

# The Mustang

Leading the stampede with award-winning coverage



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## CCPP: the caddy cell phone policy recently implemented at MHS

Lia Koski  
Editor-In-Chief

There's no doubt that Mundelein High School has a new elephant in the room: "room" as in a classroom, and "elephant" as in the new cell phone policy that MHS enforced this year. Wherever a student might be in the building, they can expect to see a cloth caddy that holds places for phones.

Not only has Mundelein turned to using cell phone caddies to limit students' usage of their phones during class, but schools all around the nation are enforcing similar protocols. However, each school is choosing a slightly different approach; for instance, particular schools in Ohio, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania have all used locking phone pouches that disable students from using their phones even during passing periods.

Administrators and staff members report recognizing the issue of phone addiction for years on end.

Interim Principal, Mike Souza, said "Our teachers and staff were noticing that there was a difficulty with student engagement in the classroom, and the phones were a big part of the distraction that was causing students not to be engaged."

Souza elaborated that it was difficult for teachers to constantly re-direct students towards what they were supposed to be doing: growing as learners.

Ever since the phone caddies were put into place, classroom learning has evolved to a whole new level.

English teacher, Ernie Billittier, spoke on the difference in student engagement before and after the cell phone policy was enforced. "This school year has felt markedly different in a positive way. I have to spend less time, meaning class time, managing behavior and constantly having that discussion with students over and over and over again to put phones away," said Billittier.

Not only have teachers noticed an increase in classroom engagement, but students such as Senior Nalani Stanczak mentioned the benefits that the cell phone policy has had on her education. "Without my phone, I feel more productive in class and less distracted. It is much easier to maintain focus in class and obtain a better understanding of what my teachers are

talking about," said Stanczak.

Even with recent successes, the phone policy has nonetheless faced challenges.

Souza said, "I think it's working. We are not unrealistic. We know at points with things like this, we're going to run into some issues. I think it's still going pretty strong from the feedback I'm hearing. The important thing to remember is our number one goal: to preserve that classroom time, and if that's happening, then the other little things that are happening on the fringe are things we can try to deal with and work with."

He added that he hopes the system will solely become smoother with more time to come. "Our eighth graders come in from the middle schools, and they're used to not having their phone already anyway," said Souza, "We're hopeful it'll become more and more just part of the norm of what students expect when they go to school."

Stanczak also acknowledged that the adjustment to the phone policy wasn't easy. "Although I was skeptical about the new phone policy at first, I have grown to really appreciate it. I have been able to better communicate with my peers in class and feel a better sense of connection," she said.

Billittier still notices some students who have had a hard time putting their phones in the caddy. However, he said that "it's with only a couple of kids." Billittier mentioned that he only has to remind students to put their phones away during the transition into class after the bell rings.

Besides a quick reminder to put phones in the caddy, Billittier said that he hasn't "...experienced any combative nature [to the phone policy], which has been great."

In fact, Billittier said that he gives credit to the students for not making the policy a bigger issue than it really is.

MHS administration and staff created the idea of using a caddy for phones because it involved the phone being a large enough distance away from the students where it wouldn't cause distractions while still remaining within eyesight of the students.

Souza said, "Our goal in this is obviously to preserve the classroom and learning time, but it's also to help students learn how to self-regulate their cell phone use." He further explained how he didn't want there to be a 100% ban on any cell phones in the school. He wanted to ensure that students could "...also quickly and easily

grab [their phones] to use different passing periods."

MHS chose the caddy system for its accessibility. Cell phone policies that entail locking up phones were especially criticized after the school shooting in Georgia that occurred on Sep. 4.

Even though MHS wanted to maintain students' proximity to their phones by having them stay inside the classroom, Souza said that the administration did not make this decision based on possible emergencies.

"Anytime there's a large-scale incident, something like, unfortunately, what happened in Georgia, the local cell phone towers can only hold up to 200 calls at a time," Souza said, "So your cell phones aren't going to work anyway. In a real serious emergency, the police and first responders take over priority on all those wavelengths as well."

Souza added, "If there's an emergency, our staff, our administrators, are all trained on how to handle those different types of

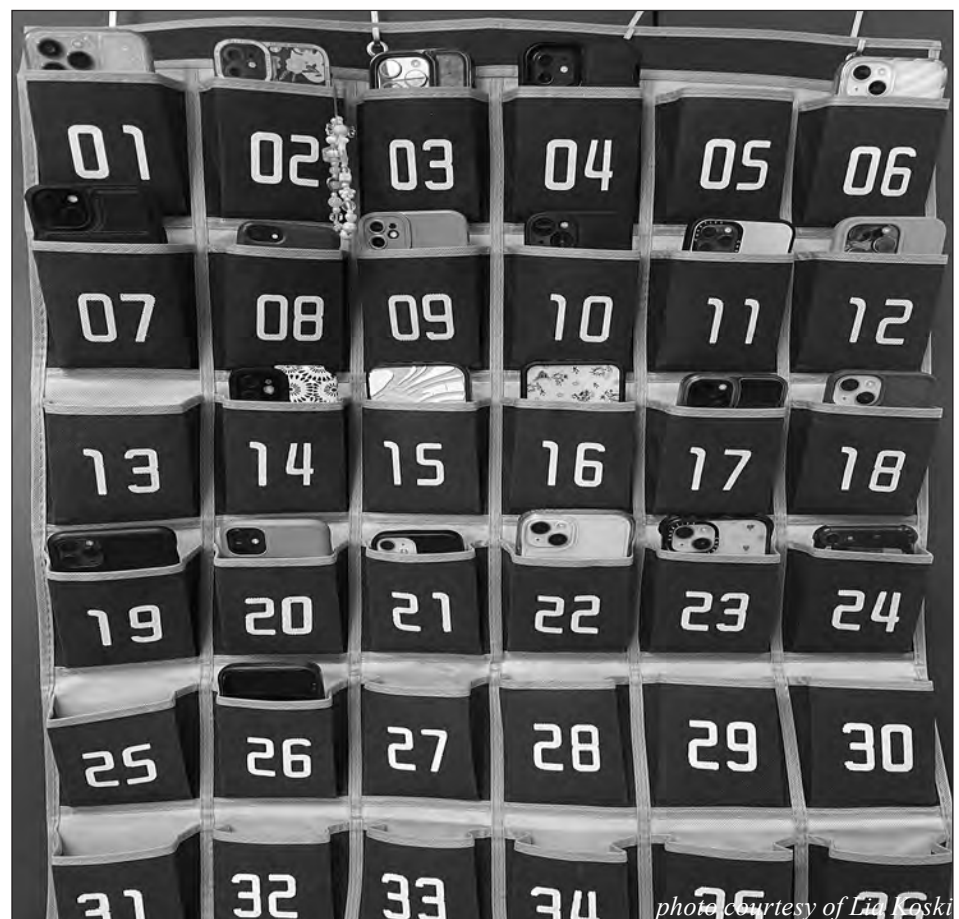
emergencies. We go through that training every single year. We take it very seriously, and none of that training ever involves students using cell phones."

Even if cell phone towers cannot place unlimited calls, there is a sense of security for students that if an emergency occurs, they could contact their parents or anyone else for help.

Stanczak said, "I don't want my first worry in any scary situation to be 'where's my phone?'"

She added, "Before I feel comfortable locking away my phone, I need to see more safety protocols with security preventing any possible situations like a school shooting."

Because of the positive feedback and observations from the new cell phone policy, Souza said, "We don't have any big ideas or big changes that we foresee coming. It's always hard the first year after a big change [such as the addition of the caddy system], but we're hopeful for the future."



The pictured above is of a cell phone caddy in A101 taken in the midst of class. Most of the students' phones are in the caddy, but not everyone's.

## MHS hires new staff: A look at the new teachers

Ashton Salski  
Staff Reporter

This year, MHS welcomes 11 new teachers into the English, Math, Science, Social Studies, World Languages, and Special Education departments. Here are some quick questions to get to know them!

