students learn many skills besides science. They learn how to plan their work, how to budget their time to complete their work, and how to present their work in papers and oral presentations."

Doing a science project is not easy but is very rewarding. Mr. Rincker noted that students have to "design the experiment, complete the scientific process following the guidelines of the IJAS." He went on to say, "Going to the Regional Fair and presenting their project enables the student to get more experience in verbally expressing what they have learned, accept helpful advice to improve on the project and also to observe other projects at the fair." He concluded by stating, "The student should feel a sense of a great accomplishment--their idea, their design, and their conclusions."

Dr. Friend also said that she hoped the Regional Science Fair would be in person this year rather than virtual like last year. She said, "As a judge, I prefer in person because I can ask questions." She also liked it in person because "the students can interact with the judges and other people attending."

The Regional Science Fair gave students at Good Shepherd a chance to present their research projects to a group of judges. While it took some time and effort to do this, the students and compete next year?

## The Buddies Program

By: Jacob S.

Here at Good Shepherd, we have a lot of different age groups. The grades go from preschool all the way to eighth grade! This is one of the reasons our school decided to implement the Buddies Program! I interviewed the school principal, Robert Mayhew, to find out all the benefits of having the Buddies Program in our school. Mr. Mayhew explained, "The main reason we do the Buddies Program is to get the upper grades involved with the lower grades and help these students form relationships through activities." He stated, "The reason that I like the program is that it builds relationships with the upper and lower grade students and gets them to be more confident when talking to people they don't



recognize. There are several different categories for the Buddies Program; for instance, seventh and eighth grade go to kindergarten, and sixth grade goes to preschool. I'm hoping that the buddies pro-

gram will build our culture and faith-based relationships to get rid of bullying and lift up the kids in a

positive atmosphere."

James A., a seventh-grade student at Good Shepherd, shared his thoughts about the program. He stated, "I think the Buddies Program is beneficial for the children, and it helps the mind grow. It is also a good way to help older kids connect with younger kids. I also think that the Buddies Program has a big impact on the school; the kindergartners are really funny, and it is fun to do activities with them."

Both James and Mr. Mayhew had some very positive things to say about the Buddies Program, and they both think that it is beneficial to our school.

*"The reason that I like the program is that it builds relationships with the upper and lower grade students and gets them to be more confident when talking to people they don't recognize."*

—Mr. Mayhew

## Chickens and Kindergartners

By: Lilly G.

Recently, the baby chicks have visited the kindergartners of Mrs. Sengele's class. The eggs are from Mrs. Sengele's family's farm. She is able to do this project, because of the Madison County Career, allowing her to have live baby chicks hatching in her room, and having the young kids experience it. The students, learning new things, had fun watching them hatch, grow, and learn. Mrs. Sengele's class did many experiments involving the eggs, allowing the students to learn more everyday the chicks were there. Having chicks in their room helped them observe osmosis and become aware of the changes that were happening in nature. Caring about chicks and watching them grow into a brooder is a great opportunity for the class of Mrs. Sengele. All of the chicks hatched on different days at the beginning of the week when the kids first had them.

The surprising thing is that the kindergartners have the opportunity to keep live animal baby chicks in their room. One of the young female students from the class stated, "I held them two times; the white one is my favorite. The black and white one lifted up his neck, and I liked it because it was just chillin' and had really long eyelashes." She was very excited to share the news with people from outside of her class, especially because she likes to be a mom for the chicks like her mom is to

her.

The shocking news is that one of the chickens hatched before hatch day. An enthusiastic boy exclaimed, "I liked watching the egg finally hatch because I was getting impatient. But, sad news is that we had to go straight back to our desks as soon as he hatched." The kindergarten students were eager to see the chickens they had been raising since they were babies.

Mrs. Sengele's kids were so excited when the chicks got in the room. The students had to move around some things, so the brooder fit in the room. Another young boy from the class said,

"We had to move around our quiet time spots." This explains that when something new hatches or grows, they always have to make and accept space for changes to happen.

Mrs. Sengele's class had the huge privilege of having chicks in their room. She stated "I am able to do this project because of the Poultry Kit provided to me by the Madison County CAREER (Conservation Ag Resources Environmental Education) Ag in the Classroom program. I attend a class to refresh my skills and to learn about the ways I can teach my students about all things poultry. The students learned that it takes 21 days before the chicks will hatch. While we waited for hatch day the students did some experiments with an egg. They

watched an egg shed its shell with an experiment that demonstrated an acid-base reaction and osmosis. Then they took those eggs and observed what happens when the eggs are placed in water or corn syrup. This provided a lesson on permeability."

