



# the GOOD LIFE

Mental • Health • Dental



# Spring 2022

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# MHS Senior

By Alyssa Andrews  
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## raises the roof and funds



Photos by Alyssa Andrews

Brylee and Zach Clift open the concert with “Fly” by Maddie & Tae and Merry-Go-Round by Kacey Musgraves.

Excitement filled Brylee Clift when her senior project rolled around, a way to showcase her passion, skills and dedication. Clift, like many of her classmates, wanted to host a fun event and do some good for her community. When searching for a cause to get behind, Clift kept circling back to a little boy named Hudson.

Hudson Finley Gray-Hearod, just under two years old, has spent half of his young life fighting against cancer. Hudson was diagnosed with a Choroid Plexus Carcinoma, a rare brain tumor found in as little as 3% of all tumors. Hudson is currently under treatment at St. Jude's. To assist with the financial hurdles Hudson's family will endure, Clift decided her project would be a benefit concert.

“I knew I wanted to help benefit the community and the people in it,” explained Clift. “Around the same time I heard about Hudson and everything that he's been going through. I knew instantly I wanted to help.”

Clift's family are all musically inclined, especially her father, Zach, who plays guitar for country artist Chelsey James.

With her family connections and support from the Marshfield Community Center, Clift drafted up a plan to host a benefit concert starring Chelsey James on the evening of March 4. Clift decided that 100% of the night's proceeds would go to

Hudson and his family.

The concert included a fun set list of country favorites like “Fancy” by Reba McEntire and “Fishin’ in the Dark” by the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band. The audience showed their love for James and the band by line dancing and two-stepping around the stage.

However, Chelsey James was not the only star of the evening. Clift and her father, Zach, opened the concert with select songs of their own. Clift gave a powerful speech about Hudson's journey and the significance of her senior project.

Overall, the evening raised over \$4,000 for Hudson. Clift said she could not have done it without the support from her community and family.

“My project was better than I could have ever imagined. So far we have raised over \$4,000 and still counting!,” expressed Clift. “I was honored to be able to hold this event to help Hudson, as well as impact the community with this cause. Lots of work was put into it and I want to personally thank each and every person who volunteered during the event, I truly could not have done it without everyone.”

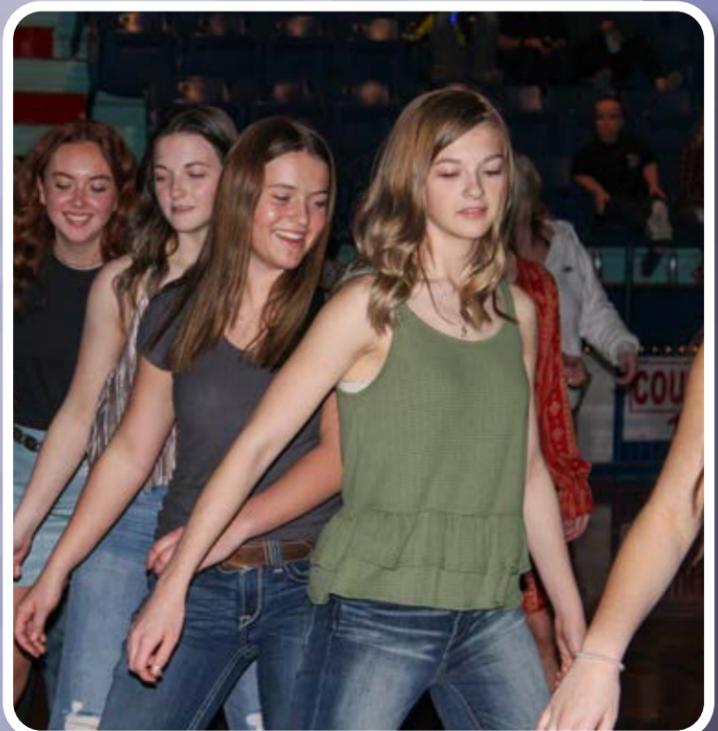
For those interested in supporting Hudson and his fight against cancer, visit [www.gofundme.com/f/be-a-hero-for-hudson](http://www.gofundme.com/f/be-a-hero-for-hudson).



Hudson and his mother, Adisyn Gray, watching Brylee and Zach perform live from home. Hudson and his family were able to enjoy the concert from home.



Chelsey James and her band put a rock-n-roll twist on some ole' country favorites!



Heel, toe, dosey doe! Boots stomped, kicked and shuffled their way along the dance floor. Many partook in line dancing throughout the concert.

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# Daredevils still rockin'

## Hits to be charted by Springfield Symphony



The Ozark Mountain Daredevils took the stage at The Historic Landers Theatre in Springfield nearly 50 years following its initial debut at the venue. The band is fully composed of Missouri musicians, including John Dillon, of Ozark.

MAIL PHOTOS BY SHELBY ATKISON

By Shelby Atkison

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Fifty years of rock 'n' roll were relived during a three night gig at The Historic Landers Theatre in Springfield. The Ozark Mountain Daredevils took the stage 49 years and 11 months after the band's initial Landers performance and were received with a warm welcome.

"These shows were so special for multiple reasons... it was the first bigger venue that the band ever played back in 1972," explained band manager Dwight Glenn. "Secondly, to be there nearly 50 years after was remarkable. Thirdly, the fans each night were so appreciative and enthusiastic... and loud but yet respected the musicians."

