



# TRIBUNE-COURIER

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06.25.26



ALEXIS MILLER receives her Miss Ohio crown from Miss Ohio 2025 Olivia Fosson.



## Ontario packs festival with activities to celebrate 4th of July

The City of Ontario kicks-off Independence Day activities with the Little and Junior Miss Ontario pageants Wednesday, June 24 at 6:30 pm and the Miss Ontario pageant on Friday, June 26 at 6:30 pm. Both pageants will be held in the Ontario Middle School Auditorium, 447 Shelby-Ontario Rd., Ontario. Admission is \$5 per person and free for kids under 5. Proceeds will go to the Miss Ontario Scholarship Program.

The Ontario Liberty Fest (formerly the Ontario 4th of July Festival) returns Friday, June 26 and Saturday, June 27, at Marshall Park in Ontario. This special edition of the festival celebrates America's 250th birthday with two days of patriotic celebration.

Brian & Michelle Gates State Farm Insurance Agency will once again sponsor the classic car show on Friday in Marshall Park, from 5:15 to 8 pm. The band, I Told You, will perform from 6-8 pm on the raffle stage and a putt-putt tournament will begin at 6 pm. Concessions and a beer garden will be open from 6-9 pm.

On Saturday, the day will open with the Ontario Youth Sports All Star Boys and Girls Tournament at 10 am. The festival officially opens at 1 pm with twirlers performing on the midway at 1:30 pm.

A kids festival begins at 2 pm and a dog parade will be held at 3 pm. The 4th of July Parade will follow at 3:30 pm.

The Ontario Lions Club will bring back its famous frog jumping content at 5 pm and Miss Ohio and Miss Teen Ohio as well as Miss Ontario contestants will be available for autographs.

The Jimi Vincent band will perform from 5:30-7:30 pm and food eating contests begin at 6 pm. Cryin' Out Loud will perform from 8-10 pm and the grand prize raffle drawing will be held from 8:45-9:15 pm.

The festival concludes at 10:05 pm with a laser show and the region's largest fireworks display, synchronized to music on WVNO Mix 106.1.

## Alexis Miller crowned Miss Ohio 2026

Photos and Article By Traci Little

ASHLAND — Alexis "Lexie" Miller, Miss South Central, was crowned Miss Ohio 2026 last Saturday evening following a week of competition, earning a \$10,000 scholarship sponsored by KYBRI Enterprises and B13 Investments and the opportunity to represent Ohio at the Miss America Competition this fall.

The 23-year-old Newark native and registered nurse topped a field of contestants from across Ohio during the annual Miss Ohio Scholarship Program.

Throughout the competition, Miller impressed judges with both her vocal talent and her passion for community service. She captured Thursday night's Preliminary Tal-

ent Award with a vocal performance of (You Make Me Feel Like) A Natural Woman and also earned the People's Choice Award, securing her place among the Top 11 semifinalists before ultimately winning the state title.

Miller's community service initiative, "Take HEART," promotes cardiovascular health by helping educate, advocate, provide resources, and inspire healthier communities. Her platform encourages heart health awareness through education and prevention, emphasizing that "a healthy heart is truly a happy heart."

Outside of pageantry, Miller works as a registered nurse and enjoys singing, staying

(Continued on Page 6)



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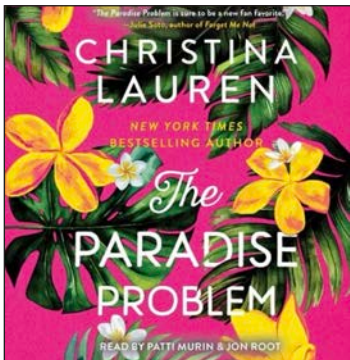
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LOST IN A BOOK



A Book Review  
By Amanda Belczak



I've read others by Christina Lauren, but somehow missed *The Paradise Problem*.

It was a sweet romcom to start off the summer. Two people have a fake marriage to save money on college housing, but years later they discover the marriage is still legal.

When a family inheritance can only be collected by proof of a real marriage, the couple sets off on a trip to a private island trying to keep the marriage story alive. But of course, things don't go as planned and a fake marriage just might entice real feelings.

These characters were interesting and held more depth than many romcom figures. The setting was beautiful and I loved the ending. I appreciated the audiobook, but beware, you'll need headphones because this book is full of spice.

My rating: ★★★★★

Follow my blog at [amanda-belczak.com](http://amanda-belczak.com)

Sale proceeds will help with travel expenses

An Ontario Community Garage Sale will be held Saturday, July 25, in Ontario Middle School's parking lot.

Spots can be reserved at a rate of three for \$20 and four for \$25. Vendors are invited to sell gently used items or those not interested in selling can donate the day of the sale. The sale will be held from 10 am to 3 pm.

Spaces are limited. Register in person at The Ontario Local Schools Board Office, Monday through Thursday from 8 am to 3 pm (closed 12-1 pm).

This event is sponsored and hosted by students studying Spanish who will be traveling to Spain in the summer of 2027. All proceeds will benefit students traveling to Spain and help cover their travel expenses.

Payment is due by July 7, to reserve a spot.

To register visit [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScqAUChZzoq-7WDVX-8CcD0hJZMb7\\_twNVZoFeoUvsh2\\_PY5Edw/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScqAUChZzoq-7WDVX-8CcD0hJZMb7_twNVZoFeoUvsh2_PY5Edw/viewform).

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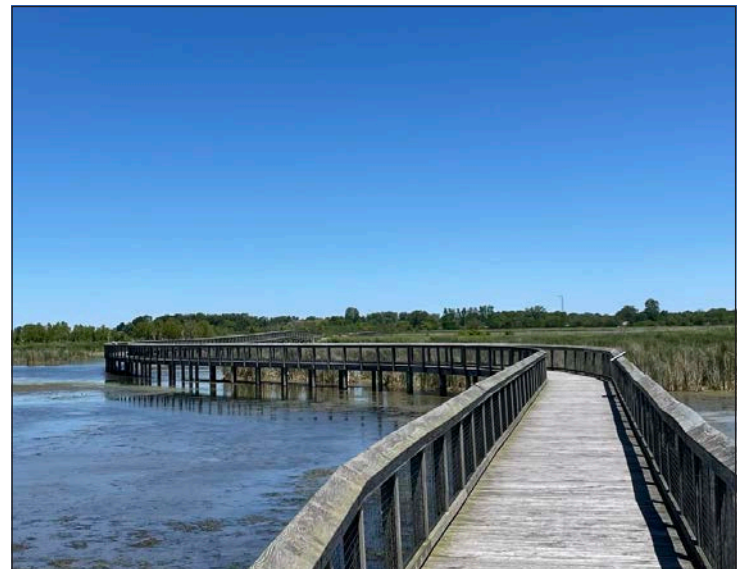



Photo by Damon Callis

**Day Trippin' With Damon** – Howard Marsh is part of Metroparks Toledo and has six miles of water trail for canoeing and kayaking and five miles for hiking and bicycling. Madewell Trail is 1.6 miles roundtrip. Howard Marsh is a birding hotspot, particularly known for waterfowl and shorebirds. Over 230 species — more than half the known species ever recorded in Ohio — have been documented. For information visit <https://metroparkstoledo.com/explore-your-parks/howard-marsh-metropark/>

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# Tribune-Courier



Serving Ontario, Lexington, Madison, Bellville and Butler Communities in  
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# News Briefs

The City of Ontario's 2026 Concerts in the Park will be held at the band shell in Marshall Park at 6 pm. Concerts are scheduled for June 26, I Told You; July 7, Conne; July 21, Oolong Gurus; Aug. 11, Soul Town; and Aug. 25, Red Ball Jets. This is event is free to attend. Lawn chairs and blankets are encouraged.

★

A recycling trailer will be in the parking lot at Ontario United Methodist Church, 3540 Park Avenue West, June 27 and 28. Acceptable items include steel and aluminum cans, crushed milk jugs, detergent bottles, plastic bottles with number 1 or 2 on the bottom, broken down cardboard, all papers included with the newspaper but no other magazines or paper. Please remove caps from bottles and rinse all containers well.

★

The Lexington Area Senior Citizens Inc., invites those 55 and older to attend meetings the third Wednesday of every month at 11:30 am at Der Dutchman, Rt. 97, Bellville. Cost is \$17 for the meal, with an additional \$2 for pie.

The next meal will be July 15, and will include roast beef and the game of bingo.

The group will also meet for lunch on July 1, at 11 am at Golden Corral in Ontario.

For information visit the Facebook page at Lexington Area Senior Citizens (LASC). Dues are \$10 per year.

★

The Madison Ram Marching Band Alumni Football Game will be held Friday, Aug. 28, at the Madison Comprehensive High School and Stadium, 600 Esley Ln., Mansfield.

Practices are held Monday, Aug. 24, from 2:30-4:30 pm and Thursday, Aug. 27, from 6-8 pm, in the high school band room.

Musicians should report to the band room at 5 pm on the night of the event. The game begins at 7 pm. To sign-up visit <https://forms.gle/Ez93fK7YLoXQvVsk6>. Sign ups close on Friday, July 24.

For information email [kfanning@mlsd.net](mailto:kfanning@mlsd.net) or [Imann@mlsd.net](mailto:Imann@mlsd.net) for the band and [mpoland@mlsd.net](mailto:mpoland@mlsd.net) for Ramettes.

★

The Madison Township Lions Club will host a car show and swap meet on Sunday, June 28, from 10 am to 6 pm, at Madison Comprehensive High School, 600 Esley Ln., Mansfield.

There is a \$25 entry for the car show and swap meet vendor spots are \$25 for a 10'x10' space. Categories will include cars, trucks, race cars, motorcycles and RVs. RC car categories will be cars, trucks planes and boats.

Proceeds benefit pediatric cancer families, Madison Rams Boosters and local community projects. To register call Steve at 419-632-0111. No alcohol is allowed on the premises.

★

A Light Up the Valley 5K and one mile fun run will be held Saturday, June 27 in Bellville. The family friendly 5K will begin at 8:30 am. To register visit [www.tinyurl.com/LUTV5K](http://www.tinyurl.com/LUTV5K)

The 5K is sponsored by Sunshine Girls Running Club, a Christ-centered running program that encourages girls to grow strong physically, confident mentally and rooted spiritually.