Mrs. Sengele also stated, "While most of their experiences involved observations, they were also learning about how to care for an animal and what things are needed. After our 12 chicks hatched, the class had an opportunity during art to create their own chicks or hens. The students enjoy watching the chicks, observing how quickly the chicks change and grow and seeing the behaviors from each of the little chicks. It is a project I am so thankful that I can provide for my students. It is always a sad day when the chicks leave our classroom and return to the farm. While our classroom is always full of noise and activity, the students always miss the chirping and sounds that come from the brooder."

The baby chicks will be missed by the kindergarten class. It was very enjoyable and a privilege to have them here at Good Shepherd Lutheran School. The students enjoyed the experience, and will grow with the chicks as they continue to grow at their new home.



## Good Shepherd Youth Group

By: Isaak B.

Youth Groups are important events that allow kids in a community to talk and have fun. Mrs. Lingafelter, a Good Shepherd Youth Group Volunteer, has this to say about youth group importance, "Being involved in Youth Group allows kids to form a bond with each other as they go through Junior High and High School. A Youth Group can provide an outlet for Christian students to get together to talk, have fun, and make memories. This past year we had a Nerf war on the first two floors of the school. Youth Group can help kids remain close to the Word of God as they are surrounded by friends that have the same foundation of beliefs."

Here at Good Shepherd, the youth events were closed for a little bit, but they were immediately set up again with the help of church volunteers. Most people who are

members can volunteer to help. Mrs. Lingafelter explained how she started running some events, "I am on the Good Shepherd Church Youth Advisory Board. The Youth Advisory Board is a group of volunteers who come up with ideas and organize the events that are agreed upon. We try to find activities that provide kids the ability to grow in their faith, fellowship, the ability to serve, and (have) fun." Youth Group events can also be joined by people of every age group. Small kids and teenagers can find entertainment by going to them.

Now, you might think about how much youth groups cost and how they are funded. I thought the exact same thing. Mrs. Lingafelter gave me some great information about this. She explained, "Good Shepherd Lutheran Church financially supports many of the Youth activities.

The pastors are very supportive of the ideas that we come up with on the Youth Advisory Board. This year especially, the congregation has been very generous in their support financially and through prayer as the youth are preparing to go to Houston, Texas, this summer for a National Youth Gathering. The theme for the gathering is "In All Things." This trip will be a wonderful opportunity for the participants to continue to see how God is "in all things" in the world they live in. I believe that all schools around the country should have a youth group program because it really is a great way for a community to get together.

*"Being involved in Youth Group allows kids to form a bond with each other as they go through Junior High and High School. A Youth Group can provide an outlet for Christian students to get together to talk, have fun, and make memories."*

—Mrs. Lingafelter

## This Year's New Sixth-Grade Teacher

By: Bradley D.

This year, a new 6th grade teacher came to save the day when our beloved Mr. Voss retired. Mr. Betts is an energetic teacher who excels at his job. This is good because we need teachers to fill in everywhere when old ones retire. This is also good timing because Mr. Betts came in just last year in August.

Mr. Betts had many professions before he became a teacher. He was a janitor, camp counselor, food service worker, child care worker, and a substitute teacher. We also might have had a different teacher because there were a lot more options. Mr. Mayhew found him at a Lutheran teacher's university, Concordia University.

Mr. Betts is a good teacher. "He's kind, under-

standing, and funny," stated Bradley W., a sixth-grade student. He also has a good teaching style, and "He's really good



at teaching health," said Henrik G., another sixth-grade student.

Mr. Betts is so good at teaching that it would be quite difficult to get used to a new teacher. He also likes to help other students in his own

way. Fortunately, he's good at settling his class down.

Mr. Betts's favorite part about teaching is forming relationships with his students. His teaching style is just as good as every other teacher's style. He is also adapting quite well. Also, he has a say about the COVID pandemic: "We learned a lot from the pandemic."

Mr. Betts is the new 6th-grade teacher at our school. He is kind, funny, and understanding. Even though the pandemic was going on when he came to our school, he adapted well and took control. So here's my question: Would you be a teacher like Mr. Betts?

## Mrs. Italiano's Return

By: Aiden E.