Gaining their footing in Springfield back in 1971, the Daredevils began pedaling their music under a plethora of names – including the Family Tree, Burlap Socks and the Emergency Band. It wasn't long before the group became Cosmic Corncob & His Amazing Ozark Mountain Daredevils, later more commonly known as the Ozark Mountain Daredevils.

"The songs that we were putting out I think they were so creative. That process that was going on here at that time was so unique and maybe said a lot about where we were from as well," said founding partner of the Daredevils, John Dillon. "But somehow people found us... the next thing you know we had a [record] deal."

The band penned a deal with A&M Records in 1973, which led to the group's debut album and first hit song "If You Wanna Get To Heaven." According to Dillon, everything

seemed to happen really quickly after that.

"A friend of mine called me and said, 'Man, I heard you guys just sold 10 thousand records,'" Dillon smiled. "Well, most of those were probably from Kaleidoscope."

The Landers shows offered an intimate setting for the band to connect with fans. The group shared stories and memories from throughout its 50 years in the music business with each one leading into the next song.

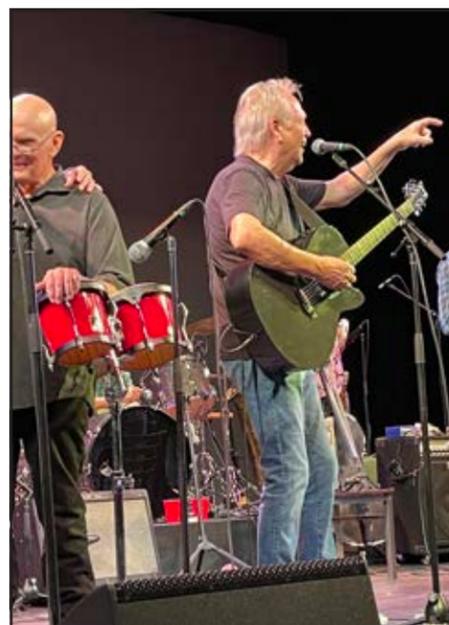
Dillon recalled the making of the Daredevil's first album and the cover of fellow Missourian Porter Wagoner's "A Satisfied Mind," which the band recorded on the campus of what is now Missouri State University.

"We went into the boys locker room at McDonald Arena at SMS and we loved the way the bathroom sounded. I mean the urinals were the perfect echo chamber," he laughed. "That afternoon before the gig we set up a bunch of mics and recorded this cover."

According to Glenn, the band was feeding off the crowd's energy each night it performed, which is why they're always excited to play in front of a home crowd.

"This band hasn't done several nights in a row in a long time, especially coming off of a year break for COVID... but to come back to Springfield before sold-out shows, to feel the love and energy from the fans, it was like one big family reunion" added Glenn. "We were just thrilled with the response and, humbled by it to be honest."

The "homecoming" shows don't end there. Just after wrapping up the three night stretch at the Landers, the Daredevils an-



Pictured is John Dillon, a founding partner of the Ozark Mountain Daredevils, who currently resides in Ozark.

nounced that its unique sound will undergo yet another twist during a one-night collaboration with the Springfield Symphony Orchestra.

"We've been talking about working with the Springfield Symphony Orchestra for years... it actually began in February of 2020 with the idea to chart our music and do this collaboration," explained Glenn. "Then March 2020 changed everything for the next two years. However, it was a blessing in disguise because of the way things happened. It ended up falling in 2022, which is a special

year for the band and Juanita K. Hammons Hall. We couldn't be more pleased."

This one-of-a-kind concert falls in the Ozark Mountain Daredevils' 50th year as well as the 30 year anniversary of Juanita K. Hammons Hall for the Performing Arts, offering the collaboration an extra special venue. On Saturday, Sept. 10, 50 Springfield Symphony Orchestra members will take the stage alongside the Ozark Mountain Daredevils to celebrate the occasion.

"We knew we wanted to do something big for our 30th Anniversary celebration. The Ozark Mountain Daredevils have been a staple of the southwest Missouri music scene for decades, and the Springfield Symphony has called our stage home since we opened our doors in 1992. I can't think of a better way to celebrate 30 years than to bring these two groups together to create something Springfield has never seen or heard before," said Keith Boaz, Executive Director of Juanita K. Hammons Hall.

Dillon says that the Daredevils are thrilled to be a part of the Hall's anniversary, "It's a great honor for our band to kick off the 30th Anniversary of Hammons Hall. We have been a fortunate group of individuals who have been able to share our music all over the world for 50 years. We are thrilled to share the stage with the Springfield Symphony Orchestra, which will highlight the songs in a completely different light."

The one night only performance will begin at 7:30 p.m. on Sept. 10 with ticket sales beginning Friday, March 25 at 10 a.m. To purchase tickets, visit HammonsHall.com, call (417) 836-7678 or stop by the Hammons Hall box office (M-F 10 a.m.-5 p.m.).

THE GOOD LIFE  
VOLUME 2, NUMBER 8  
MARCH 30, 2022

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# Running their 'wiggles' out



Bolivar Intermediate School students hold up their certificates showing they are participating in the school's 100 Mile Club.

PHOTOS/FACEBOOK

By Bolivar Herald-Free Press News Staff

news@bolivarnews.com

**This club allows them to run and get out their energy — or “wiggles,” physical education teacher Erin Howard said one student told her — before classes.**

Prior to heading to their classrooms every morning, some Bolivar Intermediate School students are taking advantage of the school's 100 Mile Club.

This club allows them to run and get out their energy — or “wiggles,” physical education teacher Erin Howard said one student told her — before classes.