Through running, faith-based lessons and positive relationships, the goal is to help girls build confidence and resilience, develop Christ-centered character, enjoy movement and teamwork, understand their identity in Christ and experience a safe, encouraging community. The program, designed for third through sixth grade, runs twice each year in the spring and fall and includes running practices that build endurance and strength and faith and character curriculum each week. Lessons are age-appropriate and rooted in scripture. Visit [sunshinegirlsrunningclub.org](http://sunshinegirlsrunningclub.org) or email [info@sunshinegirlsrunningclub.org](mailto:info@sunshinegirlsrunningclub.org) for more information.

★

Mechanics Bank will host Live@Lunch performances in the downtown Mansfield courtyard, 2 S. Main St., all summer long, from 11:30 am to 1:30 pm. Food trucks will also be available.

Upcoming performers and food trucks include June 26, Milo's Music with the What in the World food truck; July 10, Taylor Schlupp, Black Willow; July 24, Tom's Kitchen Table, Panchos Tacos; Aug. 7, EKG, Grunt Grub & Cowgirl Creamery; Aug. 21, Jevan Cole, On the Rise BBQ; Sept. 11, SHaK, The Back Porch Food Co.; and Sept. 18, Tom's Kitchen Table, Cub Country. The courtyard is open every Friday over lunch.

★

U.S. 30 at the east and west bridges over the Norfolk Southern Railroad, just west of SR 98, will be reduced to one lane of traffic in each direction for a bridge replacement project. Estimated completion is August 2027. U.S. 30 eastbound from Old Lincoln Hwy (CR 330) to SR 98 has reopened to traf-

fic. It was previously closed for emergency pavement repairs.

The U.S. 30 eastbound exit ramp to SR 98 is closed for a bridge replacement. The detour route will be for motorists to continue on U.S. 30 east the CR 330/Bucyrus exit, take the exit and then turn left onto CR 330, and then reenter the highway onto U.S. 30 west to the SR 98 Plymouth St./Plymouth exit to get to SR 98. Estimated reopening is Thursday, Sept. 17, 2026

Traffic has been switched into a new pattern using the median crossovers. One 11' lane in each direction will be maintained on the westbound side of the roadway while crews work on U.S. 30 eastbound.

★

Ashland Main Street and Substance Church invites kids to participate in the annual "Push 'Em Pull 'Em Parade," when kids of all ages decorate their non-electric rides.

Registration opens at 9 am in front of Substance Church, 101 South St., Ashland, and the parade will begin at 10. Parade participants will go east down South Street to Claremont and join up with the Birthday Bash Parade, which will already be coming up Claremont. It will continue down Main Street, and end up at Union.

Children six and under must be accompanied by an adult. No large motorized vehicles are allowed.

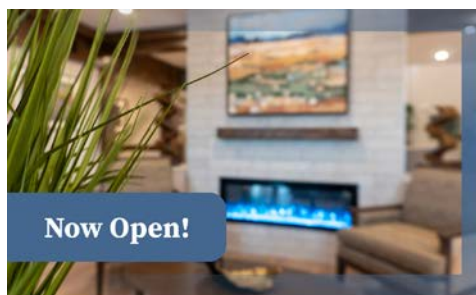
★

All Souls Unitarian Universalist of Bellville, 25 Church St., Bellville, will welcome Karen Gotter on Sunday, June 28, at 10:30 am. The subject will be "Oh, The Places You'll Go! — Graduation Sunday." For information visit [www.allsoulsuohio.org](http://www.allsoulsuohio.org).

★

The City of Ontario meeting schedule for July has been released. Meetings are held at 555 Stumbo Rd., Ontario.

The schedule includes July 8, 1 pm, civil service commission and 4 pm planning commission; and July 15, 5:30 pm, personnel committee of the whole, 6:15 pm caucus and 7 pm council.



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# 250th will be honored with national bell-tolling celebration

Americans around the country are being invited to join the National bell-tolling celebration to honor America's 250th at noon on July 4. America turns 250 years old and across the country, in communities large and small, bells will ring at noon to mark the moment. Church bells, school bells, firehouses, town halls and courtyard bells will ring out.

Freedom Bells is a national civic celebration organized by the Mil-

tary Order of the World Wars, inviting every American community to participate in a shared moment of patriotic joy on Independence Day.

Freedom Bells provides organizers with all the tools to organize and participate in this national moment of celebration including a countdown to noon local time, a ceremony opening for gatherings with music and words to say or play, a bell tolling moment for local bells, a unique reflection and exploration of the words that our nation's founders issued this day 250 years ago.

America's 250th birthday provides a moment to reflect on the hard won principles that this nation is built on, and stands for. It is a moment of reflection; it is a moment of celebration; and for those who may have forgotten, or never knew, it is an important teaching moment.

Visit [FreedomBells.org](http://FreedomBells.org) and register planned participation. Include a "Birthday Wish" to America. Community members, veterans organizations, churches, chapters, posts and schools are welcome to upload a logo to share with the others. All registrants receive a commemorative copy of the Declaration of Independence. Organizers can also use the "Ceremony WebApp" to plan, organize and execute an event.

## Church Directory

### All Souls Unitarian Universalist

25 Church St., Bellville  
419-886-3497 • [www.allsoulsuohio.org](http://www.allsoulsuohio.org)  
10:30 am Service and Sunday School  
Adult RE Book Club (quarterly)

### First Congregational Church

640 Millsboro Rd., Mansfield  
419-756-3046 • [www.mansfieldfcc.com](http://www.mansfieldfcc.com)  
Pastor Brad Bunn  
8:30 am Chapel • 10:30 am Sanctuary  
10:30 am Sunday School (nursery-high school)  
10 am Monday Morning Bible Study

### Lexington Church of the Cross

236 Otterbein Dr., Lexington  
419-884-2150 • [Churchofthecrosslex.com](http://Churchofthecrosslex.com)  
Pastor-Rev. Dr. Edna Stahl  
Sunday Worship 9:30 am  
Junior Church for 10 and under • Wesley Class 10:45  
5th Sunday of the month-Do Something Sunday AA, Girl Scouts,  
Yoga, Knotty Ladies and Bible Study.

### Ontario United Methodist Church

3540 Park Avenue West., Ontario  
419-529-4345 • [ontarioumc.com](http://ontarioumc.com)  
Rev. J.P. Snyder  
9:30 am Grace & Eggs  
11 am Sunday Worship and Kingdom Kids

### St. John's United Church of Christ

2010 Park Avenue West, Mansfield  
(At Hope Lutheran Next to Drug Mart)  
419-522-2813 • [www.stjohnsmansfield.org](http://www.stjohnsmansfield.org)  
[contact@stjohnsmansfield.org](mailto:contact@stjohnsmansfield.org)  
Pastor Faith Proietti • 11 am Sunday Worship  
Office hours: Mon-Fri 9 am to 1 pm  
AA Meetings M & F 10 am & noon;  
Wed. noon Brown Bag and Sat. 6 pm

### Trinity Grace Fellowship

1592 Grace St., Mansfield  
419-589-5890 • [trinitygracefellowship.org](http://trinitygracefellowship.org)  
Pastor Larry Carnes  
9:30 am Sunday Worship • 11 am Sunday School  
Bible Study Mondays 2 pm

### G & M Body & Paint Shop

1689 West Fourth St., Ontario • 419-529-2747

### Wappner Funeral Home

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## Obituary Listings for Wappner Funeral Directors

Daniel Jeremiah Garza, June 6  
Beth Ann Bookwalter, June 8  
David "Dave" Alan McIntire, June 13  
Jennifer Lynn Martin, June 14  
Tracy Blaine Gerhart, June 17

View Full Obituaries at [www.dignitymemorial.com](http://www.dignitymemorial.com)

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# Madison BOE heads into summer with busy meeting

The Madison Local School District Board of Education held its regular meeting on Wednesday, June 17.

The meeting opened with presentations from Renee Neron, curriculum and instruction; and Matt Blankenship, food services.

A donation of \$1,000 was accepted from Altrusa International, to be used to purchase feminine hygiene products for MACC students.

A donation of \$3,000 came from the Middle School PTO, to be used towards outstanding fees and lunch balances for fifth and sixth grade students. The board also accepted a donation of hygiene and household items from Candy Brenner, to be used by the Rams Care Closet.

Treasurer Bradd Stevens' monthly financial report for May was approved and approval was given for the revised permanent appropriations for FY 2026 and temporary appropriations for FY 2027, not to exceed 50% of the FY 2026 appropriations at fund level.

Blanket and super blanket purchase orders were approved for amounts not to exceed \$500,000 per order for FY 2027.

The treasurer was authorized to make the necessary appropriation modifications, transfers and advances, and to request from the county auditor an amended certificate for the purpose of closing out FY 2026.

An insurance quote from Rinehart, Walters and Danner was accepted for fleet and liability insurance and the board authorized the execution of accepting coverage from the Ohio School Plan for 2026-'27.

The board approved a transfer of \$1,930.12 from the general fund to food service for the current inactive debt for inactive students who are 19 years of age.

A resolution was approved for the necessity of a ten-mill levy renewal tax. The resolution states that it will go to the voters for a 6.90 levy renewal for five years. The original levy was approved by the voters on May 3, 2022. The district will also ask for a 7.50 levy renewal for five years. This was originally approved by the voters on Nov. 7, 2023.

The board approved a community taxation policy. The primary aim of this policy is to set clear targets and guidelines for generating tax revenue to support school district activities and to achieve financial stability. It also aims to create a long-term plan to minimize the need for frequent requests for new taxes from taxpayers.

Resignations were accepted from Calvin Gordon, assistant varsity football; Heather Argo, fourth grade ELA/social studies; Kaitlyn Fanning, middle/high school band; Brianna Barr, middle school intervention specialist; Melissa Parish, assistant varsity swim; Kathie Jansen, third grade ELA/social studies, retirement; Adolph Hathaway, intervention specialist; and Lukas Mann, high school band assistant.

Resignations were also accepted from Holly Beidelschies, library tech; Darla Noblet, bus driver, Route 11; and Natalie Lewis, MECLC assistant teacher.