Teachers	<i>What do you enjoy most about teaching at Mundelein so far?</i>	<i>What qualities do you feel teachers need most?</i>	<i>Why did you choose Mundelein?</i>
Jarod Hesse	"I really enjoy being able to build a rapport with the students. Being able to be silly is okay and allowing kids to be comfortable being themselves has been a huge success."	"Patience and empathy. Anyone can learn material and teach it. The ability to empathize with students and get them to a place where they can learn is what makes a teacher great."	"The math department really separated themselves from other schools. I knew that the school has a good reputation in the community."
Monika Smaga	"I enjoy getting to know students and working with them. I also enjoy being a part of such a great team of math teachers."	"I believe teachers need to be patient and be their true selves in front of their students."	"I loved the atmosphere"
Leslie Osorio	"What I enjoy most about teaching at Mundelein is the strong sense of community. As an alumnus of Mundelein, it's both comforting and motivating to see familiar faces every day and to collaborate with former teachers and mentors."	"I believe the most important qualities for teachers are patience, understanding, confidence, adaptability, and the ability to collaborate effectively with others."	"I chose to teach at Mundelein because I wanted to give back to the community that shaped me as a student. My own positive experiences here inspired me to return and encourage current students to learn, dream, and pursue their goals."
Nick Brow	"My favorite part about MHS has been how welcoming everyone is. My students have been awesome and I am having a lot of fun working with them."	"Teachers need to be understanding and caring. We also have to understand that every student faces different challenges. We need to assist them through the struggles while we celebrate their triumphs."	"I chose Mundelein for the great community and the opportunity to work with a diverse group of students. Everyone has made my experience positive so far."
Julisa Gamez	"I enjoy how diverse the campus is and the fact that we have a bilingual program. The staff and amount of support I get here at Mundelein as a new teacher is also amazing!"	"As a teacher being organized and empathic are top qualities a teacher needs most."	"I chose Mundelein because it felt very welcoming. Being that I am a Latina, I was looking for a campus with a big Latino population. Also Mundelein gets involved in lots of outside activities."
Melissa Whitaker	"I really enjoy getting to know the students and all the different opportunities that Mundelein presents for the students."	"I think qualities that teachers need the most include the ability to be passionate, compassionate, collaborative, and understanding."	"I chose Mundelein because I really align with Mundelein's mission statement."
Dan Tagtmeier	"Teaching at Mundelein has been excellent so far, as a lot of my classes respond well to my form of teaching. It's difficult at times, but I enjoy learning about students and diving into how the content relates to their lives."	"The best quality a teacher needs to have is positivity. If a teacher isn't passionate about what they're teaching, the students will not feel engaged with the lesson."	"I chose Mundelein because I'm a former student and I've been working in the building for almost three years. When I got the call for the job, I didn't have to think twice about coming back to MHS."
Madeleine Licata	"I really enjoy getting to know all of the students and my colleagues. I feel very supported as a new teacher at Mundelein! I'm also the JV girls' swim coach."	"I think that teachers need to be compassionate before anything else. School can be a difficult place because there are always new challenges, so it's important to me to always consider a person's experiences in and out of the classroom."	"From the start, it was clear that Mundelein has such a strong sense of community. Everyone was and continues to be incredibly inviting, and it's wonderful to see that the school has a lot of pride in who they are."
Molly Havlic	"I enjoy working with the amazing students. Everyone is so respectful, kind, and interesting! I have learned so much from the students already."	"I believe educators need empathy, grace, and genuine passion."	"I have been a Mundelein community member for my entire life! I also completed my student teaching at Mundelein High School in Fall 2019."
Don DeVito	"I truly appreciate how welcoming the staff and student body have been. I felt embraced and supported, which has made my experience here incredibly positive so far."	"I believe teachers need to be empathetic, compassionate, and relatable for students to come into and be willing to learn in. My goal is to embody these qualities effectively."	"I chose Mundelein because of its core values, equity, collaboration, and growth. They align perfectly with my own teaching philosophy."
Henry Judge	"I enjoy building relationships with the students. It's been fun getting to know the personalities of all the different types of students in my class."	"I would say it's really important to have creativity. Creating lessons and finding different ways to engage the kids, while also adapting in different situations."	"I think the school values align with my beliefs. I like how diversity, equity, and inclusion are important principles in the school."

## Electives at Mundelein : roll or enroll

Shrushti Shah  
Staff Reporter

Electives are versatile classes that allow students to explore themselves and their individual interests. Electives are like a platter, students get to pick what they like and see if it works for them or not. If they like something, they can take it or otherwise leave it.

Tom Buenik, the Department Chair of Guidance, shared some of the most popular electives at MHS. He stated that core electives include, "Project Lead the Way, Honors Anatomy, fourth year math, fourth year science, Psychology, and Sociology," while non core electives include "Food and Nutrition, and business and music courses, specifically Band and Show Choir."

Electives that did not run this year due to the low enrollment include Honors Graphic Design Studio, Advanced Media 2, Sports and Entertainment Marketing, Latino Literature, Residential Construction, Intermediate Guitar, STEM class, AP Physics 2, Contemporary U.S & International Problems, Honors Spanish 5, and Strength 4.

Neil McCarthy, a social studies teacher at MHS, previously taught an elective titled Modern Latin America. It included everything about Latin American culture including the music, dance, and food. He shared that "eventually the numbers started dwindling" so they could not run the class anymore.

America at War was another class McCarthy previously taught that stopped running.

McCarthy said, "It was mystifying to me why the course stopped running. It was a popular class." He added, "After we had the C- Wing, there were entrepreneurial

classes... to increase the enrollment in those classes, maybe the enrollment in another department was reduced."

McCarthy said that across the country many social science departments at the university level are dying. Most of the money is going into the STEM fields globally. As a result history courses are becoming less popular and people are losing their foundations.

McCarthy's ambition as a social studies teacher was to take Modern Latin America forward and have a similar class for each continent like Modern Asia and Modern Africa. He believed, "If you build it, they will come."

He clarified, "I understand school districts are not always full of cash so school boards have to make tough decisions, my problem is that it is too often that the humanities and the arts that get a first chopping block."

McCarthy acknowledged the importance of STEM classes and the future that they provide to students, however, he believes that there should be more opportunities for students to explore the social science area as it makes them responsible citizens.

Electives need funding, staff, space and student interest to run. Some electives like McCarthy's America at War and Modern Latin America were not able to run because of some missing factors.

Not all classes stop running for the same reasons. Sometimes, classes don't run because of a change in staff schedule.

Buenik explained, "Our district tells us, here is how many staff members we can hire and if we try to create positions within the building we have to look at what teachers are certified to teach and what they have taught in the past. When we allocate

teachers to courses, we have to prioritize. Core classes are held up more than electives."

Buenik further mentioned that some seniors graduate early and as a result there are fewer students taking electives. Other students might be taking several AP classes which leaves no space in their schedule for electives.

Study halls can also take up the space in students' schedules. Although study halls are great when utilized well, students lose the chance to explore electives because of them.

Tech campus creates a wide variety of options of pathways for students to choose from like culinary arts, firefighting, and cosmetology. About 100 students from MHS attend tech campus every year, but those classes also take course scheduling space away from electives provided here at the high school.

Buenik said, "Our students need to explore more...they haven't had a chance to explore because they only have one elective period after taking a language class." He added, "If they don't take the other core classes, they will not get into a good college."

Mike Souza, the Associate Principal of Operations, shared, "I think overall we have quite a few offerings, we have a lot of options, that is why some of those courses don't run because students choose some options over others. We try to give students what they want." However, Souza added, "We have to make decisions for the best of the building and best of the teachers... we want to make it a viable course which is based on enrollment."

## MHS administrators take on new roles during principals' absence

Xavier Hilgart  
Staff Reporter

The start to Mundelein High Schools 2024-25 school year has gone as smoothly as possible.

From introducing a brand new phone policy to incorporating one of the largest freshman classes ever into the already overcrowded school, there were quite a bit of issues to work with in order to make the school year run like normal.

However, coming into the year, one would not have been so sure it all would have worked out due to Principal Alexandra Taylor's absence from the equation. The third year principal began the school year on maternity leave. In her place, Assistant Principal of Student Life Stevie Liebert and Assistant Principal of Operations Michael Souza were both to take on much more responsibilities to fill the void.

Souza, who has taken on a much larger workload during Taylor's absence, is try-

ing his best to adjust.

"The biggest challenge so far has been the increase of my overall workload," Souza said. As assistant principal, he already has many responsibilities, however they are more focused and, according to Souza, they "align well with my skills and preferences." The position of principal requires a much broader range of work and people he needs to work with.