The club, Howard said, was developed by Southern California special education teacher Kara Lubin during the 1992-93 school year.

“She wanted students to have something to look forward to and be successful in school,” Howard said.

“I wanted to have a program to help students get active and have something to do at recess if they needed something to do,” she added. “The 100 Mile Club creates a sense of community for students with common interests ... a nationwide program impacting students across the United States.”

That's when the club began at BIS in 2013 for students in third through fifth grades.

Howard said she runs the club every morning — except Wednesdays — before school at 7:30 a.m., but students can also run at recess while being

monitored by other teachers and staff.

She said it's because of these teachers and staff that she is “able to make this all happen.”

“The 100 Mile Club encourages students to set goals and work at (their) own pace to achieve (their) own goals,” Howard said. “Students can walk, jog or run to achieve these goals.”

The average number of miles a student completes a morning is one to two, but she said some have made it to three.

Even if a student decides to run when not on campus, Howard said students are welcome — encouraged even — to log miles when they're at home.

Howard herself was never much of a runner growing

up, she said, until she hit the age she started desiring to stay more fit and active.

That's where she would find her love for running, she said.

Coming across a promotional grant for the 100 Mile Club, Howard grabbed the help of a building administrator and applied for the grant. They were awarded the grant and started up the program at BIS.

The money from the grant, she explained, “was used to sponsor students who wanted to participate but didn't have the funds to join.”

She said there was a cost of \$10 to \$15, but it only applied to the 100 Mile Club's incentive packages. Students can run in the club and just not purchase the incentives.

However, she added, there

are some “amazing parents and community members” who have stepped up to sponsor some interested students who wanted the incentives but couldn't afford them.

“Thank you to all of those who have sponsored a student at BIS the past nine years,” Howard said. “I am really grateful for such a giving community.”

She said she has heard “very positive” feedback from students and parents — and even other staff.

“The students beg me to run every morning,” she said, “even if it is too cold.”

She said she runs with the students when she sees it's safe, but her main goal involves encouraging them and keeping them safe.

In addition to simply completing miles, Howard initiates “friendly class competitions,” she said, where it's class against class in the race to accumulate the most miles.

Howard said she hopes to continue seeing the program “impact the lives of our students.”

“It is such a great program for kids to be a part of,” she said. “You don't have to be a fast or talented runner to participate — you just have to take it one step at a time. Just keep moving and encouraging others.”

Some students, she added, have even continued their running endeavors from the 100 Mile Club to the middle school and high school cross country or track and field teams.

As a PE teacher, Howard said she only sees her students once a week, but it's been a “blessing” running the 100 Mile Club every morning because it gives her “an opportunity to build relationships with students on a daily basis.”

She said it is her mission to bring students to “find a love for something that will encourage them to live a healthy lifestyle,” and the club allows her to do just that.



Bolivar Intermediate School students run on the school's track for the 100 Mile Club during the 2020-21 school year.



Bolivar Intermediate School teacher Vicki McDonald poses with some of her students wearing the 100 Mile Club shirts during the 2018-19 school year.



Students at Bolivar Intermediate School pose with their 100 Mile Club shirts and their popsicle sticks during the 2017-18 school year. Students grab a stick after each completed lap and take them back to their class to collect.

**“You just have to take it one step at a time. Just keep moving and encouraging others.”**

**— Erin Howard**  
*Physical Education Teacher*

# Marshfield man recipient of blood donation

**“donating blood is an easy process that results in saving lives.”**

—Sid McConnell

By Alyssa Andrews  
alyssaa@marshfieldmail.com

For Sid McConnell, donating blood is a regular habit and a way to give back to his community and help those in need. So, when McConnell donated one Monday during the month of Dec., he would have never guessed that following Friday, six days later, he would be in need of several units of blood.

McConnell endured sudden quadruple bypass surgery in Dec. 2021 needing seven units of blood to recover.

“The whole heart issue could have just abruptly cut life off at that point. This good (donating blood) just gives the person a chance to continue onward,” explained McConnell. “This offers more time to spend with family and that is a wonderful thing.”

Spending time with his wife and three daughters is ultimately what McConnell lives for. They

regularly gather to spend time and attend family outings.

Blood banks and hospitals have reported shortages across the country, thus McConnell encourages everyone who can to donate. He notes that donating blood is an easy process that results in saving lives.

“I’m really passionate about the blood donations, it really is something very important,” expressed McConnell. “It’s also something very personally rewarding because if you stop and think about actually being able to make a contribution to somebody else, continuing their life, well that’s huge.”

The 63 year old Marshfield native even lives by his own words and has donated post heart surgery, knowing the benefits first hand.

To find more information about the lifesaving benefits of donating blood or where the next blood drive near you is, visit [www.cbco.org](http://www.cbco.org).



(Left to right) Jami, Kathy, Sid, Chelsea, and Kaitlyn McConnell during a family outing in Silver Dollar City. Thanks to blood donors across the Ozarks, the McConnells have many wonderful family days ahead!

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



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## The health advantages of writing

According to Harvard University, some research suggests that disclosing deep emotions through writing can boost immune function as well as mood and well-being. Conversely, the stress of holding in strong feelings can ratchet up blood pressure and heart rate, and increase muscle tension.

Deeply troubling situations, such as suicide or a violent death, are best explored with the help of an experienced therapist.