Hirings for the 2026-'27 school year include Amy O'Connell, high school intervention specialist; Sierra McLaughlin, preschool teacher; Melissa Beverly, high school math teacher; Julia Litt, middle school intervention specialist; Dominique Tozzi, high school math teacher; Elizabeth Sims, third grade ELA/social studies teacher; and Lukas Mann, middle/high school instrumental/general music and band director.

Supplemental positions for the 2026-'27 school year were awarded to Wendy Caperton, middle school academic advisor; and John Foust, head eighth grade girls' basketball coach.

Pupil activity positions were awarded to Brian Lowe, varsity football 1/2 contract (making full contract); Cayleb Cox, varsity football 1/2 contract; and Chad Hider, varsity football 1/2 contract.

Non-renewal of 2026 pupil activity contracts currently held by non-MLEA members include Jayson Stone, head varsity baseball; Mike Wolf, assistant varsity baseball; Julia Litt, assistant varsity softball; Chris Clapper, assistant varsity softball 1/2 contract; Mico Castelveter, assistant varsity softball 1/2 contract; Bill Roth, varsity track assistant 1/2 contract; Joe Stupka, varsity track assistant 1/2 contract; and Tyler Amos, 7/8 track assistant.

An extra 1/8 day was approved for high school staff Melissa Brandt, Eric Dillon, David Hipp, Nikki Mosiychuk, Casey Perry, Jim Thompson, Karen VonStein, Mike Wagner, MaShala Schmid and Melinda Williams.

Extended time for the 2026-'27 school year was granted to Kelly Carpenter, 12 days, high school counselor; Katherine Darnell, 16 days, high/middle school media center; Eric Dillon, 8 days, high school auto tech; Mike Leeper, 20 days, high school C.B.I. 10-12; Lukas Mann, 20 days, high school band director; Timothy Ritchey, 12 days, high school counselor; Jim Thompson, four days, CT precision machining; Karen VonStein, 5 days, JTC program; MaShala Schmid, 10 days, CT Health Occupation, year 1 of 2; Monique Eberst, 12 days, middle school counselor; Jessica Rush, 12 days, middle school counselor; and Jenifer Culler, 8 days, speech & hearing.

Daniel Lashley, intervention specialist, primary, was hired as a long-term substitute for the 2026-'27 school year.

Tommy Hill was approved as a girls tennis volunteer. Kacie Petrik and Amiah Noe were hired as MECLC assistant teachers. EmmaLee Dravenstott will serve as a special education paraprofessional, intermediate.

2026-'27 contracts were approved for Michelle Boudinot, Brittani Burggraf, Amanda Henry, Amanda Oswalt and KaLeyha Utt. Substitute employees hired on an "on call" basis, as needed, for the upcoming school year include Eric Mulvane, custodian; and Darla Noblet, bus driver.

Two-year contracts (2026-'28) were awarded to Jessica Shaffner, Madison Primary School Principal; and Regan Pore, Madison Primary School Assistant Principal.

The board approved items for the 2026-'27 school year including the student fee structure, K-4 and 5-12 student handbooks, the purchase of i-Ready assessment and personalized instruction for math and reading for grades K-8 from Curriculum Associates in the amount of \$60,030.50, an overnight eighth grade student trip to Washington, D.C. May 10 -12, 2027 at no cost to the board; and the Independent Contractor Agreement between Madison Local Schools and the Silver Lining Group for ABA services from June 1, 2026 to May 28, 2027, in the amount of \$12,030 per month.

The board also approved a therapy services contract with EJ Therapy to provide therapy services for th 2026-'27 and 2027-'28 school

(Continued on Page 14)

**Congratulations!**

To Our 2026 Ashland, Goal Digital & Homeschool Seniors

Summer Registration is open for dance, music, theatre, visual arts, and martial arts offering classes for all ages.

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2026 Miss Ohio

• Alexis Miller crowned Miss Ohio 2026

(Continued from Front Page)

active outdoors, and spending time walking or running. She hopes to one day combine her medical background with her adventurous spirit by serving as a flight nurse in a mountain rescue unit.

The Top Five finalists were Miss South Central, Alexis Miller (winner); Miss Greater Columbus, Caitlin Seifert (1st runner-up); Miss Clayland, Lucabella LaEace (2nd runner-up); Miss Lake Festival, Mackenzie Harmer (3rd runner-up); and Miss North Coast, Marina DeNunzio (4th runner-up).

Scholarship awards presented to the Top Five included Miss Ohio 2026, Alexis Miller, \$10,000; 1st runner-up, Caitlin Seifert, \$4,500; 2nd runner-up, Lucabella LaEace, \$4,000; 3rd runner-up, Mackenzie Harmer, \$3,500; and 4th runner-up, Marina DeNunzio, \$3,000.

The competition also recognized the Top 11 semifinalists Alexis Miller (People's Choice Winner), Lucabella LaEace, Sophia Kreze, Mackenzie Harmer, Emily Legenza, Caitlin Seifert, Cassandra Kurek, Emily Cram, Madalynn Anderson, Marina DeNunzio and Bryn Hasenaur.

Wednesday Preliminary Awards

Health & Fitness: Lucabella LaEace  
Talent: Caitlin Seifert

Spirit of the Pines Team Award: Blue Team  
Individual Spirit of the Pines: Bryn Hasenaur

Americanism Essay: Madalynn Anderson and Cassandra Kurek

Community Service Essay: Kalli Gregory and Ivy Parker  
"The Whole You" Essay: Cassandra Kurek and Kalli Gregory

Thursday Preliminary Awards

Health & Fitness: Mackenzie Harmer  
Talent: Alexis "Lexie" Miller

Mina O'Guinn Memorial Award: Madalynn Anderson

Women in Business Awards: Marina DeNunzio and Kendall Windsor

STEM Awards: Lucabella LaEace and Skyler Kopit

Special Awards

Additional honors presented during the final competition:

Caroline Grace Williams Spirit Award: Emily Cram

Cheryl J. Oliveri Memorial Scholarship: Kalli Gregory

Terri Mitchell Memorial Scholarship: Cassandra Kurek

Paul Herlihy Spirit Awards: Kendall Windsor and Reagan Petersen

Betty & Jim Estep Memorial Award: Mackenzie Harmer

Interview Award: Marina DeNunzio

Miller now begins a year of service as Miss Ohio 2026, traveling throughout the state as an ambassador for the Miss Ohio Scholarship Program while promoting her Take HEART initiative. She will represent the Buckeye State at the Miss America Competition later this year.

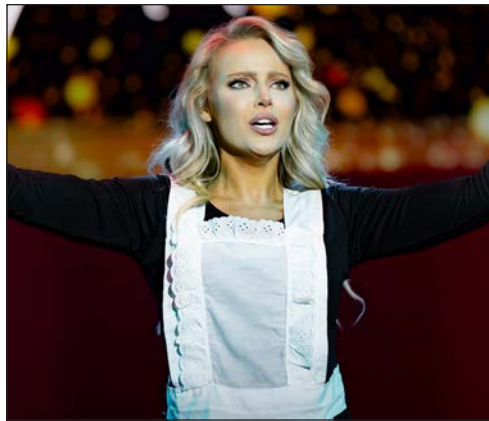


Photos By Traci Little



Photos By Traci Little

# Miss Ohio 2026



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2026 *Miss Ohio*



Photos By Traci Little



**Congratulations Miss Ohio Contestants!**

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Miss Ohio 2026



Photos By Traci Little

**LITTLE & JUNIOR MISS ONTARIO**

**MISS ONTARIO**  
PAGEANT & SCHOLARSHIP ORGANIZATION

**Ontario Middle School Auditorium** | Tickets are \$5 a person | Kids 5 and under get in free

**Wednesday, June 24 at 6:30 PM** | **Friday, June 26 at 6:30 PM**

2026 Miss Ohio's Teen



Cicely Esterline of Circleville crowned Miss Ohio's Teen 2026

ASHLAND — Seventeen-year-old Cicely Esterline was crowned Miss Ohio's Teen 2026 last Friday evening, June 19, during the Miss Ohio's Teen Competition, earning a \$2,500 scholarship and the opportunity to represent Ohio at the Miss America's Teen Competition.

Esterline, a senior at Ohio Connections Academy and a College Credit Plus student at Southern State Community College, impressed judges throughout the competition. She captured the Talent Award, earning an additional \$250 scholarship, with her performance before claiming the state title.

Her community service initiative, "Boots to Bravery: Supporting and Honoring Our Nation's Heroes," focuses on celebrating and supporting American veterans through volunteer service and advocacy. Inspired by her own family's military connections, the initiative has already received national recognition.

The Top Five finalists were Miss Ohio's Teen 2026 Cicely Esterline, \$2,500 scholarship; 1st runner-up Miss Chillicothe's Teen Katherine Green, \$1,000 scholarship; 2nd runner-up Miss Portsmouth's Teen Lexie Claxon, \$900 scholarship; 3rd runner-up Miss Columbia Homecoming's Teen Lindi Flaig, \$800 scholarship; and 4th runner-up Miss Lake Festival's Teen Claire Kuehne, \$700 scholarship.

Additional scholarship awards:

- Talent Award: Cicely Esterline, \$250 scholarship
- Interview Award: Katherine Green, \$250 scholarship
- Paul Herlihy Memorial Scholarship Award: Lindi Flaig, \$250 Scholarship

All contestants who did not place in the top five received \$350 scholarships in recognition of their participation.

As Miss Ohio's Teen 2026, Esterline will spend the coming year traveling throughout the state as an ambassador for the organization while promoting her "Boots to Bravery" initiative. She will represent Ohio at the Miss America's Teen Competition later this year.



Photos By Traci Little





# Miss Ohio's Teen 2026



Photos By Traci Little



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2026 Miss Ohio's Teen



Photos By Traci Little



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## Archers invest \$1 million in UH Samaritan Medical Center

University Hospitals is the recipient of a \$1 million gift from Bob and Jan Archer to UH Samaritan Medical Center, continuing the Archers' decades-long commitment of investing in organizations serving Ashland and Ashland County.