With the switch, not only does he have the responsibilities of a principal, he still has to make sure his duties as associate principal are completed. "There is a lot the principal has to do," he mentioned, "and, on top of that, I still have to make sure I am completing the tasks assigned to me as the Associate Principal of Operations as well."

"There have been a lot of people who have reached out to me offering their support while I am in this role," Souza added. "Everyone is pitching in to help fill Dr. Taylor's shoes while she is out."

Stevie Liebert is the other half of the puz-

zle. She shared that she has worked smarter, not harder, to make the school year run better than ever.

"We have divided the workload based on what made sense for each of our roles," Liebert explained. This process of dividing the work based on prior skill sets and responsibilities, as touched on by Souza as well, has been their saving grace.

Instead of making "one person do the job of two people" as Liebert put it, they instead share the workload, doing what they can to make sure everything gets done, and that everything gets done well. Playing to each other's strengths has proven to work much better than just assigning bulk workloads out to one person.

Beyond their strategy for handling the switch, Liebert iterated that their motivation was ironclad. "I think it's really important that when a colleague takes a leave... that we are supportive and excited for them," she said.

### The Mustang Staff

The Mustang is a student-produced publication published in print about every six weeks and also online by the journalism students of Mundelein High School, 1350 W. Hawley St., Mundelein, IL, 60060, phone (847) 949-2200. The Mustang provides accurate and objective coverage of events and topics that are interesting and relevant to high school students. The staff welcomes signed letters from readers for possible publication. These letters can be submitted to the Journalism Room A101.

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# Get Philosophical with Philosophy Club

Shrushti Shah  
Staff Reporter

Meditative. Thought Provoking. Conversational. The sponsors of the Philosophy club are Susan Theotokatos and Michele Bonadies who make sure that it remains a safe place for people to share their ideas and debate abstract ideas.

The club's president, Nicholas Selimos and vice president, Alexis Petros lead it along with Bonadies and Theotokatos.

Theotokatos mentioned, "When the club started, it was a space where kids could come and talk about philosophical ideas like what is the nature of love, crime and punishment, existence. All the traditional ideas that philosophers have tried to think about for centuries."

The leaders work together to put up a video or an article which everyone reads and uses to discuss. Now, what they are planning to do is use surveys in the club and have everybody read a book and discuss it.

The club is making progress in terms of making itself the way its members want it to be.

According to Petros, Philosophy club is unlike any other club in the building as students are truly encouraged to practice their interpersonal skills by talking and interacting with their peers. "It is more discussion based than other clubs," Petros added.

Theotokatos said, "The goal of the club is to make students feel comfortable, and build community within MHS."

Theotokatos believes that Philosophy

Club is meant to give students a better understanding of who they are along with sharing their perspective with peers which can be helpful to them in the future.

There are a lot of skills that one takes away from the club like interpersonal and communication skills. Selimos said the most important skill the club teaches is "the ability to sit, hear, and respect someone else's stance on a certain subject" while address-

ing one's own opinion.

Selimos thinks, although discussions get intense sometimes, overall, it is a casual atmosphere for the students to have discussions and learn from each other.

Everyone is encouraged to talk and jump into conversations, but they can also listen. While most club members are involved in conversations, their level of participation is up to them.

Selimos described their experience at the club as "one of his favorite hobbies outside of school" and Petros has found the club "inspiring and interesting."

The club leaders and sponsors want all members to learn that they can connect the philosophical discussions in the club to their own lives and overcome struggles using the ideas they are exposed to during the discussions.

The leadership and sponsors aim to keep the way the club is in the future. However, they do wish that more people knew about the club.

"I hope to see the club grow in size and thought," Petros said. Theotokatos wants to keep it the safe space it is meant to be.



Pictured above are the president and vice president of Philosophy Club. On the left is Junior Alexis Petros, on the right is Senior Nicholas Selimos.

## Athletic Director signing off: Parola's phenomenal past

Daniel Stricklin  
Staff Reporter

Troy Parola is entering his 33rd year of being a teacher, coach and athletic director. Parola has been Mundelein's athletic director for nine years. This is Parola's last year.

"I was a teacher for seven years and the Head Boys Track coach as well as a football coach and wrestling coach here at MHS from 1998-2005," said Parola.

Some of Parola's favorite things about being the athletic director is being able to see students grow in school and out of school. He loves seeing kids find joy in a sport while maintaining good grades in school.

Parola will miss engaging in his students and witnessing their growth. However, he is excited for this new chapter of his life.

He is excited "to see the school continue to grow and experience success in our programs. In our sports programs our participation numbers are growing and we are able to field levels in all sports that we offer in the North Suburban Conference. I love seeing our students finding their 'AND.' There is something for everyone here at MHS," Parola said.

Before Parola retires, he hopes that students will continue to make the most out of their high school experiences.

Parola added, "To find your 'AND' learn that being a part of a team and participating in sports will help make each individual who they are and will be. Being part

of a team is special, it teaches you about 'family' and you learn to work through the ups and downs along the way. I truly hope that our student athletes can have the seven core values become part of who the student athletes are and become in life."

Parola recalled some of his favorite memories here at MHS. He shared, "There have been so many special moments as the Athletic Director at Mundelein."

Specifically, Parola said, "I would say the Boys Basketball Season from 2019-2020 stands out. Mundelein had a team full of juniors and was heading to the IHSA Sectional Championship Game with a 30-4 overall record when the pandemic hit and shut everything down. The team was going to play Stevenson for the third time in the Sectional Final at Prospect. Everyone was looking forward to this game as it was going to be a third match up of well matched teams. Just a couple of weeks before fans were treated to a sold out thriller that came down to the last second at MHS."

Parola described how difficult it was to witness how the pandemic affected sports. He said, "It is unfortunate that the season ended the way it did. Unfortunately the pandemic took the next year of sports from everyone. The pandemic just stole so much from everyone. I feel for all students that had to live through that, I hope no one has to go through that ever again."



Pictured above is Troy Parola. He is in his ninth and final year as the athletic director for Mundelein High School.

## Small business, big impact: How Tina G's makes Mundelein

Darby Schwerman  
Staff Reporter

Chances are if you've driven through Mundelein, you've passed Tina G's. Nestled on the corner of East Park and North Lake street, Phil and Tina Gilardi's Italian restaurant is hard to miss.

The couple entered the restaurant business with Philly G's in 2005, which then became tavern on 60 in 2013, finally opening Tina G's in 2016.

Marco and Sophia Gilardi, the owners' children, graduated from MHS in 2020 and 2022, so the students here hold a special place in the owners' hearts. Tina makes a point to support MHS in any way she can. "I feel like it's the right thing for me to do, to help all of you be the best you can be." Whether that be through fundraisers, or just being there to talk to, Tina calls herself "everyone's Italian Aunt."

Their efforts have aided programs like dance, gymnastics, lacrosse, cheer, swim, water polo, show choir, band, basketball, and of course football. Ask any football player and you'd know that Tina G's fuels our team by feeding them almost every Friday. "Walking out there and seeing the huge smiles on their faces is just unbelievable," Gilardi commented.

It's not just during the school year that students are involved with the business. Over the summer, students have been able to showcase their talents by performing

live music for the community at the restaurant.

Senior Mason Jerome along with others have been playing there the last four months. "It's very meaningful that she's looking to support us by giving us a platform, giving us a way to express ourselves and play and make people happy."

The space the business has created is something special. "I think my favorite part about working at Tina G's is that it's a very loving atmosphere filled with generous people. All the memories I make, connections I build, you know, they'll last forever," said Jerome.

The exchange gives Tina just as much fulfillment as the performers. "It made my heart sing to hear them play and be able to help showcase their immense talent," Gilardi commented.

The Gilardis' consideration for others doesn't stop at customers. They let employees be high schoolers first. "All of our hostesses are involved in at least one sport, which must be tricky for Tina to balance everyone's schedules, but she manages to do it for us and makes sure we never have to miss games/matches for work," explained hostess and Senior Natalia Jandes.

Tina and Phil gain more than just a team when employing MHS students. "I have worked with over 50 MHS graduates and currently enrolled students. I am honored that they chose to work with me. I am so truly grateful for the relationships I have

made with both them and their families," Gilardi commented.

Jandes expressed that working at Tina G's has made her feel more involved. "I see so many different people at Tina G's—regulars, people I know outside of work, and people I've never met—and the small interactions I've had with each of them make

me feel more connected and like I'm a part of something bigger."

