

*Wishing you
and yours a
very Merry
Christmas and a
Happy New
Year!*



Girard Unified School District No. 248
415 N. Summit
Girard, KS 66743

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Girard Alumni Returning (Cont.d from page 1)

dad (former GHS football coach Craig Crespino) would be over-the-moon about his grandsons being Trojans.”

2011 GHS graduate Shelby (Hobbs) Cannon graduated from PSU with her masters in Special Education and was working in Pittsburg schools when the opportunity to return to Girard and work with her mother presented itself.

“We saw a need for a clothing boutique in Girard and wanted to give people another reason to come here and shop,” said Shelby.

In addition to bringing a new business to Girard, Shelby also serves as secretary for the Girard Chamber of Commerce and is an active member of Celebrate Girard.

Apparently, Girard is not the only small town experiencing a millennial population boost. According to the latest census data, millennials (those born between the years 1981 and 1996) are no longer finding metropolitan areas as attractive as they once did. Collectively, large cities lost 30,000 millennials in 2018, the fourth consecutive year the urban population of young adults declined. Citing a “better quality of life”, this generation is looking to reduce stress and enjoy a lower cost of living.

Matt and Brooke Mahnken, 2000 and 2003 GHS graduates respectively, have found that “quality of life” here in Girard. After college, the couple moved several times for Matt’s job, but always

knew they eventually wanted to return to Girard to raise their children. Being closer to family was important to the Mahnkens. Matt’s family farm in Hepler provides them with the outdoor experiences they were lacking in the city. Brooke also enjoys volunteering as the PTO (Parent-Teacher Organization) Vice President at RVH Elementary.

“We’ve got a unique set of traditions and expectations in Girard,” continued Bauer. “When alumni return or stay so that their children can grow up in Girard and attend Girard schools, that helps perpetuate those small-town values that we hold dear and try to instill in our students. It’s exciting to know that these young adults want that same upbringing for their children.”

USD 248

GIRARD
SCHOOLS



Winter • 2019

Increasing Number of Alumni Returning

As you enter the city limits of Girard, you will most likely notice the signs that say “Girard: A Great Place to Call Home”. Although many of our Girard students graduate and subsequently leave the area, an increasing number of GHS alumni appreciate the truth in the signs’ claim and are returning to once again make their home in Girard.

“Over the last few years, we’ve seen an increase in families with young kids moving back to the Girard area,” said Girard Chamber of Commerce Director, Julie Smith. “I believe this is due to the success and traditions of USD 248, combined with improved economic development efforts and quality of life amenities.”

These returning alumni consistently report that their reasons for returning include proximity to family, small town living, and Girard’s excellent schools. In short, they want to provide their children with the same positive childhood experiences that they enjoyed growing up in Girard.

“It reflects well on our school system,” began district superintendent Blaise Bauer. “But I think it speaks even more so to the sense of community that was instilled in these folks growing up in Girard.”

“As superintendent of schools, I love seeing Girard graduates remain in Girard or return to Girard. I view it as a success for our school system and our community when our young people

choose Girard as the place they want to raise their families.”

Another quality that returning (and remaining) Girard alumni seem to value is the desire to get involved and work to better our community.

“We were raised to give back to the community,” said 2003 Girard graduate Erica (Crespino) Harris, who is a new member of the Celebrate Girard Committee, the organization responsible for events such as Fall Festival, Trunk or Treat, and the Christmas Festival. Erica and her husband Zack recently moved to Girard after 10 years in Illinois and one in Olathe. “Our goal was always to return to the area to be closer to family. My

(Continued on back page)

SUPERINTENDENT

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Blaise Bauer

As I'm sure you are aware, every 10 years, each person in the United States is counted as part of the census. What you might not know is that your decision to participate in the upcoming census in April 2020 will have a huge impact on our community and our state for the next decade.

According to the State Data Center at Kansas University, census counts are used to distribute more than \$6 billion in federal funds each year in Kansas. **That translates to \$2,082 per person, per year.** These dollars help fund a multitude of things that affect you and your family, including:

- Education
- Highway funds
- School lunch programs
- Head Start programs
- Nutrition programs like WIC and SNAP
- State Children's Health Insurance Program
- Rural and Agriculture Funding

Accurate census counts are also essential for ensuring appropriate representation in state and federal government.

For these reasons, as well as the fact that participation is your constitutional duty, we urge you to respond to the 2020 census when you are notified in April. The census is 100% confidential and will be delivered online. **Even if you don't have time to fill out everything on the form, it's worth filling in some basic information about each person in your household as incomplete answers will still be counted.**

We thank you for your continued support of our school district and our community, and we appreciate your consideration of this important matter.

USD 248 Offers Wrestling for First Time

Girard's Middle and High School Wrestling coach Scott Rieck will tell you his life has almost always revolved around the sport of wrestling. He began wrestling in grade school at the age of seven and continued through college.

"Starting a new wrestling program at Girard is a challenge I eagerly accepted," said Coach Rieck. "The athletes, parents, businesses, and the community have embraced this new program well beyond my expectations. I am excited about teaching and sharing my knowledge and my passion for wrestling with the athletes and the community."