This gift from Bob and Jan Archer establishes the UH Samaritan Medical Center Fund for Hospital Operations, with a focus on healthcare provider recognition and engagement. The fund will support current-use needs that strengthen hospital operations, including employee engagement activities, healthcare provider events, efforts

### Sutton Bank to host open house and ribbon cutting for newly remodeled Willard location

Sutton Bank invites community members, customers, local businesses, and civic leaders to celebrate the completion of renovations at its Willard branch during a special Open House and Ribbon Cutting event on Wednesday, July 8, from 5:30–7 pm.

The event, held in partnership with the Willard Area Chamber of Commerce, will take place at Sutton Bank's Willard branch, 301 E. Walton St. Formal remarks and the official ribbon cutting ceremony will begin at 6 pm.

Guests will have the opportunity to see the newly remodeled branch, meet Sutton Bank team members, and learn more about the bank's ongoing commitment to serving the Willard community. Light refreshments will be provided.

The renovation reflects Sutton Bank's continued investment in enhancing the banking experience for customers while maintaining the personalized service and community focus that have defined the bank for nearly 150 years.

"We are excited to welcome the community into our refreshed branch and celebrate this milestone together," said Tony Gorrell, CEO of Sutton Bank. "Willard has long been an important part of Sutton Bank's service area, and these improvements demonstrate our commitment to providing a modern, comfortable banking environment while continuing to deliver the local service our customers value."

The event is free and open to the public. Community members are encouraged to stop by and help commemorate this exciting new chapter for the Willard branch.

Founded in 1878, Sutton Bank is an independent, community-focused financial institution headquartered in Attica, Ohio. For more information visit [www.suttonbank.com](http://www.suttonbank.com). Member FDIC. Equal Housing Lender.

### Event will support Special Olympics Richland County Bears athletes

Mansfield United Lions Club's Special Olympics Athlete Showcase Fundraiser will be held on Saturday, July 11, from noon to 4 pm at Kelly's Dairy Bar and Miniature Golf, 1280 S. Main St., Mansfield.

The event will support the Special Olympics Richland County Bears athletes.

There will be live music by Backburner, a dj, snow cones, popcorn, cotton candy, miniature golf and ice cream. The fundraiser will also provide an opportunity for community members to meet athletes.

Special Olympics Ohio serves thousands of athletes with intellectual disabilities across the state by providing year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-style sports. Beyond athletics, the organization promotes inclusion, confidence, leadership and community engagement.

The event's theme, "Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt," reflects the spirit of the Special Olympics Athlete Oath:

For those unable to attend, donations to support Special Olympics Ohio will also be accepted through the organization's fundraising efforts. The event is open to the public.

to recognize high-performing employees and pathways for career advancement.

The Archers prefer to be called communitarians rather than philanthropists. They insist on giving locally and during their lifetimes. "We plan to die broke," Bob said, laughing.

Like many Ashland County residents, the Archers have seen the impact of UH Samaritan. Local access to care for cardiovascular events can make a lifesaving difference – and even more so when that care comes with the resources and capabilities of the globally trusted UH Harrington Heart & Vascular Institute. The same can be said of local access to cancer care at UH Seidman Cancer & Infusion Center at UH Samaritan.

"What would we do without UH here in Ashland?" Jan said.

The gift honors several individuals who shaped UH Samaritan's history and ethos, including Dick Beal, former president of the UH Samaritan Hospital Foundation; Bill Kelley and Danny Boggs, former chief executives of the formerly known Samaritan Hospital; and Sylvia Radziszewski, who is the current Chief Operating Officer of UH Samaritan Medical Center. In recognition of the Archers' generosity, the hospital's main reception area has been named the Robert M. and Janet L. Archer Lobby.

Radziszewski emphasized the significance of the Archers' gift in today's environment. "Unlike other businesses, healthcare doesn't have many levers to pull," she explained. "Expenses rise, reimbursement often falls, and yet the needs of patients and staff continue to grow. Philanthropy gives us flexibility and an ability to invest in our people beyond covering basic costs."

That investment, she added, is central to UH Samaritan's identity. The hospital distinguishes itself by the dedication and community-rootedness of its workforce.

The Archers' giving focuses on education, civic engagement, the arts and healthcare in Ashland, and they have provided historic support for general operations and specific student programs at Ashland University, where Bob serves on the board of trustees and as executive-in-residence.

Jan's connection to Samaritan Hospital, now UH Samaritan Medical Center, dates to the 1980s. She spent several years at the hospital after working as a government health planner in nearby Wooster. There, she oversaw resource sharing between hospitals during a period marked by regulatory pressure and an emphasis on cost containment; Ashland was one of eight counties in her purview. Hired to Samaritan from her government role by then-CEO Bill Kelley, Jan evaluated the use of hospital resources and conducted feasibility studies.

Kelley saw Jan's aptitude for relationship-building and invited her to step into Samaritan's development director role. As she raised funds for the hospital, she embraced a simple guiding principle: "We care."

While the Archers' gift is deeply local, it reflects a broader reality across UH: the majority of the health system's patients receive care at community medical centers like UH Samaritan, each committed to serving its region's unique healthcare needs with the same level of excellence.



Bob and Jan Archer



Maligne Lake, Jasper National Park, Alberta, Canada • Photo By Mark Shutt

## Emergency response training available

The Crawford, Marion, Morrow and Richland County Farm Bureaus will host a livestock transportation emergency response training on Saturday, July 11, from 8:30–10:30 am at the Bucyrus Nazarene Church Fellowship Room, 2165 State Route 4, Bucyrus.

The training will equip to help local law enforcement, firefighters and EMS personnel safely and efficiently handle roadside accidents involving livestock trailers. Participants will learn standardized protocols for scene stabilization, responder safety and animal welfare through hands-on demonstrations with specialized trailers and equipment.

Reservations are due by Wednesday, July 1, by calling the Farm Bureau office at 419-747-7488. This event is in collaboration with Hord Family Farms and OSU Extension – Marion County.

## •Madison BOE heads into summer with busy meeting

(Continued from Page 5)

years, a service agreement with Cardinal Rehab, LLC to provide services for the visually impaired for the next two school years and the high school roofing project to include the purchase of project materials from Garland Roofing in the amount of \$77,362 to be paid out of FY26 funds, and labor services from Worner Roofing Company for \$71,450 to be paid out of FY27 funds.

A contract for police services with the Richland County Sheriff's Office was approved for the coming school year.

The Title IX Service Agreement with Mid-Ohio Educational Service Center, from Aug. 1, 2026 to July 31, 2027, was approved.

The purchase and installation of three ADA-compliant lifts was approved for Eastview Elementary/Madison Intermediate School, totaling \$92,625.00 to be installed

by National Seating & Mobility, Inc. One ADA-compliant incline lift will be installed at Madison South Elementary/Madison Primary School, totaling \$30,875, to be installed by National Seating & Mobility, Inc.

The Ohio Direct Admission Data Sharing and Participation Agreement with the Ohio Department of Higher Education, effective with the 2026–27 school year, was approved.

Student teacher mentor payments from Ashland University, at no cost to the board, were approved for Breanna Crunkilton, \$100; Tiffany McCoy, \$100; Shelbi Ohl, \$100; Brittany Farley, \$100; Melinda Tiney, \$100; Sarah Weiser, \$100; Megan Studer, \$100; Tim Lord, \$40; Mikela Nichols, \$100; John Ihrig, \$40; Kristen Agee, \$100; Kyle Wirick, \$100; Marc Harris, \$40; Mindi Reiter, \$100; Amy O'Connell, \$100; Naomi Adinkrah, \$40; Melissa Parish, \$100; and

Danielle Wentworth, \$100.

The Madison Early Childhood Learning Center Staff Handbook was approved.

The board went into executive session to discuss the termination of employment for Abby Radabaugh. She had made a sexually inappropriate comment to more than one female student in her classroom this past November. There was also another incident this past school year where she made an inappropriate comment to a female student.

A hearing was held on April 29, at which Ms. Radabaugh was present with counsel. On June 5, the board received the recommendation that the teaching contract of Radabaugh be terminated for good and just cause. The board moved forward with the termination.

The next regular meeting will be held July 16, at 6 pm in the Madison Middle School Auditoria.



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**The Pickwick Place Cafe and Market**  
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# Pioneer CTC holds a busy June meeting

The Pioneer Board of Education met Monday, June 15, and approved temporary appropriations for the 2026–27 fiscal year.

The board approved liability, fleet and property insurance coverage through SORSA Consortium. The board also approved the Local Professional Development Committee and administrators as evaluators for Ohio Evaluation System (OES).

Clay Frye as chosen as an evaluator for the Ohio School Counselor's Evaluation System and Greg Nickoli and Clay Frye will be evaluators for Ohio Principal's Evaluation System (OPES).

A transportation agreement between Richland County Transit Board and Pioneer CTC was approved.

Career Awareness Use of Funds Plan was given approval as was an agreement with Mid-Ohio Educational Service Center for Title IX Services for the upcoming school year.

The treasurer was authorized to pay administrators for unused vacation time.

Donations were accepted from Jim Day, Ohio Valley Manufacturing, Mansfield, industrial light curtains with an approximate value of \$4,600 to be used in the Industrial Electricity lab; Kenneth Owen, Shelby, \$200 to be deposited into the Art Barr Scholarship Fund; Kelly Purvis, Ashland, \$50 to be deposited into the Rene' Burtscher Scholarship Fund; Mary and Jeff Ritz, Willard, \$50 to be deposited into the Rene' Burtscher Scholarship Fund; Cynthia Swigart, Shelby, \$100 to be deposited into the Rene' Burtscher Scholarship Fund; Diane Thurman, Mansfield, \$100 to be deposited into the Rene' Burtscher Scholarship Fund; anonymous, \$3,000 for the Crestline FCCLA Nationals Trip; and The Ohio State Eagles Charity Fund, Shelby, \$5,000 to be deposited and used for the Shelby FCCLA trip to the National Competition.

One-year contracts were awarded to Ellen Zaebs, intervention specialist; Jill Parsons, electives instructor; Tammera Baumberger, Bucyrus Satellite FCS Instructor; and Michael Marshall, math instructor.

Voluntary transfers were approved for Charles Curren, math instructor to culinary arts instructor; and John Stewart, intervention specialist to Collegenow Business instructor.

