



# KALKASKA BLAZER BULLETIN

HOME OF THE BLAZERS!

January 2025  
Vol. IV | No. 5  
#GoBlazers  
HOME OF THE  
BLAZERS

## THE I LOVE U GUYS MISSION

To restore and protect the joy of youth through educational programs and positive actions in collaboration with families, schools, communities, organizations and government entities.



The January 20, 2025, professional learning for KPS staff focused on preparing to respond to emergency situations from start to finish.

**The building blocks of crisis response.  
An institutional all-hazards approach.**

Hold      Secure      Lockdown      Evacuate      Shelter

# Staff as Students Your students' caring staff trained!

**K**alkaska Public Schools has trained all staff in protocols for how to respond in the event of any emergency. Furthermore, staff was trained in how to reunify families after such an event.

## LEARNING

The trainer made it clear that the training was not just for school violence, but any type of emergency that might occur, including fires, tornadoes, chemical spills

on the highways or railroad tracks going through Kalkaska, etc.

## THE DAY

Monday, January 20, all staff at Kalkaska Public Schools were trained in a safety and security protocol by the I Love U Guys Foundation. The training lasted from 8 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. and covered the standard response protocol and the standard reunification method.

In addition to KPS staff, Forest Area Community Schools, Excelsior School District

#1, Sheriff's Department deputies and other local emergency personnel attended.

## THANK YOU

The training was made possible by a Community Policing Grant awarded to the Kalkaska County Sheriff's Department and coordinated by Live Well Kalkaska.

More than 300 members of the Kalkaska County Community now have a common language in the event of an emergency.

Twin Birch Restaurant catered the event.

# INSIDE THIS EDITION

**BULLETIN**  
Kalkaska Public Schools  
315 S. Coral St.  
Kalkaska, Michigan 49646

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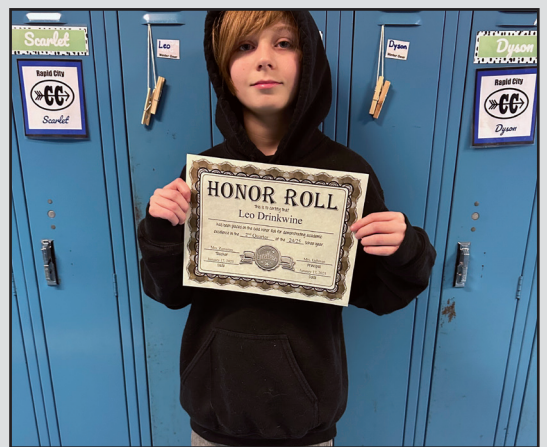
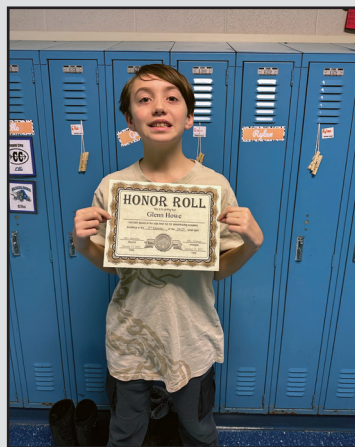
# RCE Celebrates Christmas Around the World

## *Rapid City returns to moving and grooving in January*

The Rapid City Rockstars had an absolute blast celebrating “Christmas Around the World” before their well-deserved winter break! Mrs. Wodehouse organized this fun event. Students visited four classrooms, each one representing a country with a unique winter holiday celebration. They got an awesome inside look at celebrations in Africa, Germany, Mexico, and India. Each classroom had a short lesson followed by an activity.

After winter break, the students came back beaming from ear to ear, despite the freezing temps outside. The incredible Rapid City staff and SEEDS program have dreamed up creative ways to keep those Rockstar bodies moving and grooving indoors. Get this — every Tuesday, the wonderful Ms. Haylee Dyel brings the art and joy of gymnastics right to Rapid City Elementary! Each week, it’s new skills, new games, and new obstacle courses to conquer.