Girard High School began wrestling as a Cooperative sport with Southeast High School last school year. During the regular season, Girard wrestlers competed with the Southeast wrestling team. For the regional tournament and the state tournament, Girard competed as an independent team. The 2019-2020 season is Girard's first year to have their own wrestling team. There are currently 16 student athletes out for wrestling.

The middle and high school programs have a talented group of athletes for whom Coach Rieck has high expectations. The Girard Middle School wrestling season consisted of five tournaments, all in the month

of November. GMS had 24 student athletes participate in wrestling.

Girard High School wrestlers began practice in November, their first tournament was Dec. 7, and the season will conclude at the end of February.

"I am proud to be coaching a group of athletes that gives me nothing less than their personal best," said Coach Rieck. "I specifically want to thank parents of wrestlers new to the sport for giving me the opportunity to introduce their children to the sport of wrestling."

Coach Rieck went on to express his appreciation for his assistant coaches, Wes Jameson and Jon Bishop, as well. "They're class acts that also bring a plethora of knowledge to the program."

To accommodate wrestling practices, the Girard school district transformed storage space at the district's Activity Center into a new wrestling facility (pictured below).

"We are very pleased to be able to utilize more space in the Activity Center to create practice space for the new wrestling program," said district superintendent Blaise Bauer. "We appreciate the USD 248 taxpayers, the Goppert Foundation, and Farmers Bank for making this transformation possible."



GMS wrestler Zack Benso was the first wrestler at the first wrestling tournament ever attended by a Girard wrestling team. Zack also provided the team's first win.



GHS wrestlers practice in the new wrestling facility at the USD 248 Activity Center.

RVH News

RVH RECOGNIZED FOR READING PROGRAM

The Comprehensive Literacy Model was implemented at R.V. Haderlein Elementary five years ago. This model provides students with leveled reading and writing support each day. Students are continuously reading new books throughout the school year and writing a response to their reading daily. They meet within a small group to discuss their book as the teacher provides support toward the grade level goals.

To determine accurate reading levels and to assure growth is taking place, RVH implemented the Developmental Reading Assessment in grades K-5. Teachers monitor student progress, providing students with leveled text that will support their learning. Students are also provided opportunities to glean knowledge from other content areas through cross-curricular activities to support and meet their grade level standards.

Reading no longer needs to be from a reading book, specifically. Reading can be taught through books about historical figures or events or scientific discovery, with questions, activities and writing to follow. "No longer do we teach in silos with reading, science, social studies being separate subjects. We cross the subjects with reading comprehension and writing coming from all," says RVH Assistant Principal, Tina Daniel.

Outside schools are beginning to see the results at RVH. Educators and administrators from Osawatamie, Columbus, Santa Fe Trail, Neodesha, and Cherryvale have visited Haderlein to learn more about the literacy model and observe student reading and writing accomplishments. RVH teachers Ashleigh Brauer and Taylor Bernot were recently asked to present at a statewide conference in Missouri for reading teachers.

GMS News

GOLD STAR INCENTIVE PROGRAM

The Gold "STAR" program refers to Students Taking Academic Responsibility. The program has been implemented to reward students for excellence in the areas of behavior, attendance, grades, organization, and responsibility. In order to receive a gold star, students must have no tardies and fewer than two absences during the quarter, no detentions or suspensions, and a minimum of all A's and B's on their quarterly report card. Students who meet 2 of the 3 requirements receive a crimson star and students who meet all the requirements receive a gold star. All card holders are rewarded with Trojan Time during seminar, as well as various activities throughout the quarter. Gold star holders are rewarded with a quarterly afternoon trip. The first quarter, students went to Lincoln Park in Pittsburg to play mini golf. The second quarter trip is bowling. Currently, there are 165 students who have met the requirements for crimson or gold status for the second quarter.

CHOIR PROGRAM BEGINS

On October 15, GMS and GHS choir had their first program. Under the direction of Mrs. Reid, the students presented a wonderful performance. The next choir program is scheduled for December 9.



GMS WRESTLING

This is the first year of wrestling for GMS. The 24 GMS student participants, many of whom were novice wrestlers, made tremendous strides in learning how to wrestle under head coach Scott Rieck.

GHS News

HOSA - FUTURE HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

In the mid 1970's, the State Department of Education and representatives from six states chartered the first national leadership organization for students interested in health occupations, which is now referred to as HOSA - Future Health Professionals. This is the only national organization that serves high school and college students in the pursuit of a career in the health professions. The mission of HOSA is to empower HOSA - Future Health Professionals to become leaders in the global health community through education, collaboration, and experience.

There are currently thirty-four local chapters in Kansas and that number is steadily increasing with student interest in health science courses and demand for healthcare professionals. Membership in the Girard chapter is open to students who are currently enrolled in a health science pathway course or are interested in pursuing a career in the health professions. Any student interested in becoming a member needs to fill out a membership application and pay their annual dues. Once officers are selected, we will begin planning for the rest of the school year. Our goals will be to increase membership, create partnerships with local healthcare providers, select community service projects, and identify possible fundraisers.

In addition to local chapter activities, students may attend the two state leadership conferences and possibly the International Leadership Conference if they qualify. The focus of the Fall Leadership Conference is encouraging students to become leaders, while the focus of the Spring Leadership Conference is participating in competitive events. Students who qualify may also attend the International Leadership Conference.