Supplemental contracts with 20 extended days were awarded to Crystal Escalera, counselor; Elizabeth Heinlen, counselor; Tasha Lisle, counselor; and Morgan Schumacher, counselor. Kelly Jung, will get 2.25 days extended service to attend the OATFACS Conference In Lewis Center, OH, July 26–28.

Supplemental contracts with additional days were approved for Molly Belcik, intervention specialist, 2 days; Kris Bruce, FCS/Crestline, 5 days; Karrie Davison, workforce development coordinator, 20 days; Matt Dotson, Ag instructor/Lucas, 20 days; Preston Foy, intervention specialist, 2 days; Katie Getz, project search, 4 days; Paul Gladden, intervention specialist, 2 days; Sandra Grau, horticulture, 25 days; Kaleb Hollar, intervention specialist, 3 days; Crystal Jennings, FCS/Wynford, 5 days; Phillip Johnson, food science instructor, 5 days; Kelly Jung, FCS/Shelby, 5 days; Jordan Kiess, FCS/Col. Crawford, 5 days; Anne Kurtzman, performing arts, 10 days; Jennifer Magers, special needs coordinator, 23 days; Tessa Martin, production Ag instructor - Wynford, 30 days; Margaret (Meg) Mergel, career pathways specialist, 4 days; Tina Parr, intervention specialist, 2 days; Christina Phelps, FCS /Galion, 5 days; Heidi Rietschlin, intervention specialist, 2 days; Stephanie Roberts, preschool teacher/childcare center director, 3 days; Matthew Roth, Ag instructor/Wynford, additional 18 days for a total of 20 days; Joshua Schieber, production Ag/Col. Crawford, 20 Days; Mark Seitz, intervention specialist, 2 days; Gwen Schwemley, FCS instructor/Shelby, 5 days; Amanda Snipes, intervention specialist, 2 days; Rich Ulmer, intervention specialist, 2 days; and Maleesa Warner, FCS instructor/Lucas, 5 days.

Prep day pay was approved for Caleb Alt, Gabe Kennedy, Joshua Barnett, Cheri' Laughbaum, Joe Bridenbaugh, Cassandra Lowery, Grant Brocwell, Melinda Meisse, Josh Broughton, Michael Messersmith, John Burgess, Jesse Meyer, Jessica Clark, Lynette Moritz, Susan Cooper, Melissa Myers, Mary Cosker, Darien Payne, Terri Crain, Colton Penwell, Charles Curren, Stephen Raphael, William Dichtl, James Rippel, Tina Duckworth, Wendy Rodenbaugh, Katie Eichorn, Skyler Rose, Aaryn Evans, Caitlin Roub, Jeffrey Evans, Peter Schmitt, Kathleen Fiske, Al Sears, Jay Follett, Jon Secrest, Jeffrey Funigiello,

Janifer Stewart, Adam Galley, Austin Strouse, Lindsay Galley, Jody Tackett, Mandy Glessner, Michael Thompson, Robin Hager, Carey Tocash, Meghan Haney, Meghan Townley, Nicole Harding, Justin Tuttle, Rick Harvey, Brent Tyrrell, Gabe Helbert, Cassandra White, Rebecca Holbrook, John Yohe and Emma Jenkins

Stipend contracts were approved for John Burgess and Anne Kurtzman, SkillsUSA State Competition, May 5–6, \$50 each; Kris Bruce, FCCLA stromboli fundraiser, May 16–17, \$150; Carlos Smith, Google Certification, Level 1, \$110; and John Yohe, Google Certification Level 1, \$110 and Google Certification Level 2, \$110.

Discipline co-hort committee pay, at \$100 per full day, Aug. 1–31 was approved for Jay Follett, Stephen Raphael, Amanda Glessner, Justin Tuttle, Meghan Haney and Beth Heinlen. These will also receive discipline co-hort committee pay, at \$50 per half day, Sept. 1–Dec. 31.

The board approved part-time employment for Hope Adams and Ima (Jo) Towler, cafeteria workers.

Supplemental contracts were awarded to Megan Herrnstein and Molly Kousma both for Early Childhood Education extra help, effective Aug. 18, 2026 through June 1, 2027, up to one hour per day/ five hours per week, as needed, only on the days school is in session.

Adult education part-time hirings also included Tammy Sutter, CNA instructor; Pepper Swartzentruber, LPN instructor; and David Foley, LPN coordinator, increase in hours up to 29 hours per week.

The board approved an agreement with Trade School Software Holdco, Inc. for adult education financial aid processing.

The facilities plan for 2027–'40 was also approved.

## Time capsule will be opened at Mansfield's celebration

City of Mansfield Mayor Jodie Perry invites residents and visitors to join in a community-wide celebration of America's 250th Anniversary with a full day of Fourth of July events, honoring the nation's history while celebrating Mansfield's rich heritage.

All events are free and open to the public. The schedule includes:

### 11 am: Rededication of the Historic Vasbinder Fountain

The day begins at Central Park Square with the rededication of the fully restored 1881 Vasbinder Fountain, a treasured Mansfield landmark restored for future generations. The fountain was originally dedicated on July 4, 1881. The program will feature the history of the fountain and remarks by Todd Kieism from the America250 Ohio Commission.

### 11:30 am to 1:30 pm: Picnic and Ice Cream Social in the Park

Guests are encouraged to bring their own picnic lunch and enjoy community fellowship in Central Park. There will be live music by Jazz Connection in the gazebo and free ice cream dessert will be provided during the picnic (while supplies last). Sponsors are Mechanics Bank, Rich History Alliance, Richland Public Health, Destination Mansfield, Idea Works Kitchen and Velvet Ice Cream.

Judge Steve McKinley will talk about the Declaration of Independence at 11:30 am. Downtown restaurants scheduled to be open are Reindeer Grill, 11 am to 8:30 pm; and Hamilton's on Main, 12–10 pm.

### 1 pm - Opening of the Bicentennial Time Capsule

Immediately following the picnic, the community is invited to the Mansfield City Municipal Building plaza to witness the historic opening of the Bicentennial Time Capsule, reconnecting Mansfield with voices and memories from the past. A new time capsule will be placed, to be opened for America's 300th Birthday in 2076!

### Mansfield Speedway Celebration 9 am to 9 pm — Free all-day admission

The celebration continues at Mansfield Speedway with a full day of family-friendly activities, including a classic car show, a hot dog eating competition, the demolition derby, live music and entertainment, rides and family activities and an America250 fireworks spectacular at dusk

(Continued on Page 45)

# Renaissance begins massive restoration project

Submitted By Jillian Henry

Visitors to the Renaissance Theatre this summer may notice something strikingly different: the seats in the auditorium have been fully removed, marking a significant step forward in a comprehensive renovation effort that is already well underway.

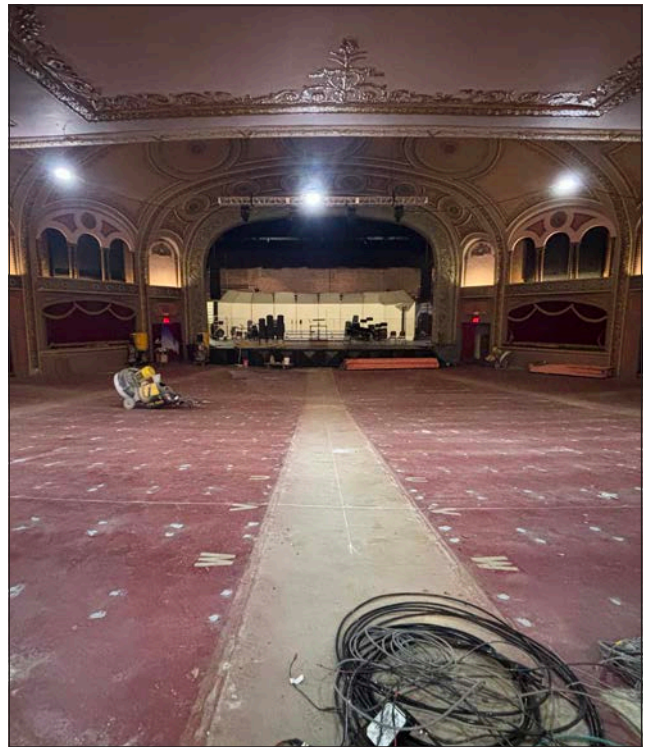
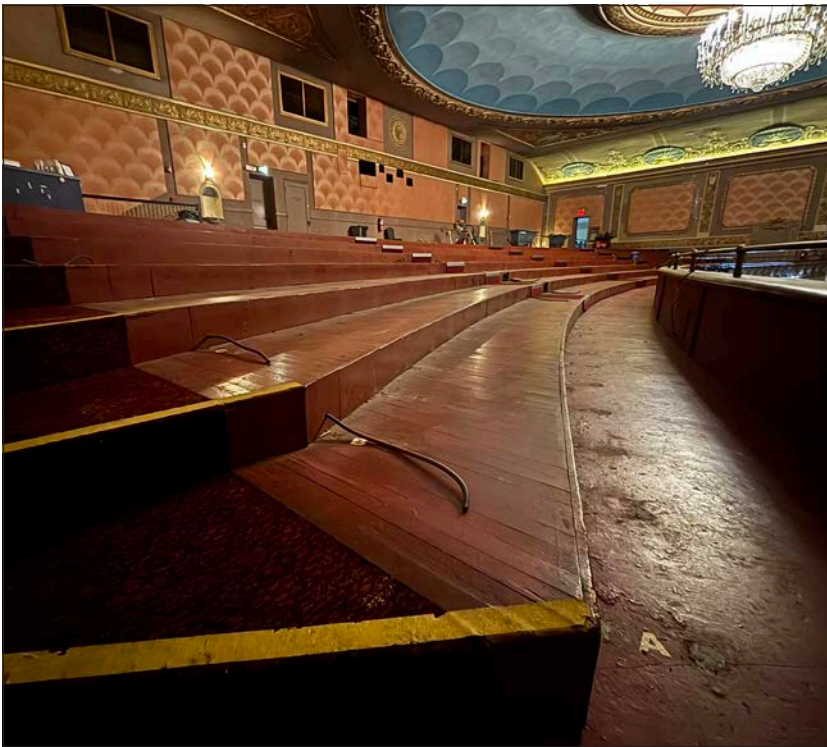
This visible transformation is part of the "Road to 100," a multi-year initiative designed to prepare the Renaissance Theatre for its 100th anniversary in 2028. The project represents a strategic investment in the facility, its audiences, and its long-term sustainability to ensure that the theatre continues to serve as a cultural cornerstone for generations to come.