Something bigger is exactly what Tina G's is a part of. "The people of this community are so awesome. I can't explain how grateful I am to wake up every day and do what I love," Gilardi stated.



Tina G and her family outside of their Mundelein restaurant.

## Gen Z has a gambling problem

Eric Beauchamp  
Online Editor

Plinko balls. Dice. Slot machines. These are only the most popular of over 1,000 different gambling games available on Stake.com.

Today, Stake is one of the largest purveyors of underage gambling culture. Stake is the most visited gambling website in the world, averaging close to 150 million visits per month according to Google. Though Stake requires users to be 21 years or older, their slim regulations make it easy for those not legally allowed to gamble to create accounts and use the platform.

According to the International Center for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviors, 60-80% of high school students say they've gambled for money in the past year, and 6% are addicted to gambling.

But why are so many teens drawn to gambling? Cait Huble, Director of Communications at the National Council of Problem Gambling, says that it begins at a young age.

"A lot of gambling exposure actually happens quite early in life," said Huble, "most young people are reporting that their first gambling experience is occurring between 9 and 11 years old. And that can range from any kind of you know, maybe bingo or a lottery ticket in the stocking at Christmas, as well as exposure to it through video games and online gambling."

In recent years, online streaming of gambling has become extremely popular. The streaming platform Kick.com has seen the category of "Slots and Casinos" streams become the second most popular on the site, with over 15 million hours watched according to Kick.

"Teenagers see people like XQC winning so much money, so they say 'I'm only going to put five bucks in' and then they lose the five dollars, so they put more money in and before you know it they're down 50, 100 dollars and maybe even more," said Joey Gargano, senior at MHS.

Despite the seriousness of gambling addiction, a societal stigma often keeps it from being taken seriously; many believe

that gambling addiction is not as serious as other addictions since there is no substance involved. Despite this, Huble says it is more similar to other addictions than most think.

"It's hard to conceptualize that gambling is an addiction the same way that substance and alcohol abuse is, because there's not that substance, right?" said Huble, "But chemically in your brain, that dopamine, that rush of a win or a risky bet is chemically the same as a substance abuse disorder. So your brain doesn't really know the difference, even though physically from the outside it looks a little bit different."

Treatment options for gambling come in a variety of ways. Kentay Varnell, a teen gambling specialist for NICASA Behavioral Health Services, says that it is a particularly difficult addiction to treat.

"We try to get them to understand that they're losing their family, that they're losing everything because of gambling. Some actually get their money monitored by a family member or significant other," said Varnell.

Though many are not aware, gambling addiction is also often treated similarly to other addictions.

"There are inpatient treatment options, there's therapy, there's group therapy, there's peer support like Gamblers Anonymous. So thinking about treatment-wise, it actually is treated quite similarly to the way we think about substance use disorder," said Huble.

For struggling teenagers, admitting to a program or support group can be intimidating. Despite this, there are still plenty of options, including the NCPG hotline.

"Contact our number, 1-800-GAMBLER," said Huble, "you can call it, you can text or tap that number. You can reach out for help in your area. Certainly, you can help a friend if they're struggling, you can reach out on their behalf. All of those contacts are super confidential, we're not going to turn around and call your parents. Our priority is to get people help as quickly and as easily as possible."



### Gen Z voters: what makes them different?

Hannah Roberts  
News/Feature Editor

The 2024 election is right around the corner and it's certainly going to be an interesting one. The Democratic and Republican parties are more divided than ever and American citizens are divided right alongside their parties, but that's not the only difference coming to this November's election.

This year there will be a new wave of Generation Z (Gen Z) voters taking the polls by storm. Gen Z is known for always speaking up for what they believe in and not following in the footsteps of previous generations. Gen Z is also known for being more liberal than previous generations like the Millennials or Generation X.

Social studies teacher Susan Theotokatos commented, "I think it really depends on where you're growing up. Your community environment, your family environment, and your own personal identity."

A big difference between Gen Z voters and the people older than them is where they get their information. It's no secret that Gen Z is engrossed in the world of technology and in turn, spend lots of time on social media.

Government teacher Thomas Kuhn said, "If social media stays the prominent source of media then it's (the election) is going to be more based on personality."

Social media, according to Kuhn, can't get into the details of the policies of candidates, so if people keep getting their information from social media, they will likely be voting off personality.

It's true that Gen Z gets lots of information from social media; however, it's not the only place they get it from. Senior Samantha Jaffe said she gets her information from big newspapers and news stations.

This election is going to have voters spanning across five generations and that makes it easy to wonder: will the votes of Gen Z actually impact the election in any way?

Jaffe stated, "I do feel it's very important to vote. I think it's one of the easiest ways to impact our democracy."

But it's not just young people who think it's important for Gen Z to vote. Both Kuhn and Theotokatos agree that it's important for teachers to encourage their students of age to vote.

Kuhn said, "It's why we do what we do...so there's a purpose to what their studying."

## How is this year's election different?

Shrushti Shah  
Staff Reporter

The election of 2024 is a contrast in candidates. The change in candidacy for the Democratic party has made a turn in this election. The race has been more about the personalities than policies.

Kamala Harris, a woman of color running for president, has brought a new energy to the Democrats, while Donald Trump, a well known businessman, has caught the attention of his fellow Republicans. The change in the Democratic candidate has brought great enthusiasm; however, the race will still be tight.

After the change in candidacy, Harris has received more support from women compared to men. According to The 19th, an article published on Sept 10, 2024, Harris holds a slight edge over Trump— and it's driven by women, the poll finds. Shrushti Menon, a senior at MHS who plans to vote in November said, "I believe that she can relate to our struggles as a person of color."

Elections have been becoming more about relatability with candidates rather than policies of the party; elections are

candidate-driven rather than party-driven as they used to be.

Although Thomas Kuhn, an AP Government & Politics teacher at MHS, did not notice a shift in the policies of Biden and Harris, there was a change in the atmosphere after the change in candidate.

A Time Magazine article written July 18, 2024, 'America's Political Violence Crisis,' by Vera Bergengruen brought attention to the increased political violence in America. The article stated, "...polls have traced a sharp rise in the share of Americans who believe violence is a valid means to achieve their political goals," later reminding the readers that, "the last presidential election ended in a violent attack on the U.S. Capitol by an angry mob that left five people dead and 140 injured."

As time has passed, the political violence in America has risen; there have been two assassination attempts on Trump around the time of the election 2024.

Michele Bonadies, an MHS AP Government & Politics teacher, expressed her thoughts on the assassination attempt saying, "It was a reality check that we need to calm down the rhetoric on both sides

[meaning political parties]."

Moving from Biden to Harris, there has been a difference in the voters the candidates have approached. Harris has been more center-leaning compared to Biden in hopes of reaching some Republicans along with Democrats.

"You never would have heard Kamala Harris in a Democratic debate say that she's a gun owner and she is not taking anyone's gun away," Kuhn said.

In their debate on Sept 10, 2024, both candidates tried to put each other down.

"I don't hear many policies," Bonadies mentioned.

Kuhn agreed, "I haven't seen a defined policy position as much...the debate was more about personality and character more than it was about policy and substance."

A New York Times poll of undecided voters published on Sept 26, 2024 showed that the biggest concerns of swing voters for Trump was his temperament while Harris' swing voters were also concerned about her personality, but less so than Trump.

The 2024 election is one of the most critical and tight elections, making the vote of the youth of great importance.