Harvard suggests that if you'd like to try keeping a journal to help you process feelings of grief, keep these things in mind:

- Although writing about grief and loss can trigger strong emotions — you may cry or feel deeply upset — many people find journal writing valuable and meaningful, and report feeling better afterward.
- Truly let go. Write down how you feel and why you feel that way. You're writing for yourself, not others. Don't worry about grammar or sentence structure.
- Try writing for 15 to 30 minutes a day for three to four days, or as long as a week if you feel writing continues to be helpful. You could also try writing for 15 to 30 minutes once a week for a month. One review of research on journal writing found that writing has stronger effects when it extends over more days.

For more on ways to process and deal with grief, purchase *Coping with Grief and Loss*, a Special Health Report from Harvard Medical School.



# A Poet's

## heart beats in the Ozarks

### *Cargill's writing helps her process caretaking, grief, love and more*

By Kathryn Skopec  
kathryns@cedarrepublikan.com

When she was a child, Jackie Cargill, of Stockton, did not ever see herself being a published author — but her life's experiences have led to a book of poems being penned by this passionate Stockton poet.

Much of her work as a poet stems from the grief and stoicism she's retained after being a long term caregiver to the person she loved most dearly — her late husband, Irvin Cargill.

In late 2020, Cargill's book "Heart of the Ozarks" was published by Page Publishing in New York City. The book, she said, is a collection of poems about "love and life and happiness and sadness and different events."

Cargill said she began writing her poems as she took care of Irvin, who died around three and a half years ago after a long battle with Alzheimer's disease and dementia.

"While he was sick, I would write whenever he would take a nap," Cargill said. "I couldn't hardly leave the house or anything because he couldn't be left by himself, and I had a lot of time on my hands, so I started writing, and I enjoyed it."

Cargill said she had been writing for years and had gotten to writing more and more. Irvin, meanwhile, loved her poems and told her she should have a book published, although Cargill initially thought nobody would want to read her writing.

Around two years ago, a friend who visited Cargill read a poem Cargill had left on the kitchen table; the friend implored Cargill to publish a book of her poems.

Shortly later, Cargill reached out to Page Publishing in New York City — having to get her poems typed with the help of Ambur Byler, because Cargill writes by hand — and then her manuscript was accepted by the publisher weeks later, she said.

When she found out her manuscript was accepted, Cargill said she was "so excited."

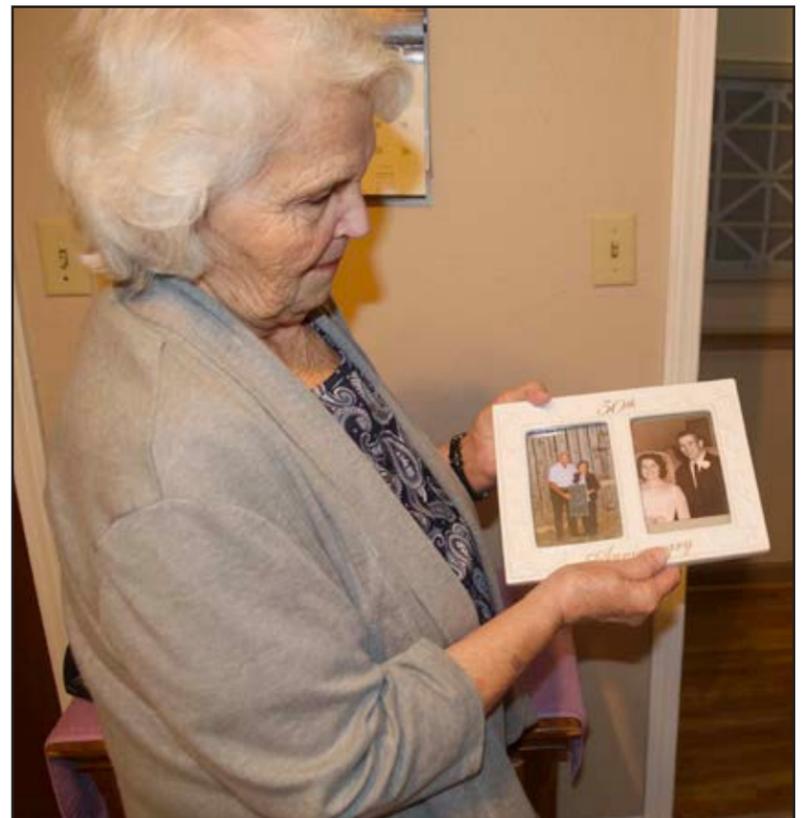
Cargill's craft, her muse

Cargill's writing process begins when she "sees someone or some event," and then after she thinks more, "it won't leave me mind, and so I sit down with a piece of paper and try to get my thoughts together — and the first thing I know, I've wrote a poem."

Due to how devastating the loss of Irvin felt, many of Cargill's poems were written after his

Jacke Cargill, Stockton, peruses her published book, "Heart of the Ozarks," in her Stockton home.

STAFF PHOTOS/KATHRYN SKOPEC



Cargill looks at photos of her and her late husband, Irvin Cargill.

passing, she said.

Cargill noted Irvin's impact on her life and in her book, saying "he was such a special person."

"He was a one-woman man, and he was a workaholic," Cargill said. "He just made sure that I had everything I needed ... He made such an impact on a lot of people."

Since Cargill was Irvin's caretaker when his Alzheimer's disease and dementia progressed, she said she thinks her poems about caretaking will have a positive impact on readers who are either in similar situations or do not know what it is like to care for a loved one who has these diseases.