Finally, let’s hear it for Rapid City’s second quarter Honor Roll Recipients: In 3rd grade, Orianna Amidon (not pictured) and Azelle Finley–Underhill. In 4th grade, Ivaine Amidon (not pictured), Ella Deater, and Glenn Howe, and in 5th grade, Leo Drinkwine. Huge congrats to these six superstars for their hard work and dedication — you make Rapid City proud!



### WINTER FUN!

RCE has had many events and activities in January! Even though it’s been chilly and snowy outside, the kids have been having fun inside!



# Happy New Year!

*BSE encourages winter fun ... even on snow days!*

## Happy New Year!

As we embark on a new year, we're excited to share what's happening at Birch Street Elementary.

## Winter Fun

Snow day Fun: Let's hope for a snowy day so we can enjoy building snowmen, having snowball fights, and sledding.

Indoor Winter Activities: If the weather

doesn't cooperate, we have plenty of indoor winter activities planned, including crafts, games, and cozy movie nights.

Winter-themed activities: Our classrooms will continue to be filled with winter-themed activities throughout the month.

## Important Reminders

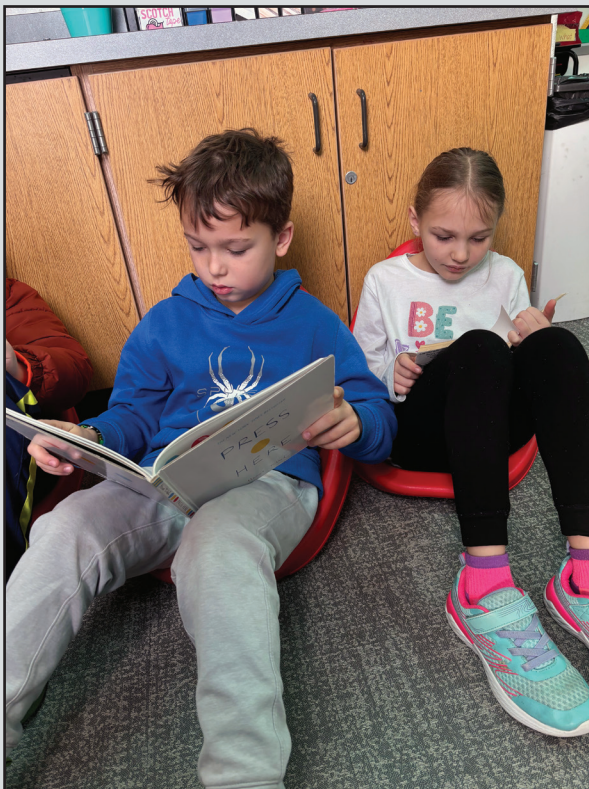
Winter clothing: Please ensure your child has appropriate winter clothing for school,

including a warm coat, hat, gloves, and boots.

## Upcoming Events

- ★ February 10 – No School
- ★ February 17 – No School – Staff Professional Development

We hope you have a wonderful January filled with fun and learning!





# Students engaged in basketball

## *Upper elementary students learn extracurriculars*

Third through fifth grade students are getting their chance to play basketball. Kalkaska hosted games for the boys' teams, and several teams. We are excited to see our younger students playing ball! At the same time that the boys were playing in the high school gym, the 3rd and 4th grade girls were practicing in the Kalkaska Elementary School Gym. These girls have worked hard to improve.

### Money!

Grace and Tim from Northland Credit

Union came to the school to present to the students about money and bonds.

### Visitors

CMU student Madison Morewy spent eight weeks with Mrs. Stewart's students, helping them develop better writing skills. Morewy is currently preparing for a teaching career.

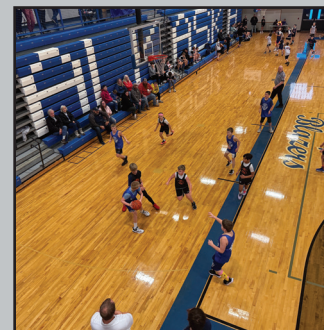
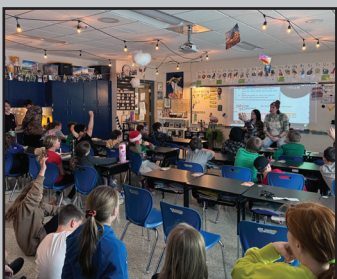
Students also benefited from a speaking engagement with a Netflix director and costume designer.