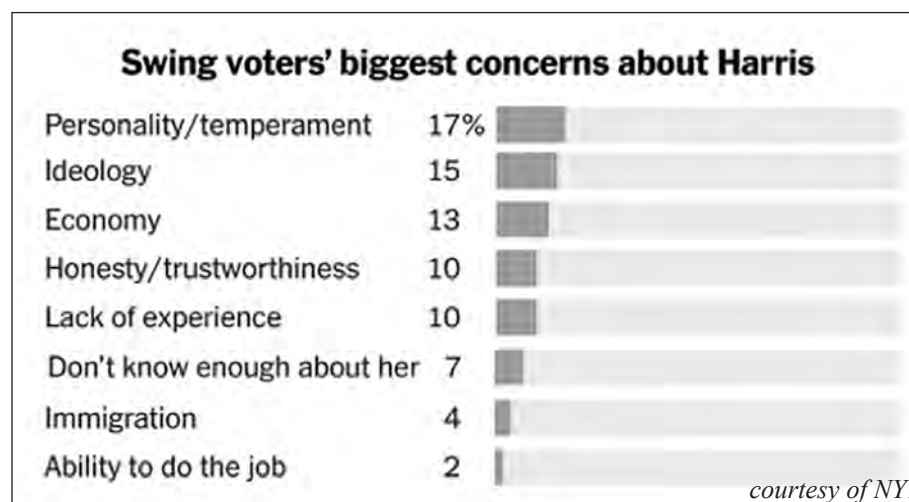
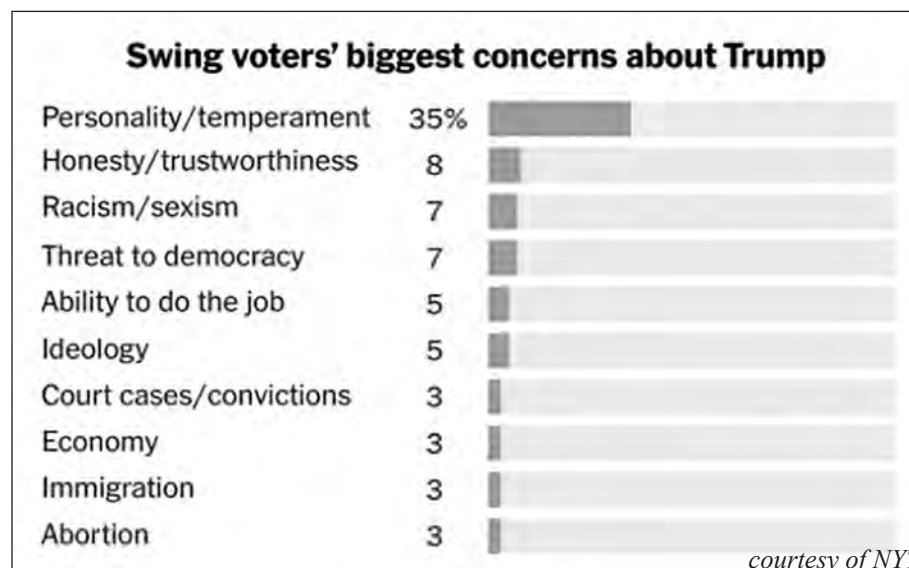
Kuhn points to taxes, the economy and foreign policy as some of the most crucial policies for young voters to pay attention to. Menon conversely considered the reproductive rights of women and gun shootings as important issues impacting young people..

Bonadies said, "Each candidate has completely different views... it is an election of contrast."

Kuhn talked about the policy of the Republican Party: "In my opinion, Trump's policy is like the late 1800s tariff policy, the logic of cutting income tax and raising tariffs." He added, "If you raise tariffs, China is paying the taxes, we are not paying as many taxes, but if the cost of foreign goods is driven up, the cost of domestic goods will be driven up as well because the foreign companies have to charge more to pay more tariffs so that gets passed on to the consumers," he said.

According to a CBS article updated on Sept 19, 2024, 'Trump and Harris' views on China' by Caitlin Yilek, Harris wants America to have peaceful relations with China while maintaining the best interests of America rather than pulling out of the relations.

This election is one of contrast because of the opposite poles both parties are on. The change in candidate for the Democratic party has brought a new energy to the election. The election is very much candidate-centered rather than policy-centered as voters seek a connection with candidates.



*Polls of swing voters' biggest concerns about Trump and Harris. Data and images from the New York Times.*



# The second vote of the referendum: one last chance for MHS

Lia Koski  
Editor-In-Chief

A referendum is defined by “a general vote by the electorate on a single political question that has been referred to them for a direct decision.”

The community of MHS has been asked whether or not they want to increase their taxes to renovate the high school. The referendum was voted on in the Spring of 2023 and failed by a slight majority. Now, MHS turns to the community again, pleading for their vote on the upcoming referendum that will be on the ballot on Nov. 5. However, this is not the same proposal. The MHS school board has revised its plan based on community feedback.

Kevin Quinn, Director of Facilities, said, “The priorities have never shifted.” Quinn means that the referendum still plans on renovating the aged infrastructure, the performing arts center, the cafeteria, adding a field house, and adding a CTE program.

One of the main focuses of the referendum is on the infrastructure of the school because the “systems were built in 1958, and commercial construction has a 50 to 75 year lifespan. We’re at that point,” said Quinn, “Additionally, the school was originally built for 1500 students, and now we have 2290 students.”

The growing student population has led MHS to be overcrowded in many of its main facilities including classrooms, gyms, performing art centers, and the cafeteria.

Mundelein community member and long-term resident, Pam Whitaker, said, “I’ve read a lot about the overcrowding on the school’s website.” She read about how “the

cafeteria is extremely crowded, and they have several periods for everybody to fit in, to find time to eat, and that’s not an easy thing to navigate,” said Whitaker. Both of Whitaker’s children graduated from MHS already.

Regarding the overcrowding and discomfort in the cafeteria, Quinn added, “Our cafeteria two weeks ago was 94 degrees during lunch periods. That was for two days in a row from excessive heat outside. It’s not an air-conditioned space. We know how important that is. But we can’t put in air conditioning due to the underground systems and electrical components that are outdated.”

Not only does the cafeteria not have air conditioning, neither do both of the gyms. Quinn mentioned how, because of this, students were unable to have class in the gym already twice this year.

The outdated infrastructure has also been known to cause water main breaks, forcing the school to cancel classes for the day.

The overcrowding in MHS can also be seen in classrooms. Oftentimes, classes can have up to 32 students. This upcoming referendum will also focus on adding academic spaces in order to have small class sizes.

“We heard from the community the complaint of the lack of academic components. So we added classrooms. It’s a total of 11 classrooms added to our plan that didn’t exist in the last referendum and that’s based on community feedback,” said Quinn.

Many current students witness the lack of space and updated facilities in MHS. However, many of them are still reluctant to vote for the referendum.

Senior Paul Cory said, “I do agree that

there are improvements the school can make. For instance, the overcrowding in the hallways is a problem, but I think this referendum should be more focused. If it was significantly cheaper than I think people wouldn’t have as big of a problem with it.”

Even though the referendum would increase resident’s property taxes, this upcoming referendum proposal reduced the cost substantially.

“The difference in this one is we reduced the scope by 36,000 square feet of construction. We’ve also reduced the cost by \$25 million,” said Quinn, “On a \$300,000 home, the impact would be about \$414 annually.” He advises families to calculate how much they would pay by using the net price calculator on the school’s website.

Additionally, “The term of the bond that supports referendum is going to be moved to 30 years. What this does is effectively reduce the yearly cost of a homeowner by 40%,” said Quinn.

The increasing taxes are the main component that holds people back from voting for the referendum.

Senior Chloe Winkler described how she feels torn about how she should vote this November.

“I’m hesitant to vote because I wouldn’t get to experience the benefits of the referendum. I understand it would add a price to my parents’ already heavy load and with my college payments coming up I’m not sure if it’s fair to make them pay for a school I nor my younger sibling will go to,” said Winkler. Like many other students, Winkler feels conflicted about voting for something that will not impact her personal education before she graduates.

She added, “It is however beneficial to the future generations that go through the school and to vote against it seems a bit selfish,” said Winkler.

Senior Danielle Saweh added how with the referendum “the school would be better able to support the anticipated influx of more students in the future—younger siblings would have access to things like flag football as a sport and a field house, better-performing arts facilities, easier parking, and a more functional cafeteria layout.”

Every year, the incoming freshmen class grows in size, yet the school’s current size and resources do not adjust adequately.

Even if someone’s time with MHS is over, or their kids have already graduated, Whitaker stressed the importance of still voting for the referendum.

“The way of the future is education. We live in neighborhoods with great, wonderful neighborhood schools close by, and if we’re going to continue to get rewarded for the benefits of having great schools to send our kids to, we have to keep funding the schools and finding ways to make things work,” said Whitaker.

Quinn said, “This school is a community asset.” He added that “we can’t wait until things have failed, or until we get a huge influx of students to decide to build because the process is a 5 to 10 year plan.”

Quinn mentioned how the referendum will benefit the entire community. “People continue to move into the area for Mundelein schools,” said Quinn, “Good schools create good neighborhoods. Good neighborhoods create good schools.”