"When we first found out he had Alzheimer's in '97, he said, 'I don't ever want to go to the nursing home,' and I said, 'Honey, I don't ever want you to

go to the nursing home,'" Cargill said.

Thus, she dedicated her time dutifully caring for him while also working on their Cedar County farm until Irvin's final day.

"Whenever I see other people going through this, or other people hurting, it just touches my heart because I've been there," Cargill said.

Cargill's book is set to be sold at Barnes and Noble, Amazon, eBook and more, she said.

Looking ahead in her authorship, Cargill said she has a book that is "almost ready" to send off to her publisher — a book titled "The Adventures of Greenhorn Farmer," which is based on her experience going from her life as a city girl to her life on the farm after marrying Irvin.

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# Bringing joy

## TO THE FRONTLINES

*“It’s always fun to get something from back home.”*

By Bolivar Herald-Free Press  
News Staff  
news@bolivarmonews.com



SSG Levi Gold poses with the care package he received from Pleasant Hope, Willard and Fair Grove’s collaboration.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS/DANA KIMMONS

## one shoebox at a time

Pleasant Hope, Willard and Fair Grove K-12 students put together 112 shoeboxes for soldiers on the frontlines this Christmas.

When receiving the shoeboxes, the soldiers opened the lids to reveal fully-packed boxes of “toiletries, snacks and other food items, candy, gift items such as decks of cards, puzzle books, pens, pencils, blankets, socks” and other items, Willard Future Farmers of America advisor Dana Kimmons said.

“It took all of the schools to collect the items,” she said, and it took “business sponsors along with other donations to cover the cost of shipping.”

The boxes were shipped out to soldiers stationed in the United States or overseas in countries like Italy and Korea, she added.

It was actually the soldiers in Korea that kick-started the students’ goal of shipping out 100 packages.

The project was started by Willard’s FFA building communities committee — a committee focused on community service and similar activities, Kimmons said.

Greene County 4-H Teens, she said, received the National Days of Service grant and decided to utilize the funding to commemorate the 20th anniversary of 9/11, a project Kimmons said she also participated in.

Kimmons’s daughter then asked Willard’s FFA to put together care packages to send to soldiers for the project, she said.

While the FFA chapter was putting together boxes for 9/11, the members learned about 13 soldiers who were stationed in Korea who don’t receive mail, Kimmons said.

The members decided to adopt those soldiers for Christmas, and that idea exploded into “a goal of packing and shipping 100 care packages,” she said.

That’s when Kimmons said they contacted the school’s administration and a few other surrounding schools for help, as some of those schools had done this kind of project before. After the building communities committee asked businesses to sponsor the shipping costs, “the project took off from there,” she said.

Pleasant Hope was one of the schools Willard reached out to.

“They contributed by having students bring in items to fill boxes,” she said. “They also decorated their boxes with pictures and messages.”

Kimmons said the project was fully funded “through generous donations between everyone that donated items for the boxes, donated time to oversee the project within their school building (or) group, donated time to make sure all of the boxes were packed

well and donated funds for the shipping.”

Since the students came up with the idea while working on 9/11 boxes, they only had November and early December to work on the 100 Christmas care packages before they were shipped.

With Willard’s partnering schools having experience with this project, “they knew exactly what to do to help us,” she said.

Kimmons said she hopes her FFA members will make this an annual project for the future, maybe even making a goal to “pack more boxes each year.”

“I am very proud of the students that took this project on and worked to make it a success,” she said. “It is a challenging project to make sure every piece comes together, but it is very rewarding.”

Some soldiers even reached out after receiving their packages and sent messages sharing their reactions to the gifts. Kimmons said she shares the messages with her students when she receives them.

“I think these students have really seen the impact they made in the lives of just a few of the service men and women that help provide us with our freedom and safety,” she said.

This year was the first time Willard had done this project, she said, “but we hope to continue it for years to come.”

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## LETTERS FROM SOLDIERS

### Airman First Class Gavin Davis

Hey, I’m Airman First Class Gavin Davis, and I’m the servicemember you sent that amazing box to. Thank you very much, I really enjoyed all of the great drawings that you sent, and I loved the goodies that came with them! It’s always fun to get something from back home.

My job doesn’t really line up with your average idea of what people in the U.S. military might do, I’m not in the desert carrying around big guns, but instead I’m a maintainer at Minot Air Force Base, keeping our nation’s ICBM force running. When you hear people talk about the “big red button on the president’s desk”, it’s us on the other side. We are always watching for attacks 24/7/365 and are ready to respond the moment it’s needed. In Minot, a big challenge is the weather. Instead of trying to beat the heat, we actually have to try to stay warm, as it can get up to -45 degrees Fahrenheit! At that temperature, touching bare metal actually has an effect close to burning your hands, so we have to be careful.

With the highly sensitive nature of my job, I hope you understand that I couldn’t get a picture of the box in the field with me, but I did manage to get it in the lightest snow dune I could find on base! Again, thank everyone for sending this box, it really means a lot to me!

### PFC Cody Ross

I am Pfc. Ross, Cody. You and your students sent me a care package. I am currently on rotation in South Korea, and I am so grateful to you and your students, this is the first care package I’ve received since coming here and from a group of people I’ve never met so thank you. And to all the students that wrote me letters and drew me pictures, I would like to give them a special thanks. Sadly I was not able to make out their names but it is still much appreciated.

### SPC Tristan H. Potts

Dear Mrs Kimmons,

I just wanted to extend my gratitude for the amazing care package I received from your students and yourself this holiday season. I cannot express how grateful I am to be receiving these amazing letters and gifts from you all! You

guys have made my Christmas very special and I cannot thank you enough.