For nearly a century, the Renaissance Theatre has been central to the cultural life of Mansfield and the surrounding region, welcoming tens of thousands of patrons, students, and artists each year and generating an economic impact of \$4 million annually. As a three-year master plan leading up to the centennial, the Road to 100 builds on that legacy through a focused commitment to safety, accessibility, historic preservation, and transformation of a main artery into downtown Mansfield. Situated near the corner of Park and Marion Avenues, the Renaissance campus includes the historic main building (the 1928 Ohio Theatre) and its 2010 addition, a green space, a black box theatre (Theatre 166) and roughly 300 parking spaces on its five acres.

Magnifying state capital and one-time strategic reinvestment funding, grants from the State of Ohio paired with matching support through private philanthropy have supported a range of completed and in-progress improvements to date: enhanced sidewalks and entryways to improve accessibility, safety and security upgrades, and the design and initial fabrication of a new, historically representative marquee.

The current removal of auditorium seating signals the next major phase of the project: the installation of new seating in the main theatre and the resurfacing of its floor. This work will improve comfort, safety, and accessibility while preserving the architectural character of the historic space, including the refurbishment of the seats' original end caps. As part of this effort, the Renaissance has launched its "Take a Seat" program, offering community members the opportunity to dedicate a seat in their name or in honor of a loved one.

Additional projects within the Road to 100 plan will continue over the next two years, including enhanced exterior lighting and restoration of historic architectural details, alongside new outdoor elements such as a sculptural bridge, marquee blade, and the creation of an interactive pocket park, a multi-use green space designed to foster connection and create a more welcoming, engaging campus for the surrounding community. The plan aligns with broader downtown revitalization efforts, including the Main Street corridor project, to support the continued development and vibrancy of Park Avenue West.



**Trevor Grimes**  
(Wooster)

**Olivia Laux**  
(St. Peter's)

**Adriana Martínez-Hernández**  
(Mansfield)

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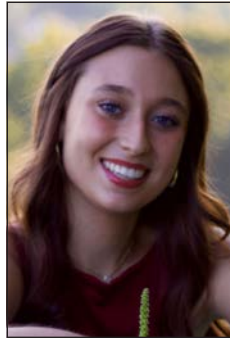
# Mansfield Christian School Graduates



**Brooke Badgley**



**Aidan Boothe**



**Brendel Bower**



**Taylor Clary**



**Adelle Cramer**



**Landin Cyphers**



**Emily Davis**



**James Davis**



**Zy'Eir Davis**



**Jude Day**



**Lacy DeFrancisco**



**Emerson Docherty**



**Adam Ebersole**



**Denver Elliott**



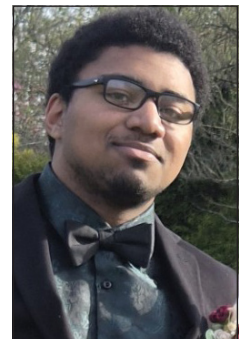
**Logan Gehrisch**



**Grady Heichel**



**Madeline Hockman**



**Micaiah Houston**

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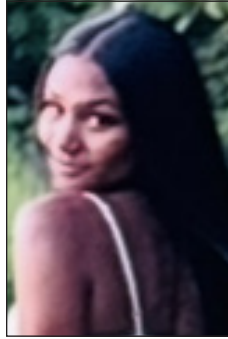
# Mansfield Christian School Graduates



**Ava  
Irwin**



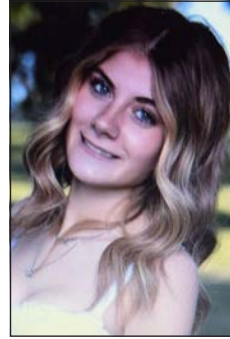
**Aidan  
Johnson**



**Avery  
Johnson**



**Chase  
Jones**



**Adalynn  
Keller**



**Rose  
Kochheiser**



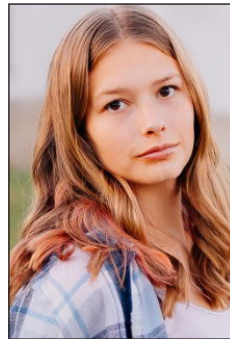
**Isaiah  
Krause**



**Levi  
Leach**



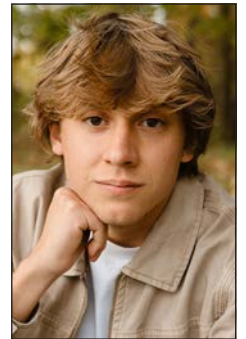
**Zoey  
Leonard**



**Jessica  
McDonald**



**Peyton  
McFadden**



**Caleb  
Miller**



**Blayne  
Morrow**



**Lillie  
Mowry**



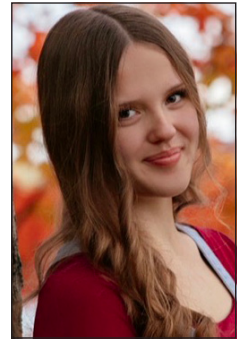
**Autumn  
Nicol**



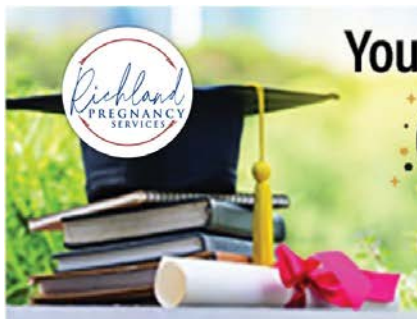
**Riley  
Patrick**



**Noah  
Pearce**



**Bella  
Rayburn**



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# Mansfield Christian School Graduates



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**Samantha Roll**



**Josiah Schleusener**



**Jayden Shewan**



**Levi Steensland**



**Hudson Stigall**



**Savannah Stover**



**Adam Them**



**Grace Them**



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**Aubrie Vantilburg**



**Ethanah Waters**



**Logan Wilson**



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Peyton McFadden (Homeschool)

richland academy arts

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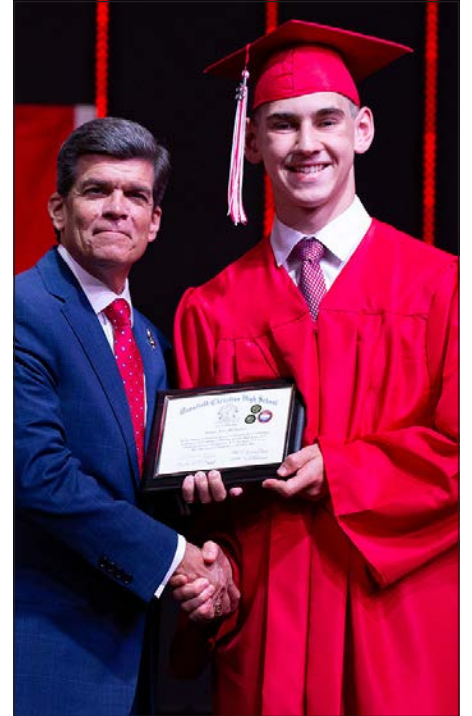
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# Mansfield Christian School Graduates

## FROM PREK TO GRADUATION: One Student's Journey through Mansfield Christian School

By Traci Little

MANSFIELD — Applause filled the auditorium as Kendall Wushinske stepped to the podium on graduation day.

The confident senior addressing her classmates looked nothing like the little girl who once struggled to leave her mom's side on her first days of school.

Yet both moments happened at Mansfield Christian School.

Kendall's journey began in PreK and stretched all the way to graduation. Along the way, teachers became mentors, classmates became lifelong friends, and lessons in faith helped shape the young woman she is today. One memory still stands out.

A rough morning left young Kendall upset and reluctant to say goodbye to her mom. PreK teacher Mrs. Lilly noticed immediately. She invited Kendall to sit on her lap during carpet time and helped calm her fears.

"She really made me feel special," Kendall recalled.

Small moments like that became the foundation of her MCS experience.

Chapel services. Field days. Classroom pets. Star Student celebrations.

The memories accumulated quickly, but the relationships left the deepest mark.

Teachers knew her long before she entered their classrooms. Some knew her family. Others watched her grow from year to year. Smaller class sizes allowed educators to invest in students beyond academics.

"They were able to really learn about each student and know them as a person," Kendall said.

Two teachers, Mr. and Mrs. Hostetler, stand out among the many who influenced her.

"They never made me feel like I was a little kid," she said. "They always treated me with respect and valued hearing my opinions."

The couple challenged her academically while encouraging her spiritually. Conversations about faith pushed her to think deeply and develop habits that would remain with her long after elementary school.

Teacher after teacher poured into her life.

Some taught study skills. Others modeled grace. Many offered encouragement during difficult seasons. Together, they helped shape both her character and her faith.

Years later, those lessons continue to influence how she views the world.

"I am ready for whatever questions come my way," Kendall said. "I can accurately share the Gospel with others and know how to answer the hard questions the culture engages."

Her high school years opened new doors.

The MCCAP Healthcare Program sparked a passion for caring for others and introduced her to a variety of healthcare careers. The experience helped her identify her strengths, develop a plan for the future and discover a calling she plans to pursue as a physician assistant.

"That program helped me realize my love for caring for others," she said.

Graduation may mark the end of Kendall's time at MCS, but it also highlights the value of starting early.

Families today can begin a similar journey through Mansfield Christian School's day-care and preschool programs. Located on the school's 90-acre wooded campus, the programs provide a Christ-centered environment where children learn foundational academic skills while discovering biblical truths that will guide them for years to come.

For Kendall, those early years mattered.

"I learned Bible stories, the fruit of the Spirit and even how to pray," she said. "Those are practical life skills and steppingstones to the deeper content I learned later."

Now, after spending her entire educational journey at MCS, Kendall has simple advice for both parents and young students.