## Mundelein High School facilities compared to facilities from Vernon High School and Stevenson High School



photo courtesy of Shrushti Shah  
English classroom at MHS.



photo courtesy of Lia Koski  
What the MHS cafeteria looks like during 6th period lunch.



photo courtesy of Lia Koski  
MHS during passing period.



photo courtesy of Erin Liu  
A classroom at SHS.



photo courtesy of Eden Block  
What the VHS cafeteria looks like during lunch.



photo courtesy of Eden Block  
VHS during passing period.



# The reason behind the MHS Friday night lights

Ashton Salski  
Staff Reporter

Mundelein has pursued a new head coach for the varsity football team this year. Former JV basketball and football coach John Cowhey has taken over the role of head coach for the Mustangs.

“It is super exciting to take on the role of varsity head coach. We have an awesome group of players this year and they are working so hard. I have enjoyed every minute of being their head coach so far,” Cowhey said.

Knowing players beyond football is important to Cowhey and he believes it is a very important activity. Cowhey shared, “The reason I think football is such a special activity is the lessons it teaches you beyond the game of football and that you can carry with you in life.”

Cowhey uses the term FAMILY (Forget About Me I Love You) to bring the team together and create a winning culture. Cowhey brought in a leadership counsel this season to help the players become better leaders on and off the field. Cowhey also

works on his own mindset, as he finds himself more defensive minded, but is working hard to learn more offense this year.

Effort and coachability is what Cowhey looks for in players. Senior Jake Junia and Junior Logan Young, two players who possess both of those qualities, highlighted

how intense practices have been. Young said, “Everything is 110% as that’s what it takes to get to the playoffs.”

Young, quarterback for the Mustangs, thinks of football like a second family to him. He enjoys all the memories he gets to make with friends and teammates. It is

Young’s first year on varsity and his favorite memory is the home opener against Grant, but thinks it will change soon. Young hasn’t played football his whole life, but is very glad he decided to. He said, “The best part about football is playing in front of the students, parents and community.”

On the other hand, Junia has been playing football since he was seven years old. He wanted to experience a more physical and faster game than soccer so he decided to try football.

Junia, who has played running back and linebacker since he began playing football, adapted to slot receiver and safety for the first three games of the Mustangs 3–0 start. Junia enjoys making big plays in key moments and never forgets to celebrate with teammates and coaches. He has been making key varsity plays since his sophomore year. His favorite experience was getting the win for his team in his first varsity start.

Junia stated, “I would definitely like to continue playing football in college as it’s a huge part of my life. I have been pursuing this dream, and hoping to find the right fit for me soon.”



photo courtesy of Karen Koe

Mundelein varsity football team run out of the tunnel before the game on the Community Night vs. Stevenson High School football game.

# 2024 Chicago White Sox: the MLB’s biggest loser

Blake Guenther  
Staff Reporter

The 2024 Chicago White Sox secured themselves a new title this season. They are now known as the losingest team in MLB history. Despite winning their final game on September 29th, the White Sox ended the season with the worst record in the MLB at 41-121. Losing 121 games in a season leaves them with the worst record in modern MLB history. They beat out the previous record holders, the 1962 New York Mets, who had lost 120 games in their terrible season. Being the league’s biggest loser was not always the story for the White Sox. The White Sox made the playoffs in both 2020 and 2021 however the team missed the playoffs in 2022 and 2023.

In 2024, how did the White Sox end up here? Why has a once successful team transformed into one of the worst teams in history in less than four years?

This may be for various reasons, such as their loss of players in free agency, injuries, or a lack of coaching. One thing is for certain this team is not the team of old.

MHS freshman, Chase Miller, has been a loyal fan since the day he was born. Reflecting on this season, he said he is questioning his loyalty and whether he’ll remain a fan of a struggling team. He even said, “I honestly think they should just lose the rest and pray for next season.” Miller is obviously frustrated and so are many other

fans.

MHS English teacher, Mark Landuyt is also a longtime White Sox fan. He said, “I wish I could just say ‘forget you’ to the Sox and cheer for another team, but the Sox have been the team I have emotionally invested in for too many years to cut bait. That said, a baseball team is like a summer companion for a fan because the season is so long, and for the last two years or so, I feel like I have lost that companionship.”

The Chicago White Sox during this season have quickly grown to being known as the worst team in the league by far. Some fans agree with Miller when he said, “injuries and lack of good management has led to very poor play.” As USA Today stated in a September 4th article, “They are trying. Not that it makes it any easier.”

It’s true the White Sox have struggled in games with their key players being kept off the field due to injury. For example, a prior season key player, center fielder, Luis Robert, missed 60 games this season. To fill this void, the White Sox made trades to fill this position, but this was not enough to turn around the season. Another outfield injury was suffered by left fielder Eloy Jimenez. He missed 45 games for the team due to injury and was subsequently traded to the Orioles. The White Sox did not wait until the off season to make changes to the staff. The White Sox fired their manager, Pedro Grifol, on August 8th and are now led by interim manager, Grady Sizemore.

The White Sox change to coaching did

not seem to help though because according to a Bleacher Report article during the run under Pedro Grifol, the White Sox went an abysmal 28-89.

At the time of this article, the White Sox have gone just 8-31 with Sizemore at the helm. This seems to prove to many fans around the MLB that the White Sox may just be a lost cause.

Have the White Sox gone down a road that is impossible to overcome in professional sports? White Sox fans may look to teams such as division rival, the Detroit Tigers, for a glimmer of hope. The Tigers were the worst team in the league in 2003 and 2019. In 2024, the Tigers are now fighting for a Wild Card spot in the playoffs. Some fans, like Miller, are looking for the team to utilize the MLB farm system. He said, “I think they will build the farm system but the major league team will continue to struggle,” and that he hopes “to see new young talents start to rise,” from the White Sox’s farm system. He may be right. The White Sox recently drafted to the farm system a talented LHP (left handed pitcher), Hagen Smith, with the 5th pick in last year’s draft. Maybe we will see him at Guarantee Rate Field soon.

Other fans, such as Landuyt, see a path forward by making changes to players as well as in the front offices. He stated, “I wish I had a simple way of rebuilding the team, but I hope that players like Luis Robert Jr. and Garret Crochet can have productive years and get traded to teams that will

benefit more from their skills. Maybe the Sox get some top-tier talent in return, but, of course, we’ve seen this movie before.”

He continued, “While I’m not often a ‘sell the team’ kind of fan, I think the entire organization needs a complete tear down and brand-new leadership. Truly, the White Sox need a ‘Theo Epstein-type’ of president/GM to completely change and contemporize the organizational climate.”

The season is almost over White Sox fans. Being the biggest loser in the MLB is not the title any team starts off the season hoping to win, the good news about baseball is there is always next season. Hopefully, in years to come the White Sox will be making headlines for a winning record.



photo courtesy of ClutchPoints.com

White Sox players Andrew Benintendi and Miguel Vargas colliding.



## Golf caddying pays off for Evan Scholars recipients

Dan Stricklin  
Staff Reporter

The Evans Scholars Foundation was established in 1930 by Chicago amateur golfer Charles Evans Jr. and the Western Golf Association. The program awards scholarships to caddies who demonstrate financial need, excellent grades, outstanding character, and a strong caddie record. The four-year, full-ride scholarship includes tuition and housing in the Evans Scholar fraternity house at each university.

Nicholas Selimos, a senior at Mundelein High School, said he found out about the Evans scholarship when he first started caddying two years ago. Selimos stated, "I'm nervous, the main part that is hard is just the essay portion and getting letters recommendation."

Caddying has changed his perspective on golf. He's gotten much better at playing the game of golf though caddying. He said, "Before hitting the ball there's plenty of different steps that you have to think about and look at."

When caddying, you have to be "positive and respectful to the golfers you are caddying," he stated. It may seem easy to people who have never caddied before, but it actually takes a lot of skill and the more you do it the smarter you get at golf.

Nicholas said if he were to win the Evans scholarship he would be so thankful. Getting a full ride to a college can help him not have debt in the future and he won't have to worry much about working to pay for college. If he were to win the scholarship he would want to go to the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign or Purdue University and major in Engineering.

Adam Adaska and Sergio Rodriguez, MHS 2024 graduates, both were awarded the Evans Scholarship last year. They are both attending University of Illinois-Chicago (UIC)

Adaska shared, "I went through a long application process that involved an essay."