Mrs. Italiano taking medical leave was a big deal. She had a sub for months, other students had to get used to the change, and the sub had to get used to Mrs. Italiano's responsibilities. Mrs. Italiano had multiple surgeries, which kept leading to more surgeries, making the time until she came back a little longer than expected. However, she is back!

Mrs. Italiano had three surgeries in three months. Her first surgery was on her shoulder. Then, her second surgery was on her elbow. Finally, she had to get her thyroid removed.

Mrs. Italiano was gone for about five months; however, she only had surgery done on her for three of the five months. Her first surgery was done on December 18, 2021. Her second surgery was on February 28, 2022. Mrs. Italiano's final surgery was on

March 23, 2022. Mrs. Italiano said, "Before I had my surgeries, my hand wasn't working fully in certain ways, but when I got all of my surgeries, my hand is now fine and feels a lot better."



A few students were interviewed to figure out what they thought about her surgeries, and how different it was without Mrs. Italiano. A seventh-grader named Austin K. said, "It has been a little different without Mrs. Italiano here,

but I'm glad she's back now. Also, I've realized that she does seem to be doing better; however, the best part is that she's back now."

Another seventh-grade student named Ava G. said, "Mrs. Italiano did have that small problem with her hand, but now that Mrs. Italiano has gotten her surgeries finished. I can tell that her hand is doing better than it was before. It was a little different without her for so long, but I think that we're all happy that she is finally back and better than before."

In conclusion, Mrs. Italiano is back and feeling better than before, but I'm pretty sure that Mrs. Italiano, her students, the staff, and the rest of us are all very happy and excited that she's back and can get back to doing what she loves and enjoys doing.

*"Mrs. Italiano did have that small problem with her hand, but now that Mrs. Italiano has gotten her surgeries finished. I can tell that her hand is doing better than it was before."*

—Ava G.

## The Reading Counts Program

By: Connor S.

Reading Counts is a program that promotes reading and assesses reading comprehension. Teachers and their students were interviewed to see how Reading Counts has affected students' reading. In these interviews, questions were asked to figure out why Reading Counts is used at GSLS.

The way Reading Counts works is when students finish reading a book, they take a test, and then they earn points if they pass. When students earn enough points, they then get medals. Mrs. Robinson was interviewed to see how many points a student needs for each medal, and she said, "Six hundred points equal a bronze medal, 1200 points equal a silver medal, 1800 points equal a gold medal, 2400 points equal a plaque."

One of the reasons Reading Counts is used at this school is because it can challenge students who like reading. It can give them goals to shoot for and

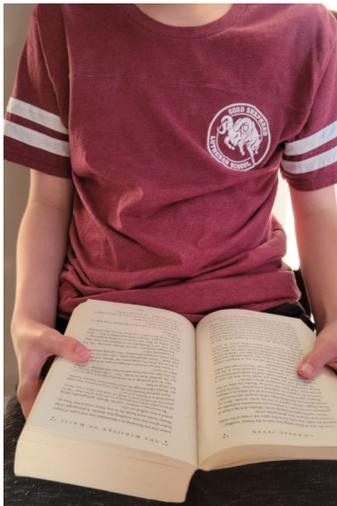
challenges for them to overcome. When Mrs. Robinson was interviewed, she said, "Many students love to read and enjoy earning medals." These medals motivate students to participate in the Reading Counts program.

Another reason Reading Counts is used at this school is so teachers can see how their students are progressing. When Mrs. Hasamear was interviewed, she said that the system gives you a Lexile score, which is a system used to measure a student's reading level at the beginning of the year and at the end of the year. Teachers can use this information to figure out how their students have improved in reading comprehension. Students were also interviewed to see what they thought of the Reading Counts program. When interviewed, Dean, a seventh-grader, said, "It helps me read more into the book because it might have a question about it." From other interviews taken it seems that most

students like this program and think it is helpful.

There are many good things about Reading Counts, but there are also some bad things. Mrs. Robinson said when interviewed, "The biggest challenge for me is that the program is not user-friendly for the teacher in charge. Mrs. Hasamear also noted that it might take months before a new book is put in the system.

Reading Counts has many good features, but it also has some bad things. Like how it promotes reading, but it is also not very user-friendly to the people who run it. You should decide whether or not you think it is a program that should be used at the school.



## GoGuardian

By: Natalie T.