### PFC Jackson

Dear Mrs. Kimmons,

My name is Terran Jackson, I received a wonderful surprise package today from your class filled with goodies and adorable messages from the kids. It was a much needed burst of joy as I am currently deployed in South Korea and cannot be home with my family for the holidays. I am more than willing to send some pictures of myself and my platoon over email but I would like clarification as to what I can send, my MOS is a 19D Cavalry Scout which is a combat MOS so we do work with multiple different weapons and military vehicles I am not sure the age of your class but I thought some of the kids might find our equipment pretty cool.

# A new building, a new location,

## but an old method of learning

By Steve  
Johnson  
stevej@buffaloreflex.com



The new Dallas County Technical Center is located at 120 S. Spruce Street in Buffalo. Students from Buffalo, Skyline, Hermitage, Humansville, Fair Play and Halfway Schools participate in Career and Technical Programs which include Automotive Technology, Collision Repair Technology, Construction Technology, Information Technology & Cyber Security, Criminal Justice, Graphic Design & Print Technology, Health Science I and II, Teacher Education Preparation, and Welding. PHOTOS BY STEVE JOHNSON

The Dallas County Technical Center has been helping students learn specific job skills and set them on a path to a satisfying and successful career for 50 years. At the beginning of this school year, the DCTC opened the doors of their brand new \$11.5 million facility on the Buffalo High School campus after the county voters passed a 46 cents per \$100 of assessed value lease purchase bond.

This modern, updated multi-level building offers spacious classrooms equipped with tools and technology for the specialized courses offered to junior and senior level students from area schools, that include: (but are not limited to) Buffalo, Fair Play, Hermitage, Halfway, Humansville and Skyline. DCTC currently offers 10 course programs taught by 12 instructors. Some of the courses offer dual credit for continued education and those numbers are increasing.

One of the standards that the Dallas County R-1 School District must meet in order to maintain accreditation from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education relates to successful placement in occupations, continued education, or military service related to his/her career and technical training. Through vocational secondary education, students gain acquisition of techni-

cal skills and knowledge to foster behavioral competence in the workplace. The main goal of vocational education is to prepare students for the workplace through academics combined with

hands-on learning of a skilled craft or trade. It can be a starting place for a specialized career.

DCTC Director Melanie Ryan, who holds a bachelor's degree in nursing, a master's degree in teaching and an education specialist degree in administration from the University of Central Missouri, left a 14-year nursing career to share her knowledge and experience with

young people on a health career path. "What I liked most about nursing was patient education and teaching patients about their specific conditions. I began to think that maybe I could contribute more by teaching our future nurses what I had already learned. When the health science teacher position opened at Cass County Career Center in Harrisonville, I applied and then taught for seven years there before Tim took a position at Dallas County R-1."

Tim Ryan, Melanie's husband, is DCR-1's Superintendent of Schools. In 2017, Melanie replaced Brandon Mankey as health science teacher at DCTC when he entered into a full-time pastoral position at his church. The following year, she took her role as the Tech Center's director. DCTC was then located in Louisburg in the old 1940's constructed

## Dallas County Technical Center helps students get on a career pathway

school building that was in dire need of expensive repairs. Tim and Melanie, along with other educators, administrators and school board members campaigned for the county to construct a new updated and fully modern building on the Buffalo High School campus. The project would require the passing of the afore-mentioned bond. The community understood the need and the benefit of keeping vocational education alive in Dallas County. Many of the citizen voters had attended DCTC during their high school days, and many of those voters are in careers they acquired through the training gained at the tech center.

Ryan feels a sense of "Bison" pride for her instructors and also her students. The majority of the teachers have several years of industry experience that they can relate to their students about the trade they are studying. Besides extensively knowing the subject they are teaching, they also understand the importance of soft skills, something that seems to be lacking in the younger generational workforce these days. Soft skills are important for any job and include interpersonal (people) skills, communication skills, listening skills, time management and empathy, among others. Some other examples of soft skills are teamwork, networking, creative thinking and conflict resolution.

Vocational education has not received the prestige that a college or university academic degree is given. Not all students are inclined toward

careers that follow an academic path. Each student that plans to attend DCTC is tested to see if they might be suitable for the program or if the program is suitable for them. School counselors use the assessment to help guide students into a field, in which they have an interest, and to establish a career and academic plan. Ryan quoted her superintendent husband when she said, "It is just as important to know what you don't want to do as to what you do want to do."

Melanie Ryan's specialty field of Health Science is just one of the courses offered at DCTC. Ryan said it is rewarding to think about the statistics that as a former Health Science instructor, in just seven years, she had graduated over 250 Health students and most of them went on to nursing school and a medical career. Other courses offered at DCTC are Agriculture, Automotive Technology, Collision Repair Technology, Information Technology and Cybersecurity, Construction Technology, Criminal Justice, Graphic Design Print Technology, Health Science 1 and HS 2, Teacher Education Preparation and Welding; but the new facility has extra classroom space for three additional subjects.

Another advantage to the new building and its different location is no travel time for Buffalo High School students, and so now hourly vocational classes and adult classes are being offered. Sending schools only add a little more drive time for their commute because they already

have to load the bus to make the trip even if it was to Louisburg. There is a limit of 18 students per class due to safety guidelines. DCTC holds morning, afternoon and hourly sessions and is in the process of possibly offering evening classes for adults.