Becoming a finalist and going to an interview with over 100 people watching was stressful to him. Two weeks after the interview, he received a big surprise at his front door. It was a certificate informing him he had won and received the scholarship.

He and his family were "over the moon happy" when he found out that he had won. He cried and laughed at the same time because of how happy he and his family were, and how stressful the process was.

After caddying for five years the work paid off, but that wasn't just one of the biggest things he looked at. Adaska stated, "Caddying didn't just get me a scholarship, it also changed my perspective on golf and

how good people play compared to bad people."

Getting into caddying wasn't easy for him because of talking and meeting new people, but it sure did help when he had to do his interview in front of 100 people for the

scholarship.

In the end, Adaska said that starting caddying was one of his favorite memories and to keep going and getting a scholarship out of it was a big reward for all the hard work he put in.



Pictured above is the certificate received by Adam Adaska that now is displayed in his home.

## The field is female: Girls flag football coming to Mundelein in 2025

Darby Schwerman  
Staff Reporter



Coach Vince DeFrancesco runs through flag football plays with the junior class during a practice which brought them to their win.

The annual Powder Puff game puts Mundy girls' competitive spirit in action, rallying up the crowds for Homecoming week. With Powder Puff numbers growing year after year, and girls flag football becoming a rising sport nationwide, MHS decided to hop on the trend.

So how is Mundelein making it happen? AP Pre Calc teacher and Powder Puff coach, Julie Ellingsen explained, "It's not an official sport yet. The goal is for it to be next year. But oh it's just so much fun. We have over 80 girls at practices which is a big number. The involvement and excitement towards it is really special," she said.

Students' excitement for the future of flag is contagious. "I had a lot of fun doing Powder Puff last year and I was always interested in flag football and was very excited to hear about it," said Junior Yael Pikus. Pikus has had a great powderpuff season and is forming new connections.

"My favorite part so far is getting to know new girls in my grade and having fun at practice," claimed Pikus. The biggest challenge for her was adapting to a new sport and learning all of the plays.

Powderpuff provides not only valuable experience, but empowerment for the players. "I think it's a huge movement for

women's sports and I think giving women athletes here at Mundelein a chance to do something that's much bigger than just a high school sport is something I want to be a part of," Ellingsen commented.

With so much success in Powder Puff already, the possibilities for a full season of flag football next year are promising and growing. "It's about the connection and to see girls being connected through this sport is something that I really want to be a part of," said Ellingsen, "I'm just excited for them to have a good time."

Pikus added, "It provides an amazing new experience and a chance to try a new sport you might enjoy. And to say you're playing flag football as a girl, that's pretty cool."

The transition from just one Powder Puff game a year to a whole season of the sport opens new doors for girls at Mundelein. The U.S. as a whole has seen increasing numbers in women's athletic achievements, and flag football has expanded that pathway. Bringing in girls flag football is Mundelein's contribution to the monumental steps taking place. Girls flag football will officially be added to the list of all of the extracurriculars MHS students can be a part of in 2025.



Senior class working hard at a practice coached by Julie Ellingsen. At practices, they not only learn new football strategies, but they also bond as a team over a common goal. Even though the junior class won the Powder Puff game on Sep. 25, the seniors still had a great time.



### Fall play: A Philadelphia Story

Darby Schwerman  
Staff Reporter

What's more entertaining than a love triangle? One that unfolds over the course of just one day, combined with some witty 1940's humor.

This year's fall play, *A Philadelphia Story*, directed by Theater Director Jonathan Meier, followed "a rich old family in Philadelphia whose wedding plans are thrown in the air when the bride's fiancé, ex-husband, and tabloid journalists all arrive before the wedding. The bride-to-be is caught between three love interests as she tries to realize who she wants as a husband and who she truly is," described by Senior Aedan Hogan who plays Mike Conner, a journalist.

The 1940s can be a difficult era to nail, but the cast took the task head-on. "I love that the students kind of have to get out of their comfort zones and exist in a different world. The language of the play is different, it's kind of heightened," said Meier.

The play had plenty to offer, from physical comedy to eccentric, historically-accurate costumes. "A Philadelphia Story helps to show another perspective of a heavily studied time period," stated Assistant Director and Senior Arlo Fingerhut.

Not only did show shake up the theater season by exploring a different time period compared to last year's more modern

literature, it also brought in a new technical aspect.

"Everything was built on wheels," Meier explained. The show was set in one location but required a large interior, which was a challenge with the overlapping freshman/sophomore show, *New Faces*. Their solution? Double duty set pieces.

The concept provided a fun challenge for the crew, "It's not just new paint. I mean the piece that's over here for one show is going to be in the middle for the other. So we've never done that either," shared Meier.

The fall play was full of new challenges for the cast and crew, making it a show no one wanted to miss.



*The Philadelphia Story* premiered October 17-19.

### It's becoming impossible to be a ticket master

Hannah Roberts  
News/Feature Editor

Seeing your favorite artists is becoming harder and harder every time they go on tour. Tickets are getting more expensive and there seems to be less of them to go around. It's almost as if there's only 500 tickets for 50,000 people to fight over.

By now, many people have figured out that this phenomenon is due to scalpers. A scalper is someone who buys a bunch of tickets not caring about the price and immediately puts them up on resale websites like Stubhub for double (sometimes more) than the original price. It's making the process of buying tickets nearly unbearable and almost impossible. The scalpers are always getting their hands on the tickets and if you can get your hands on tickets the added fees are usually outrageous. However, there is always a reason why something like this happens.

Concerts are a huge part of economies for the town's that host big artists like Taylor Swift, Beyonce, or Noah Kahan. There are thousands of people fighting for the tickets and thousands of people migrating to one place to see their favorite artist.

In an article from the Ticketmaster website called "The Truth About Ticket Prices" it states, "basic economics applies to concert tickets...so strong demand naturally leads to higher ticket pricing."

Another part of why tickets are so expensive is because of the fact that the music you're hearing is live. Streaming your fa-

vorite songs is easy to do but seeing them performed live comes at a price and that situation is something that Ticketmaster calls "experience economy." Experience economy relates to the supply of goods, services, and staging of a concert.

Concerts are expensive to host on the venue's behalf. Increasing ticket prices allow for the venue to hold the concert and still have money left in their bank account afterwards.

But just how much are people willing to pay?

A survey sent out to some students at Mundelein showed a variation of how much people are willing to pay for concert tickets. That range is between 100 and 300 dollars, depending on how much they want to see their artist of choice. Price, however, isn't the only deciding factor when it comes to buying tickets.

The same survey showed that 100 percent of the sampled students have the location of the seat as a deciding factor in whether or not they will buy the ticket. After all, if you're going to spend a ton of money you should be able to see the person you're paying to see.

All in all, it's clear that concerts are becoming more and more unaffordable, but there are always reasons behind it. Concerts are a part of the economy and the economy is always fluctuating.

The survey detailed that most students only attend one to two concerts a year. The tickets may be expensive and that's not going to change, but it's up to you to decide whether or not you want to pay the price.

# Rush Hour isn't only 4-6 pm

Ashton Salski  
Staff Reporter

If you want to hear some great music, Rush hour is an acapella group that performs at MHS events and various Mundelein venues throughout the year. Senior Chloe Langford had an idea to start this group her freshman year. She had heard about an organization in Los Angeles called "A Cappella Academy, and wanted to create something similar here.

Rush Hour performs pop style music but will occasionally sing some traditional tunes as well. The Rush Hour group includes Shawn Mastandrea, Jasmine Tigley, Julie Brenend, Lily Jones, Molly Stedman, Leo Garrelts, Nadia Garrelts, Sam Zwieselhofer, Alex Benassi, and Chloe Langford.

Langford said, "This style of music is good for our group, because we don't have anything else exactly like it at school, and it's likely that the audience will know the

songs."

Langford feels that her musicianship and leadership abilities have grown after starting the ensemble. Rush Hour performs in school concerts, but the group also has the opportunity to play at venues outside of school as well. Langford is grateful for the opportunity to direct and help the group become the best they can.

"I want to do a good job and give 100% every single morning. It makes it so much better when people show up ready to rehearse at 100%, so I want to be giving that back too," said Langford.