"Don't be afraid of what is to come," she said. "You have people around you to support you and people that want to help you."

The applause that echoed through the auditorium on graduation day celebrated what began with a little girl in PreK and ended with a young woman prepared to follow God's calling.



Photo By Traci Little

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Photos By Traci Little



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# Mansfield Christian School Graduates

## Mansfield Christian's "DReam Team" serves communities, builds lasting friendships in Dominican Republic

By Traci Little

Faith, service and life changing connections happened this spring as a team from Mansfield Christian School traveled to the Dominican Republic for a nine-day mission trip centered on outreach, ministry and relationship-building.

In March 2026, 45 staff members, teachers, parents and students from the school traveled to Fountain of Life School in the village of Juan Tomas, where they partnered with local staff and students to serve the community in both practical and spiritual ways.

Throughout the trip, team members participated in a variety of ministry efforts, including attending chapel services, visiting classrooms and assisting with English and math instruction for students ranging from elementary through high school grades.

One of the week's highlights was hosting a Vacation Bible School for children in the village. The program included songs, puppets, games, crafts and a Bible lesson focused on the resurrection. The week concluded with an Easter egg hunt featuring more than 900 eggs prepared and hidden by the team.

In addition to classroom ministry, the group completed several hands-on projects to support the school and surrounding village. Team members helped prepare a gravel section for the elementary playground, constructed walls in the boys' dormitory, built benches, created a feeding trough for goats, painted offices and homes, and laid a concrete floor for a woman in the community.

Beyond the work projects, students said the relationships formed during the trip made the greatest impact.

"I liked relationship building the most," student Katelynn Miller shared.

Mara Chase reflected on a worship service during the trip. "One of my God moments was during church," Chase said. "It was so cool to see and hear everyone worshipping in English and Spanish." Another student shared how meeting a sponsored child personally deepened their faith and perspective.

"My eyes were opened to the world's struggles," the student said. "I learned that true joy comes from God, not belongings, which we saw so clearly from the Dominican people."

Student Logan Wilson said he joined the trip hoping to gain a greater appreciation for life in America while serving others through his faith. He said the experience helped him develop practical skills through construction projects while also teaching him important lessons about joy, community and gratitude.

"They are energetic and fun," Wilson said of the Dominican people. "I was impacted by their joy and sense of contentment with what little they had materially."

Wilson encouraged future students to consider participating in future trips.

"You get good experience with hard work, meet new people, learn about a new culture and live out your faith in a tangible way," he said.

Riley Patrick, who previously traveled to the Dominican Republic in 2024 and returned again this year, said revisiting the community gave him a new understanding of the purpose of mission work.

(Continued on Page 25)



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# Mansfield Christian School Graduates



## •MCS’s “DReam Team” serves communities, builds friendships

*(Continued from Page 24)*

“What amazed me is when we walked through the doors, they welcomed us like old friends they wanted to party with,” Patrick said. “That is the reality of missions. It’s the connections you make. The relationships you cultivate. The people you get to pray with.”

According to organizers, the success of the trip was rooted in the prayers and support of those back home. Team members expressed gratitude for safe travels, good health and the unity experienced

throughout the week.

As the 2026 “DReam Team” returned home, students and leaders said the trip left behind more than completed projects — it created lifelong memories, strengthened faith and built friendships that continue across cultures and borders.

School leaders said Mansfield Christian is already looking ahead to returning to the Dominican Republic in 2027 for another opportunity to serve alongside the community in Juan Tomas.



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# Mansfield Christian School Graduates

## Senior BREAKFAST



Photos By Traci Little



# Congratulations Graduates!



# Mansfield Christian School Graduates



## Senior BREAKFAST



Photos By Traci Little



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- River Leviathan Kegley
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Photos By Traci Little



*Congrats Kindergarten Class*

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# Temple Christian School Graduates



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## Mansfield Christian Daycare offers Christ-centered early education

Photos and Article By Traci Little

Mansfield Christian School continues to invest in the future of families through its growing Early Education programs, offering both Christ-centered Preschool and Daycare opportunities designed to nurture children academically, spiritually, and socially from the very beginning.

Located on MCS's quiet and secluded 90-acre wooded campus in Mansfield, Ohio, the Early Education program provides a safe, loving, and faith-filled environment where children are encouraged to grow, explore, and thrive.

Families seeking quality Christian early childhood education can choose from both the MCS PreK3-5 program and the year-round MCS Daycare program, each intentionally designed to support young learners while partnering closely with families under a shared Christian worldview.

The preschool program at Mansfield Christian School has earned a strong reputation throughout the community for academic excellence and engaging hands-on learning experiences. Each classroom is led by a licensed educator through the Ohio Department of Education, exceeding the standard requirements for Ohio preschool programs. MCS currently offers three PreK classrooms, which consistently reach full enrollment each year with waiting lists developing early.

Students in the Preschool program experience an academically aligned curriculum that connects seamlessly with MCS elementary education, preparing children for long-term success in kindergarten and beyond. From interactive classroom activities to memorable field trips, students are immersed in creative learning experiences that build confidence, curiosity, and character.

MCS Daycare was developed in 2019 after recognizing the growing need for quality Christian childcare within the community. The

program serves children ages 18 months through age 5, while also supporting families who desire full-day care by allowing children to attend half-day PreK before transitioning into daycare care services.

More than simply childcare, the MCS Daycare program focuses on building foundational life and learning skills in a nurturing Christian environment.

Children begin developing early academic concepts like letters and numbers while also learning important social and emotional skills such as sharing, listening, and cooperation — all while experiencing the love of Jesus every day.

The daycare program is staffed by invested Christian caregivers committed to Biblically centered lessons and activities. Families also benefit from the leadership of an experienced Daycare Coordinator with more than 20 years of expertise in early childhood learning, classroom leadership, and family engagement.

In 2026, MCS Daycare was honored with the Trusted Care Parents' Choice Award, reflecting the trust and appreciation families have for the program's commitment to excellence and compassionate care.

As a fully private Christian program, admission into MCS Early Education includes an admissions process that helps ensure teachers, curriculum, standards, and partnering families align under a shared Christian worldview. Enrollment in the childcare or PreK program also secures a child's future elementary seat for grades K-6 at Mansfield Christian School.

From nature exploration on its beautiful wooded campus to nurturing classrooms filled with faith, learning, and love, Mansfield Christian School's Early Education programs continue to provide families with a strong foundation for both education and spiritual growth.

Families interested in learning more or scheduling a tour can visit MCS Preschool or MCS Daycare online at [mcsflames.org](http://mcsflames.org).

Mansfield Christian School

# Daycare

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**KNOX COUNTY CAREER CENTER'S** Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC) has announced the Outstanding Cadet Awards for the 2025-'26 school year. In picture order Jack Wallace was selected Junior of the Year; James Doss was selected Senior of the Year; Jenna Jurkowitz was selected Sophomore of the Year; and Allyson Brooks was selected Freshman of the Year.

## Ohio Senate passes education bills to enact historic changes

The Ohio Senate concurred on Senate Bill 19, sponsored by Senator Andrew Brenner (R-Delaware), which enacts historic changes to Ohio's education law to improve education Quality for Ohio's students.

The bill seeks to encourage improvement in math for Ohio's students, requiring that any school building with 51% or more of students scoring limited on an end-of-course mathematics assessment, the schools must submit a Math Achievement Improvement Plan to the Department of Education and Workforce.

"The bill not only addresses the needs of struggling students," said Senator Brenner. "It also creates accelerated learning opportunities for high-achieving students."

The bill includes several other targeted changes, but one major measure is that intervention efforts to the building level rather than the school district level. This is to ensure schools with the greatest need receive more focused attention and support.

"It is my hope that by providing supports for both struggling and advanced students," said Sen. Brenner, "We will see meaningful improvement across all levels of mathematical achievement."

The Senate will now send SB 19 to Governor DeWine and awaits his signature.

The Ohio Senate also passed Senate Bill 311, sponsored by Senator Andrew Brenner (R-Delaware), which establishes several key reforms to promote accountability and integrity in Ohio's education system.

The bill seeks to prohibit organizations from helping students cheat while still protecting legitimate tutoring and educational help.

"We can't let bad actors monetize helping students cheat," Sen. Brenner said. "This bill gives the Attorney General and affected institutions the ability to pursue civil penalties against those who undermine academic integrity."

The bill includes several other measures including strengthening educator accountability, improves the management of unused school facilities, and protects educational opportunity by preventing local governments from excluding public or chartered nonpublic schools solely through zoning restrictions.

"I'm grateful that my colleagues saw the importance of this bill," Senator Brenner shared. "Academic integrity and accountability is just commonsense."

The Ohio Senate sent SB 311 to the Ohio House for further consideration.

## Ohio Goes to the Movies event will give free showing of "Parachute Nurse"

The Crawford County History Alliance and the Galion Community Theatre will present a special showing of *Parachute Nurse* an "Ohio Goes to the Movies" event in honor of America 250.

Ohio is celebrating its big-screen legacy with state-wide movie showings in all 88 counties.

The alliance, in collaboration with the state program, "Ohio Goes to the Movies" and the Galion Community Theatre, will present the World War II-era film on Monday, June 29, at the historic Galion Community Theatre.

Doors will open at 6 pm with the film beginning at 6:30 pm. Admission is free and open to the public.

*Parachute Nurse*, a 1942 Columbia Pictures film, is loosely based on the life of Bucyrian LaureWa Schimmoler, founder of the Aerial Nurse Corps of America and a pioneering figure in aviation nursing.

Schimmoler's contributions inspired the film, making this screening a special opportunity to honor a local historical figure whose influence soared far beyond Crawford County. She has a small role in the film and also served as a consultant.



Before the screening, guests are invited to explore mini-exhibits hosted by the Bucyrus Historical Society and the Laretta Schimmoler Museum, beginning at 6 pm.

Following the one-hour film, there will be a panel discussion featuring a MedFlight nurse, offering insights into the evolution of air medical transport and the legacy of Schimmoler's vision.

Members of the Galion Community Theatre, Bucyrus Historical Society (designated by Schimmoler to house her personal and professional artifacts) and the Laretta Schimmoler Museum will also be part of the discussion panel.