### Meemic Grant

Congrats to Mrs. Stewart for writing and receiving a grant from MEEMIC Insurance for classroom supplies.

### REYS

Fifth grade has been involved in a 10-part learning opportunity with Restoration Ecology for Young Students (REYS). Students are learning about their local watershed, invasive, and native plants, and will plant 1,000 native species to help restore our local watershed.



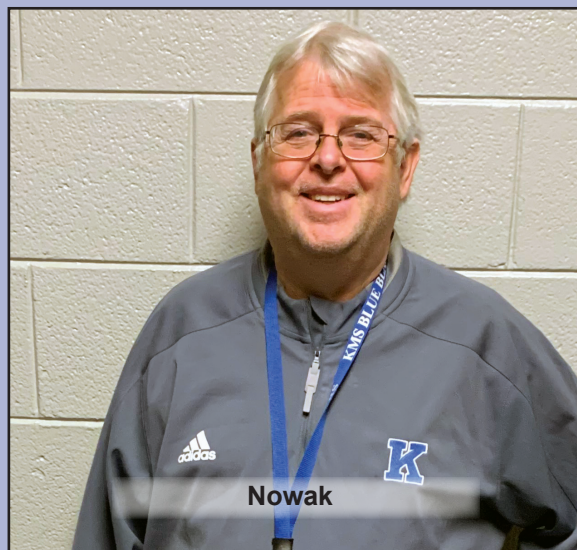
### FUN AT THE UE!

Kalkaska Upper Elementary School students have been involved in many activities.

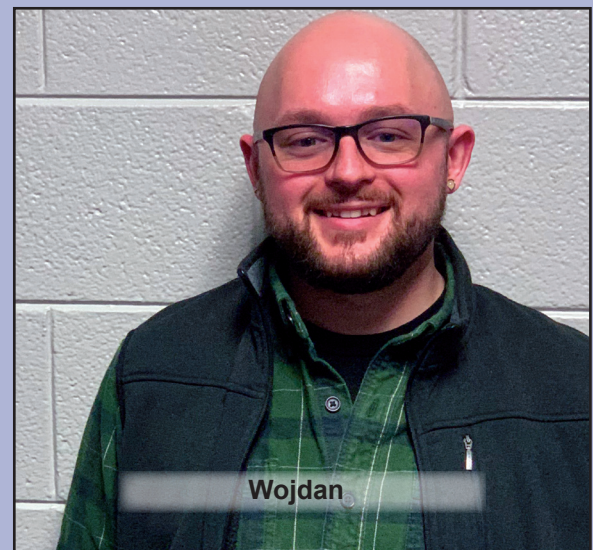




Dimon



Nowak



Wojdan

## Familiar faces, new places, changed roles!

Daryl Dimon began his position as interim Dean of Students at the start of the new semester. He was sad to leave the social studies classroom where he spent the last 14 years, but is excited to help KMS students in new ways. His main roles are helping students be more successful with their behavior, recognize students who are excelling with their behavior, and supporting teachers and staff with student behavior needs. When asked by students why he chose to take on this new role, Dimon said that he “has always wanted to become an administrator and that he likes a challenge.” We are excited to have him in this new position.

Ray Nowak has been at KPS for many years. He started in our building as a custodian, then became a full-time paraprofessional as well as a substitute teacher. Beginning in January, Nowak has helped us once again by taking over as the long-term sub in our physical education classes for the remainder of the year. Mr. Ray, as the students call him, has a degree in outdoor education and is working toward his PE certification. His enthusiasm for PE and for our students makes him a wonderful person to fill this role.

Adam Wojdan (pronounced Woah-Den), or Mr. W as he’s affectionately called, started subbing for our district in the fall of 2024. He has filled multiple positions throughout the school year and has recently become our long-term sub for 7th grade social studies. In addition to his easy smile and camaraderie with students, Mr. W has started a lunch club for Dungeons & Dragons enthusiasts. Any student who wants to sign up and participate will spend lunch creating the world of D&D. Thank you, Mr. W, we’re happy to have you.