GoGuardian is a good way for teachers to see what students are doing on their Chromebooks during the day. Many students may say that GoGuardian is horrible, and it doesn't help them. For the teachers, though, it is probably the best thing Good Shepherd has purchased. However, like most things in life, GoGuardian is not perfect. It can be a pain to deal with at times. Mrs. Maske says there are limits to what GoGuardian can do. She stated, "It does not always allow me or the teachers to see exactly what assignments students are working on. We use the Google management software to help us with that." Between these two products, teachers can see if students are on task.

Mrs. Maske also stated, "Each student email is entered into the GoGuardian software. Teachers can add students to their classes and set up the settings for their individual classes. When students use their Chromebook, GoGuardian can track the websites and apps students are using and keep track of how long they use them." All the emails go to the software, and the teachers can set up their classes and add students. Mr. Mayhew says, "It tells you where a student has been, like a time stamp." This feature helps teachers keep students accountable for their

online activities. It also allows teachers to see if students are exercising good digital citizenship.

Kaitlyn Pe, a 7th-grade student, says, "It's helpful for the teachers to know what the kids are doing during their classes. Depending on the classes, we can only do specific things. If we need to get on a specific website for class work, then a lot of the time it is blocked in that class or in other classes, so we can't work on it."

GoGuardian keeps a lookout on the history of what students are doing and when they were doing it. Jacob, a 7th-grade student, says, "I think GoGuardian is good for the students' online safety. GoGuardian does sometimes block websites that you need for a project, but most of the time, the teacher can unblock it for the student."

GoGuardian helps all the teachers with the students, like what they are doing and their search history. All teachers use GoGuardian for the students' safety. Mrs. Maske stated, "It allows the teachers to monitor students when they are working on their Chromebook. It allows them and myself to block websites that are not beneficial to student learning. It also allows me to give parents a report of a child's Chrome-

book usage at home or school."

Our teachers all have to use GoGuardian to see what students can do and what they can't. Mrs. Maske states, "The main reason we use GoGuardian is to make sure students are on task and making good choices with the technology we have. Part of the responsibility of having technology is using it wisely and making good choices, which is something we want our students to learn at Good Shepherd. Another reason we use it is to help eliminate distractions in the classroom. Teachers can choose to allow certain websites for students to use and keep them on task as they are working."

What are the pros and cons of GoGuardian? Many teachers love GoGuardian. The teachers that haven't turned to GoGuardian don't know what their students are doing. Do you know what your students do during class? Overall this is a product that ensures student safety. Students may not like it, but it is used for their protection.



*"I think  
GoGuardian is good for the  
students' online safety."  
—Jacob S.*

## Mrs. Henderson Is Retiring!

By: Austin K.

Mrs. Henderson is retiring at the end of the school year. I interviewed Mrs. Henderson, who is the German teacher at GSLS. She revealed a lot about her past.

When she was a little kid, her father was a chemist. He experimented with unknown substances and elements. He worked in a laboratory and found new materials. He did his job to help his family and support Mrs. Henderson.

The only reason she wanted to teach German was she loved the language. She said, "I wanted to learn German for fun." She then went to SIU to fully learn and speak German. However, she did not always teach German; she also taught math at Triad High School.

Another part of this school she is leaving behind is her friends. She told me that she would miss her friends and teaching at GSLS. Mrs. Italiano



said, "Yes, we are one big happy school family." This makes it very clear that here at GSLS, there are people that care for students and teachers.

Finally, Mrs. Hender-

son is a great German teacher. Mrs. Italiano said, "She makes German class entertaining, and the kids learn a lot in German." Mrs. Henderson is loved by teachers and students alike, and she has done a great job at this school; we are sad to learn she is retiring from GSLS.

*"Life after Covid feels Good."  
—Hayden S.*

## Life After Covid/Getting Back to Normal By: Hayden S.

The Corona Virus has caused many mandates. This has been going on for two years; it is almost like we have forgotten what a normal life feels like. Life is finally getting back to normal, and this is what students at Good Shepherd think about life after Covid.

People like the pick-up line a lot better because it is safer for the kids. The new dismissal method is different because of the Covid mandates. Mr. Krueger says, "I like the new dismissal method better because it is safer and faster."

It is pretty evident that it is way easier to teach without masks because it muffles your voice and it is hard to hear, but it is also tough to breathe while teaching as Mrs. Hasamear states, "It is way easier to teach because my students can hear better; it is also easier to breathe, and overall, the masks were just annoying."