Ryan tells a story that excites her with hope for students who might be slipping through the cracks because of academic struggles or disinterest.

"The principal of one of our sending schools, relayed some information about a sophomore student they had been having trouble with. He was uninterested in school and not quite making the grades he should in his classes. He could not relate to the importance of the classes he was required to take to graduate.

"We had a touring day at the new center for area schools' sophomore students to see if they might be interested in attending classes here their junior year. The principal shared with me, that after this young man finished the tour, his attitude was renewed with a new excitement for learning and studying for his future career. He was told of the requirements he had to fulfill for testing to attend and was enthused and anxious to begin preparation so he could attend next year. I know we're heading in the right direction.

Check out Dallas County Technical Center and their classes and events at [bisonpride.org/Domain/11](http://bisonpride.org/Domain/11).



Melanie Ryan  
Dallas County Technical  
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# Skateboarders carry the burden of

By Joy Beamer  
Buffalo Reflex  
joyb@buffaloreflex.com

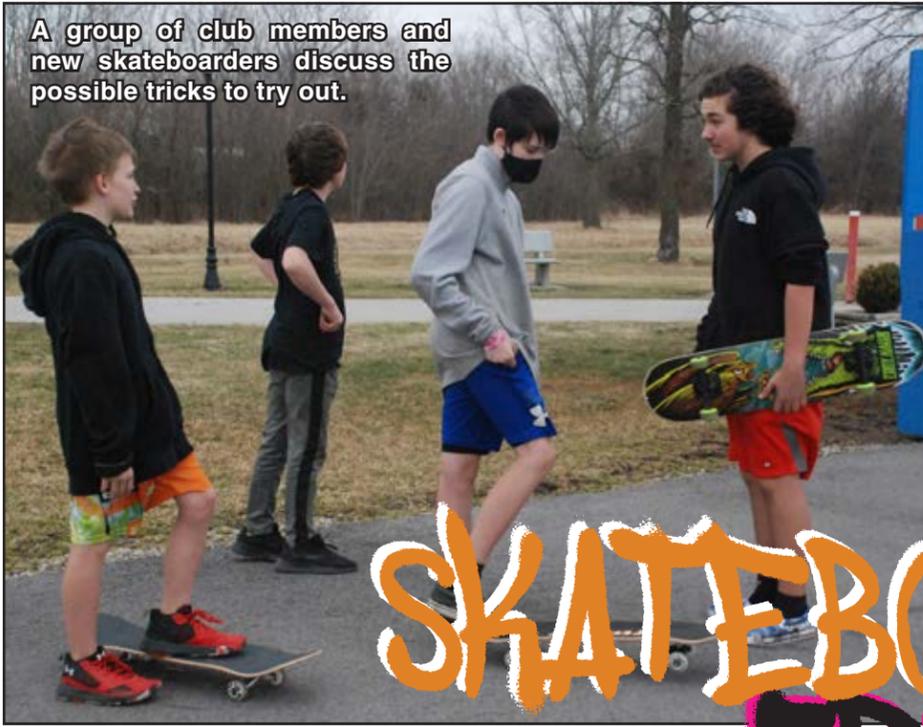
# STEREOTYPES



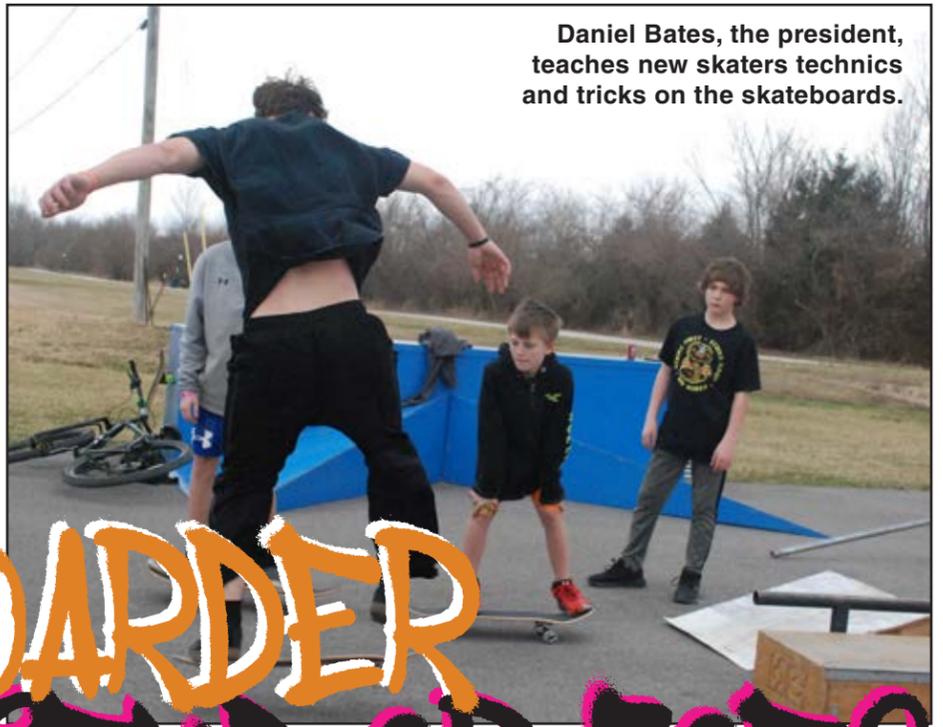
*Many people stereotype the skateboard community as a rough, deviant youth group. But, in Buffalo, that is not a fact but the total opposite. These three young men are the officers for the Buffalo Skateboard Club who volunteer to help the city and help younger skateboarding enthusiasts learn their craft. Pictured are Jason Treft, Vice President; Nathaniel Haley, Vice President; and Daniel Bates, president.*

PHOTOS BY JOY BEAMER, REFLEX STAFF

A group of club members and new skateboarders discuss the possible tricks to try out.