Senior Shawn Mastandrea joined the group this year. He enjoys singing and wanted to find something that would stray away from the usual concert band or marching band. Mastandrea's biggest challenge was blending his voice with others who sing like him. However, the singing is not what Mastandrea enjoys most about being a part of the group; he most enjoys the people he sings and spends time with.

The group practices in the morning to avoid conflicts members may have with school and extracurricular activities. The

bond that the ensemble shares is special. They all work together to sing the best they can when the show lights come on.



photo by Diane Covert

*Rush Hour performs at a staff meeting before school.*



# Fall fun on the farm: Richardson's & Stades

Blake Guenther  
Staff Reporter

Are you looking for some fun fall activities to do with your family or friends this weekend? If so, this article is for you.

There are various places near and around the Lake County Area that are perfect for a nice fall weekend activity.

Richardson's Adventure Farm in Spring Grove and Stade's Farm in McHenry are two of the popular places people like to visit. Both are farms with similar themes and activities. Both farms also have a long history in the northern suburbs.

## Richardson's Adventure Farm

Richardson's Farm was started by Robert Richardson who immigrated to this area from England. The farm first began as a small 240 acre farm, but over the years has grown to a large 544 acres with two farmsteads. While still maintaining their traditional crops of corn and soybeans, Richardson's now has a corn maze that is offered during the fall season. Richardson's still continues to add new activities every year. Some of their main attractions are the 50' long slide and 50' high aerial observation tower that overlooks the corn maze and the rest of the farm.

Richardson's Farm holds numerous activities during the fall that are interesting to all age groups: a corn maze, a pumpkin patch, a sunflower field, a wagon ride, a train ride, a carousel, a zipline, zorbing, a jumping pillow, 100' and 150' long slides, two pedal kart tracks, a spider web, gemstone mining, air cannons, a paintball shooting gallery, private hayrides, and private picnic/campfire sites. On the weekends food trucks and concession stands offer food such as burgers, brats, pulled pork, chicken strips, fries, and drinks.

The messaging to visitors on the Richardson's Adventure Farm website makes it clear they "hope to see you here." The variety of activities offered provides something for everyone.

Richardson's Farm is located at 909 English Prairie Rd, Spring Grove, IL 60081. More information is available on their website at <https://richardsonadventurefarm.com>.

Richardson's Farm has a set entry fee for each day which covers all activities offered at the farm. The farm is closed Monday through Wednesday. Thursdays and Fridays are free for children under 2, \$20 for children 3-12 years old, and \$24 for anyone older than 13 years old. On weekends,

children 2 and under are free. Admission for children ages 3-12 is \$24 and anyone older than 13 years of age will pay \$30.

## Stade's Farm

Stade's Farm originally began as a private dairy farm in 1977 owned by Vern Stade. In 1989 Stade continued to have dairy cattle, but also started to sell vegetables. In 2001, Stade decided to focus solely on selling vegetables at farm stands. In 2006, the main farm market and entertainment center opened. This area is now the fall staple known as Stade's Farm.

Throughout the fall season Stade's Farm holds a Fall Festival. The Farmtractions Theme Park offers over 50 unique attractions for all ages. There is a corn maze, zip lines, a carousel, a petting zoo, jumping pillows, and many more fun activities. There are lunch options available at concession stands around Stade's. An ice cream shop, and kettle corn and roasted sweetcorn stands are some food options that Stade's has to offer. Hayrides are available to travel to the pumpkin patch to pick a pumpkin. Apple picking is also available Thursday through Sunday.

Stade's Farm looks forward to welcoming visitors each fall, but their main message is as follows: "The great thing about our

farm is that you can get out in the beautiful country, enjoy the great view, the fresh air, and the company of one another. There are so many opportunities for people to interact with one another and experience life. Just enjoy the company of one another and have fun!"

Stade's Farm is located at 3709 Miller Rd, McHenry, IL 60051. More information is available online at <https://stadesfarmandmarket.com>.

Stade's Farm admissions prices vary based on what experiences are selected. Apple picking this fall starts at a minimum of \$8 per person. This activity is available Thursday through Sunday. On the other hand, for the Farmtractions Theme Park prices are as stated on Stade's website: \$16 on Fridays during September and \$20 on Weekends during September. \$20 on Fridays in October and \$24 on Weekends in October. Ages 2 and under are free and Ages 60+ are half off.

These locations both offer a variety of activities depending on interests. A visit to one of these local farms to run through the corn maze or pick out the perfect pumpkin for a jack-o-lantern is sure to be a fun way to spend a fall day with friends and family.

## Fall baking ideas: apple crumb muffins & pumpkin bread

Eric Beauchamp  
Online Editor

### Apple Cinnamon Crumb Muffins

4.7/5

This recipe is absolutely delicious. The muffin has a perfect mix of sweet and slightly sour (from the green apples), and the frosting and crumbs are delectable. The baked-in apples give the muffin the perfect combination of soft, crunchy, and crumbly texture.



### Pumpkin Bread

4.2/5

This pumpkin bread is the perfect fall treat, blending warm spices and the rich flavor of pumpkin. Its moist texture and sweetness make it a favorite among the newspaper staff. Either enjoyed as a snack or a dessert, this pumpkin bread is sure to bring comfort and joy. This month is the perfect time to go and bake this delicious fall treat.



The MHS newspaper and yearbook staff loved these fall treats! Find their recipes on [sallysbakingaddiction.com](http://sallysbakingaddiction.com).

Photos by Eric Beauchamp



# The right fit: how new coaches can transform a team

Sunday Daniels  
Staff Reporter

At Mundelein High School, sports hold a prestigious place among the activities that students engage in, serving not only as a means of physical fitness but also as a vital component of the school culture. The excitement surrounding athletic events fosters a sense of community and school spirit, drawing students, parents, and faculty together in support of their teams.

While it's well-known that many students participate in athletics, teachers play just as large of a role. They strive to provide quality education to their students during the day and then shift gears to motivate and guide their athletes in the evenings and on weekends.

Two coaches who are recognized for their contributions both in the classroom and on the field are math teacher John Cowhey, who coaches varsity football, and Karen Stitcher, media center instructional as-

sistant, who is the assistant coach of girls cross country.

Cowhey spent four years playing high school football at Bumberg South High School and has served as an assistant coach here for the past six years. His dedication to football is unwavering, yet it is his passion for his team that forges an even deeper connection among them.

Cowhey shared, "The acronym FAMILY stands for 'forget about me, I love you'. We try to instill a family mindset and lots of people talk about that in their programs." While love can unite a team, Cowhey admitted it requires more than just that to achieve success in a "long, grueling season with a lot of bumps and bruises."

Cowhey continues to strengthen his team in the off-season by requiring his players to "utilize our training program, utilize our strength program, and get ... into strength PE class so they can not only continue to build muscle but become better athletes but also [play] multiple sports."

Each year, there is an expectation for 60 players to meet certain standards, which not only motivates Cowhey but also encourages these athletes to put in their best effort both during the season and in the off-season.

Cowhey stated, "We spend a lot of time focusing this year on training our players about leadership and culture. And so I think every year I've been here, our culture has been improving."

Stitcher was an all-state athlete in high school and went on to compete in Division I cross country at Wake Forest University. She embraces the idea that everyone has their own path to follow.

For her, it's not about being the top achiever. She shared, "I take everybody from where they are, encourage them, have expectations, and get them to improve. And I also look at everybody's goals."

In cross country, teamwork during practices is essential, as it demands full effort

to reach personal goals when race day arrives. Instead of imposing her own ideas on how to improve their performance, Stitcher encourages each runner to find their own path to success.

Teamwork isn't always limited to just practice sessions; it extends to those moments when runners give their all, pushing their bodies to the brink of exhaustion. Stitcher emphasizes the importance of that collaborative spirit during these intense times. "I like everyone to be connected. Together. And everyone to be supportive. And ideally, that is successful, and makes a team."

Although Stitcher serves as an assistant coach and isn't responsible for creating the team's plans, she certainly has valuable advice to share with the runners. She stated, "No matter how hard you work in the fall, you're not going to catch up to the people that ran all summer."



*Karen Stitcher is pictured in the second row on the far left in the girls cross country team photo. Stitcher is excited to finish coaching cross country for the remainder of their season. She is happy to be a part of the team this year.*



*John Cowhey is pictured in the third row, front center, of the boys varsity football team. This is his first year being head coach of the football team, but he has been an assistant coach for the past six years and has enjoyed every moment of it.*