All of the athletic and different normal school activities are happening again, too. Last year the library wasn't open; we had to eat lunch in our classrooms, and there were a lot of short seasons for



sports. As Mr. Krueger states, "The different athletic activities were in full season, the cafeteria is open, and there is no social distancing."

The social distancing was a huge problem because we couldn't get close to people, and it caused many things to get canceled, like the library. Social distancing is no longer required. With social distancing and masks not being required, we can do so much more because we don't have to cancel everything. Mrs. Hasamear states, "Social distancing is no longer enforced, and masks are also no longer required."

In the end, life after Covid feels good. Not having to wear masks, no social distancing, and no more cancellations of sports and activities make us all feel a bit more normal.

## The Teaching and Learning Quality at GSLS

By: Autumn W.

The teaching and learning quality is vital to the teachers, students, and parents at Good Shepherd. This subject is always relevant to all schools, but G.S. prioritizes the learning process of their students. This topic is significant to G.S. because they are preparing their students for high school and beyond.

There are many different subjects incorporated into the curriculum here at Good Shepherd. There is foreign language, electives, MobyMax, choir, band, music, and most importantly, Bible. There are also many different teaching methods used.

Mrs. Italiano is a teacher at Good Shepherd and a mom who sends her three children here. When asked about how her teaching methods help her students, she answered, "I believe that students learn best using a variety of different ways. Not everybody learns the same. Using a variety of hands-on and visual learning is best. Most of my students are one-on-one or a small group; we do a lot of hands-on activities, a lot of games, and different ways to memorize things."

These learning methods are super helpful to those who don't understand things as quickly as

other students. There are also life lessons instilled in all of the classes at Good Shepherd. Mrs. Italiano stated, "Well, we all know life isn't always perfect. So, one thing that I remind the students multiple times a week is that God made us all different for a reason and we are all special for whatever reason. I work



with a lot of students where things may be a little harder for them. Trying to find and point out all of their special and amazing qualities when they feel like something is hard for them. We are created wonderfully and perfectly in God's eyes; we need to let our qualities shine and realize that we can overcome the areas we struggle in." G.S. is not the only school that teaches these lessons, but in my opinion, they are the best. The learning process is

made way easier than in most public schools.

Every parent should be wondering how well their child comprehends the things they are learning in school. Good Shepherd students stand out in high school. They will be very prepared for either public or private high school.

The last important thing in this article is how God is incorporated into these lessons and everyday life. Mrs. Italiano said, "It's a really nice thing that we can be here. We can incorporate God, and we can pray here anytime we want." She worked at a public school for many years and did not get to pray openly or share her faith with her students. But at Good Shepherd, everybody gets to share their faith and prayers.

In the end, the students, parents, and teachers think that the teaching and learning process at Good Shepherd is one of the best there is. This is why there are many new enrollments each year. They believe that their kids/ students are really getting the lessons they need to learn. They are not only being taught amazing things, but they are also being taught about God and His will.

# Mosaic and Their Help to Others

By: Grayson G.

Mosaic is a non-profit organization. Its mission is to help young women and men when faced with an unplanned pregnancy. The goal is to let them know that there is life growing inside of a pregnant woman. With abortions being so common nowadays, their help is crucial to all the parents. Mosaic has helped hundreds of people and saved countless babies' lives. Mosaic needs all the help they can get, so donating stuff like diapers, baby wipes, clothing, and other things is crucial to this organization.

The owner,

Kathy Lesnoff, started Mosaic Pregnancy Centers 30 years ago and continues to help babies live. Mosaic helps with a variety of things, like free pregnancy

Fairview Heights and Granite City. At Good Shepherd, our classes support Mosaic by making blankets for unborn babies and collecting

money to fill baby bottles. Mosaic is a great place that saves unborn babies' lives and shares the Gospel message with hurting people.



tests, ultrasounds, std tests, and parenting classes. In addition, the Gospel message is shared with every client who comes through Mosaics' doors.

You can find Mosaic Pregnancy Centers in



## About Shepherd's Staff Writers

This edition of *Shepherd's Staff* was written, edited and published by Good Shepherd Lutheran School's Journalism 101 class, which is composed of seventh-grade students. The newspaper is a culminating project of this semester-long course. During this class, students analyzed many local and national news articles. They learned the key components of a news story, the importance of a good lead, and the value of citizen interviews.

Students were involved in every step of producing and publishing this newspaper. In addition to writing the stories, they also determined the newspaper layout and the arrangement of the articles.