Daniel Bates, the president, teaches new skaters technics and tricks on the skateboards.



# SKATEBOARDER FRIEND OR FOE?

Same on you if a judgmental attitude has come across your mind when seeing young skateboarders in town. Because skateboarders will have dark clothing, hoodies, long hair and facial hair, citizens will immediately think they must be up to no good. When vandalism occurs, they are often the first to be questioned, but not in Buffalo.

Many people have the impression that all skateboarders are hooligans. In Buffalo, an official group of skateboarders is changing that impression. One of the members explained that there is a bad apple in every group. He continued to say that a skateboarder might commit a crime or be irrational, but that's just a tiny portion of people. Bad people are not allowed in the group. The group is non-violent, with no drug use, no alcohol, no shenanigans or vandalism.

Kids on a skateboard are just trying to have fun. The local group is not evil but proactive. Although skateboarders have broken some laws in Buffalo, the Buffalo Skateboarding Club serves as a watchdog for the local skatepark and tries to influence others with positive choices. Several months ago, a group of these young men appeared before the city council to offer their services for activities happening at the park and other venues.

One day while at the vending machine at the fire station, Fire Chief Greg Cunningham approached the group and suggested they form to create an official club. They talked to him about a better, larger skatepark. From that conversation, the young men spoke in front of the city council during citizens' comments. After a clear, thoughtful presentation, the city council members asked many questions and concluded the club would also be advisors as the city improves park spaces. The club pointed out some problems with the current equipment. Of course, none of the council members are skateboarders. They welcomed the information and advice on fixing the issues—a partnership with the city formed with the Buffalo Skateboarding Club.

They picked up the trash at Christmas after the parade went through downtown. At Easter, the plan is to help hide the eggs at this year's Easter egg Hunt and offer their services any way they can. While the skateboarder's persona may be of a tough dude, these young men are teddy bears with tricks.

Daniel Bates is the group president and started skating in January of 2020. He teaches other club members how to do tricks and encourages them to have positive attitudes. Moreover, his leadership doesn't tolerate breaking any laws. When an infraction starts to happen, these officers shut it down immediately and find solutions to all problems. In a positive

club, the officers only want the students to thrive in their skills and generosity to the citizens of Buffalo.

Nathaniel Haley, Vice President, started skating about a year ago and admits he has a lot to learn. So often, he turns to Bates for instruction. Haley said that Bates is like the club's sensei or teacher.

Justin Trefl is the second Vice President. He is the oldest of the group and feels lots of responsibility when trying to be a good role model at the park. He started skateboarding in 2017.

The membership has grown to around 20 since last summer. The club knows that stereotypes are a problem for the skateboarding community across the board. They try to be friendly and say hello to onlookers who stare or make concerned faces. Local business people and the council members don't think this at all. Many from the city, including business owners, have called them impressive young men bringing respectability and responsibility to the table.

They intend to begin helping a local initiative called Helping Hands. Several times a year, Helping Hands organizes to clean up public venues in the park and pick up trash in the main corridors. Helping Hands is known for its beautification work and when they volunteer, they will get noticed as benevolent students.

Bates and Haley talked about elementary students getting into skateboarding. First, they need to try a board and the club is willing to let them give their boards a try. Then, when the young kid decides they like it, they can go with their parents to purchase a personal board. The club officers are happy to advise about first board brands and the hardware.

The officers said a first-time board is recommended to go cheaper and to a skate shop to choose from clearance. First-timers often beat up their first board. Time will tell what features a second board will need for an individual. The club mentioned Santa Cruz, Zero, Death Wish and Baker as reliable brands. Zoomies in the Battlefield Mall is skateboarder-owned. In addition, Bates likes to support regional skateboard shops.

Skateboarding brings two "Good Life" issues together. First, the physical prowess develops with excellent leg workouts and strength. According to Bates, 800 calories an hour is burned while skateboarding. Haley clarified that if the hour-long workout is intense, 1,400 calories are burned. Skateboarding is a cardio exercise building stamina and brings explosive leg muscle development. Second, the social aspect builds great, lasting friendships.

Bates encourages them to stretch before skating to not mess up joints. Depending on the board and the run, an athlete may want to use different boards, including



All ages of young men practice their skills at the Buffalo Skateboard Park.

longboards, trick boards or cruiser boards.

A few primary components include:

- The deck.
- Grip tape that keeps your feet on the board.
- Trucks hold the board connected to the wheels and bearings.

Haley explained that starting could be a lot and a newcomer can get overwhelmed. While it looks easy, skateboarding is challenging and physically demanding. Haley says it is not a competition between peers but an improvement in personal skills. He has gone from barely able to ride to do tricks in just a year. Bates said that skaters

build their skillset and learning becomes a part of you.

The club looks forward to working with the city to help improve its skatepark. They hope to have new concrete padding laying a smooth layer for rides and tricks.

The officers are always looking for new members and anyone is welcome who has a positive outlook and wants to make a positive community impact. They encourage other city groups to form a club and enjoy the rewards.

Bottom line: The Buffalo Skateboard Club members just want to skate and have fun while serving their city.



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