### 4.0 Quarter 1 Students

(6th) [Top Left] Joncee Arnold, Mary Buck, Madison Carr, Ransom Comfort, Dayton Freeland, Aubrey Hays, Wyatt Heiler, Bentley



Henning, Sadie Karazia, Tristan McKinney, Clair McKinnon, Jack Rowell and Kason Stumm.

(7th) [Left] Madilynne Adams, Brynn Foerster, Sophie Garcia, Taylor Giganti, Aliayah Grogan, Aubrey Paynter, Aurora Schmidt, Violet Snyder, Aila Staley, Harrison Sutton and Nicholas Wegener.



(8th) [Bottom] Evelyn Amidon, Jayce Bittenbender, Elizabeth Emery, Asher Guggemos, Macy Reynolds, Scott Urquhart and Isabella Wegener.



# Athletically Speaking

## What's Happening in Blazer Nation

### BLAZER WRESTLING RISING

After several years of low numbers of athletes participating in the program, it is with great pride that we recognize the hard work and dedication of Varsity Head Coach Dean Amos and his group of assistants, including Colten Fredrickson and Wes McFadden, who have focused on building a thriving youth program, and a middle school wrestling club to feed into the high school program. We now have athletes competing at almost every weight class, and we are now hosting meets and competing in both team and individual tournaments! Thanks Coach Amos, and everyone involved with the Blazer Wrestling program!

### KHS ATHLETES OF THE WEEK

Week of 01/06 — Junior Zachary Porter, Varsity Boys Basketball; Senior Hannah Gay, Varsity Girls Basketball

Week of 01/13 — Junior Keira Curry, Varsity Girls Basketball; Sophomore Eric Bindemann, Varsity Wrestling

Week of 01/20 — Sophomore Nolan Seidelman, JV Boys Basketball; Junior Kylie Robinson, Varsity Wrestling

Week of 01/27 — Freshman Alex Thompson, JV Girls Basketball; Seniors Gabriel Buyze-Prieto & Joshua Saxton, Varsity Wrestling

### SPECTATOR ETIQUETTE

Here are some friendly reminders for spectators at our home and away events:

Please DO NOT leave elementary or preschool age children unattended at events.



Please cheer for our teams and athletes. NEVER get personal with jeers at referees or opposing players and coaches.

Please park in designated lots and spaces.

DO NOT park in areas not intended for parking

Please obey posted traffic signs. DO NOT go the wrong way on our one-way drive.

Help us keep events safe and enjoyable for everyone. We appreciate your cooperation. Game management reserves the right to remove spectators and/or vehicles that do not comply.

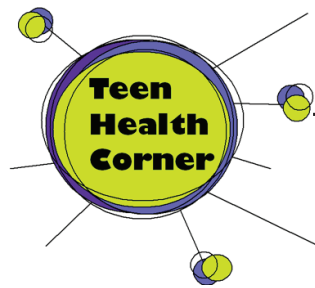
### SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

If you or your business is interested in being a proud sponsor of Blazer Athletics, we have promotional opportunities available! Whether it is with banners, scoreboard panels, logo placement on our Athletics website, or NFHS Network broadcasts, we have opportunities for you! Please email Athletic Director Bryan Hawkins for more details — [athletics@kpschools.com](mailto:athletics@kpschools.com).

### Kalkaska Fight Song

Smash right through that line big Blue.  
 Watch the points keep growing.  
 Blazer teams are bound to win.  
 They're fighting with the vim.  
 Rah, rah, rah!  
 See that line, it's weakening.  
 We're going to win this game.  
 Fight, fight, rah, team fight!  
 Victory for Blue and White!





## TEEN HEALTH CORNER

Helping kids find the help they need

### EMBRACE the OUTDOORS to BEAT the winter blues!

Winter also offers unique sensory experiences that, when you slow down to take them in and can be wildly inspiring. Here in our culture, misconceptions have rebranded winter as the season to stay indoors. But the increase in sedentary, indoor lifestyles coincides with increases in many chronic childhood health conditions, including childhood obesity, asthma, attention deficit disorder and vitamin D deficiency. Outdoor wellness benefits include:

- \* Time spent outdoors contributes to [healthy sleep patterns](#) in all kids. We parents know it too when we look at happy kids who sleep soundly and just look healthier.
- \* Kids who spend time outdoors [boost immune systems](#) resulting in getting sick less. The perception that you'll catch a cold outside is just plain wrong. Stagnant, indoor environments are breeding and sharing grounds for all kinds of germs.
- \* Time spent outdoors [reduces anxiety](#) for kids and for adults. Children are particularly vulnerable to the impact of stress and stress hormones, and this time is extra stressful on us all. Plus, if you can join your kids, your stress will reduce too, making it easier to provide a more supportive environment for kids.
- \* Nature and play bring joy: Learning to find and experience that joy is another way to give children enriching, [positive emotional experiences](#) that they can carry forward into the world.
- \* Play in the cold gives kids chances to learn to [persist](#). Winter gives kids the opportunity to learn that they can manage when life gets a little challenging.

Then, build great ["come back inside" rituals](#). Think hot cocoa, blankets, warm socks on the radiator. Make "returning to coziness" a part of being outdoors. It's a part that we can easily nail, that kids love, and that they start to associate with the joy of being outside.

Lastly, remember playing outdoors does require the [proper clothing/gear](#) to make it the most enjoyable times.

More info can be found at [Why Being Outdoors in Winter Is So Very Good For Kids](#) | Tinkergarten

#### CONTACT US:

- (231) 258-7791 Kalkaska**  
419 South Coral St, Kalkaska
  - (231) 258-7922 KMS-E3**  
Behavior Health services **ONLY**  
Kalkaska Middle School  
1700 West Kalkaska St, Kalkaska
  - (231) 369-2000 Forest Area**  
7741 Shippy Rd, Fife Lake
- Three convenient locations**

All services are billable to all insurances or we offer a sliding scale fee for those with no insurance. We also offer assistance with applying for Medicaid.



## BEYOND SCREEN TIME: HOW TO HELP YOUR LITTLE BLAZER BUILD HEALTHY MEDIA HABITS

### Babies & Toddlers

- Screen time should be **limited**, and only when caregivers are nearby.
- Media should be **simple** and **educational**.

### Preschoolers

- Try to keep screen time to **under 1 hour** per day.
- Choose media that is **interactive**, nonviolent, educational, and **social**.

### Elementary Kids

- Don't let screen time replace more **beneficial activities**, like sleep, friends and family, hobbies, or exercise.
- **Monitor** media use for your child's safety.

### Tweens & Teens

- **Talk** to your tween or teen about media use.
- Discuss **internet safety**, digital literacy, and consider **moderating screen time** for mental and physical health.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Visit [HealthyChildren.org](#) - the American Academy of Pediatrics' website for parents.



# #BLAZERPRIDE

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### Blazer Bulletin

Published by KPS

Superintendent: Rick Heitmeyer

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# BLAZERS



# Snowcoming altered by ... SNOW!

## *Snowpocalypse cancels school Thursday, Friday*

Snowcoming always tends to be the light in the dark of winter. This year it looked a little different, as it sure did snow! Though school was only in session for two of the five days of Snowcoming Week, students and staff worked hard to make Snowcoming a success.

Unfortunately, Blue and White Friday was one of the days we had a nasty snow storm. The Snowcoming basketball game against Elk Rapids was still on though, and seniors

Gabe Buyze-Prieto and Aubrey Manchester were crowned our 2025 Snowcoming King and Queen.

Boys varsity basketball couldn't pull off the Snowcoming game win against Elk Rapids, but they still put up a formidable fight. At halftime, there was even a boy-girl number put together by the high school dance team that was one of the highlights of the night.

The annual Pep Assembly was rescheduled for Monday, same with Blue

and White Day. One good thing out of the week was the Snowcoming Dance, which was still hosted on Saturday. Nearly 200 students came out dressed in their best and had a great time overall.

Even though this Snowcoming Week wasn't in its usual format, many students still expressed their enjoyment and appreciation for the events.

■ By Shealyn Hart



### SCENES FROM SNOWCOMING

(From Top Left) 2025 Snowcoming King and Queen Aubrey Manchester and Gabe Buyze-Prieto. The Boys Varsity Basketball Team huddles up after a time out. The dance team posed with their boys before performing a piece from *The Barbie Movie*.



# #BLAZERPride