This event combines a local history connection, classic World War II cinema and modern aviation medicine in a way that honors one of Crawford County's most influential pioneers.



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## Rumpke awards two scholarships to Richland County students

Recent Shelby High School graduate Natalie Korbas and Ontario High School graduate Hayden Saxton are the winners of the 2026 Rumpke Waste & Recycling Scholarship for Richland County. This scholarship awards \$1,000 to two graduates in Richland County, Ohio, pursuing a two or four-year degree at an accredited institution, including vocational/trade schools.

Winners are chosen based on their commitment to their academics, environmental stewardship and desire to serve the community. Natalie plans to study Civil Engineering at the University of Akron. After graduating, she plans to work for an engineering firm or start her own business.

As the only female in her engineering courses, Natalie learned that she could overcome any challenge.

"Realizing that I enjoy hands-on work and learning, communicating with others and solving problems has propelled me to major in Civil Engineering," Natalie writes in her application essay.

Natalie's involvement in 4-H and the FFA organization as chapter president set the foundation of her communication, leadership and problem-solving skills.

"Natalie's incredible work ethic and resilience will take her far," said Rumpke Regional Vice President TJ Rose. "We are proud to award her with this scholarship to help with her academic aspirations."

Hayden Saxton plans to study marketing at the University of Cincinnati or Miami University. After completing his undergrad, she plans to become a Creative Marketing Specialist.

Hayden's passion for art inspired her career path and has allowed her to embrace her creativity and develop a flexible mindset when solving problems.

"Unlike other subjects where there is one correct answer, I had the freedom to explore ideas, think outside the box and solve my own work visually," Hayden writes in her application essay. "Art has taught me that innovative thinking is an essential skill, which has encouraged me to approach 'mistakes' with an open mindset."

Passionate about her community, Hayden's involvement in clubs such as Warrior Leadership Council, Key Club, National Honor Society and Drug Free Seniors allowed her to give back through volunteer opportunities and setting a positive example for younger students.

"We deeply admire Hayden's commitment to serving her community and taking on leadership responsibilities that positively impact others," said Rumpke Regional Vice President TJ Rose. "We're proud to help contribute to her goals with this scholarship award."



Natalie Korbas



Hayden Saxton

## Mosquitoes carrying West Nile Virus detected in Mansfield

Richland Public Health officials have been notified by the Ohio Department of Health that West Nile Virus (WNV) has been detected in mosquitoes in the City of Mansfield.

"To be very clear, this is not a human infection case, but the first positive WNV mosquito samples in Richland County this year," Joe Harrod, Director of Environmental Health at Richland Public Health, stated. Health Department officials will continue to monitor the WNV positive areas in the City of Mansfield to discourage potential transmission of the mosquito-borne illness to residents.

West Nile Virus is a mosquito-borne virus where human symptoms are generally mild and often mimic the flu. In extreme cases, WNV can cause Encephalitis (inflammation of the brain), Meningitis (inflammation of lining of the brain and the spinal cord) or death. Approximately 80 percent of people who are infected with WNV will not show any symptoms at all. Those who develop symptoms usually do so between three to 14 days after they are bitten by an infected mosquito. There is no specific treatment for WNV infection and care is based on symptom control and/or relief. The best way to prevent West Nile Virus is to prevent mosquito bites.

RPH's Mosquito Control Program conducts surveillance, treats, and sprays throughout the season to monitor mosquito populations and mosquito-spread disease throughout the county. Residents are asked to eliminate standing water and take precautions to protect themselves and loved ones from mosquito bites.

Mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water, which includes puddles, stagnant ditches, and containers such as old tires, buckets, cans, neglected swimming pools and flower pots. Mosquitoes can carry diseases, including West Nile Virus, which can cause serious illness. It is important to apply mosquito repellent when participating in any outdoor activity when mosquitoes are active.

Richland Public Health recommends residents follow these tips to help avoid mosquito bites:

- Make sure that doors and windows have tight-fitting screens
- Repair or replace all torn screens in your home
- Remove all discarded tires from your property
- Dispose of tin cans, plastic containers, ceramic pots or similar water-holding containers.
- Make sure roof gutters drain properly. Clean clogged gutters in the spring and fall
- Clean and chlorinate swimming pools, outdoor saunas and hot tubs
- Drain water from pool covers
- Change the water in bird baths at least once a week
- Turn over plastic wading pools, wheelbarrows, etc. when not in use
- Clean ditches of obstructions so they drain properly.
- Eliminate any standing water that collects on your property.
- Check trees for cavities that hold water and fill them with soil, gravel or sand
- Remind or help neighbors to eliminate breeding sites
- Use insect repellent and follow the label directions

## Grants available through Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council

State Representative Marilyn John (R-Richland County) recently announced new grant opportunities available through the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council (ODDC).

ODDC is accepting applications for 16 new projects aimed at improving opportunities and outcomes for Ohioans with developmental disabilities. Projects range from developing inclusive athletic programs in K-12 schools to equipping individuals with developmental disabilities to live independently.

The full list of project opportunities and application information can be found here.

The application deadline is July 10, at 11:59 p.m. with the five-year project cycle beginning on Oct. 1, 2026.

"This is an incredible opportunity to support those with developmental disabilities and to continue to make Ohio a place where all Ohioans can succeed and thrive," said John.

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## Rep. John champions regional projects, votes in support of bill

State Representative Marilyn John (R-Shelby) voted in support of Ohio's Capital Budget bill, a two-year capital improvements budget for state and community projects throughout Ohio totaling nearly \$4 billion. As part of the bill, Rep. John championed multiple projects for Richland County, including funding for the Mansfield Playhouse Project and Taking Root Farms.

Senate Bill 450 provides appropriations for state infrastructure needs, including renovations to state offices, new construction for mental health facilities, land acquisition, and equipment. The plan also includes just over \$200 million for community projects, which are projects that come from outside of state agencies and have a benefit or nexus to the state.

As part of the Capital Budget, Rep. John helped secure \$1,000,000 for the Mansfield Playhouse Project.

"Our current building in downtown Mansfield is in bad shape and not worth the expense of renovating. As our area's community theater, we need a new home, soon," said Doug Wertz, President/Artistic Director of The Mansfield Playhouse. The Playhouse is celebrating its 100th Anniversary season this year.

"Our State Representative Marilyn John, State Sen. Mark Romanchuk and the State of Ohio are helping to make that possible. We are thrilled with the State's \$1 million grant as we get even closer to our goal of \$5.5 million. With the state gift, we will have \$3.2 million toward our \$5.5 million goal to build a new building," Wertz said.

"We are going to build a new, accessible building that will preserve our 100-year legacy. It will allow us to continue to deliver the same high-quality, affordable theatrical experiences," Wertz added.

"The Mansfield Playhouse is a unique and cherished part of Richland County's identity, and I congratulate everyone involved on receiving state capital budget funding," said Rep. John. "This investment will support the continued preservation and growth of this historic venue, allowing it to serve as a center for arts, culture, and community for years to come."

Additionally, Rep. John championed \$400,000 for Taking Root Farms - Field of Opportunities.

Director of Operations Angela Eisaman states "Every person deserves the chance to live a life filled with purpose, connection, and belonging. At Taking Root Farms, we believe adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities should be fully seen, fully included, and fully valued for who they are. We are deeply grateful to Representative Marilyn John and Senator Mark Romanchuk, whose leadership reflects the belief that the strength of a community is measured by how well it embraces every one of its members."

"The work that Taking Root Farms continues to do for adults with developmental disabilities is an invaluable asset to the Richland County community," said Rep. John. "Their commitment to empowering individuals, fostering independence, and creating meaningful opportunities has made a lasting impact on countless lives. I extend my congratulations on receiving funding through the State Capital Budget, which will help ensure they can continue their mission of uplifting, supporting, and inspiring adults with developmental disabilities for years to come."

Through this bill, Ohio House Republicans prioritized investing in Ohio's future by expanding access to education and healthcare through new facilities or upgrades to existing ones, improving parks and roadways to better connect communities, and strengthening local facilities across the state by providing necessary funding for enhancements. This bill now heads to the Governor for consideration.

## •Time capsule will be opened

(Continued from Page 16)

The grand finale fireworks display will celebrate 250 years of American independence in spectacular fashion.

"Our citizens asked for fireworks, and we are making good on that promise," said Mayor Jodie Perry. "The City of Mansfield is proud to sponsor this year's fireworks in partnership with Mansfield Speedway as part of our America250 celebration."

These events are co-sponsored by the City of Mansfield, with appreciation to Mansfield Speedway and Destination Mansfield.

## News Briefs in Education

Christopher Weilbacker was named to The University of Alabama Deans List for Spring Semester 2026.

A total of 14,306 students enrolled during Spring Semester 2026 at The University of Alabama were named to the dean's list with an academic record of 3.5 (or above) or the president's list with an academic record of 4.0 (all A's).

The UA dean's and president's lists recognize full-time undergraduate students. The lists do not apply to graduate students or undergraduate students who take less than a full course load.

★

Timo Dials Jimenez of Mansfield was named to the dean's list for the spring 2026 term at University of Maryland Global Campus. To be eligible for the honor, a student must complete at least six credits during the term, earn a grade point average of at least 3.5 for the term, and maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.5 at UMGC.

★

Local students are members of the graduating Class of 2026 at Heidelberg University who graduated May 9.

A total of 196 undergraduate students received bachelor's degrees and 82 graduate students received degrees in counseling, business administration and athletic training.

Ryleigh Gorman of Lexington graduated with a Bachelor of Arts, Media and English.

Lyle Scott of Mansfield graduated with a Bachelor of Science, Criminology.

★

Local students named to the dean's list for the spring 2026 semester at Grove City College are Isabel Golias and Mary Golias, both of Lexington.

Students eligible for the dean's list have a GPA of 3.40 to 3.59; for the dean's list with distinction a GPA of 3.60 to 3.84 and for the dean's list with high distinction a GPA of 3.85 to 4.0.

## Senators host news conference on protecting Ohioans from rising electricity costs

Senators Mark Romanchuk (R-Ontario) and Paula Hicks-Hudson (D-Toledo) held a news conference yesterday to discuss the Electricity Forecast Integrity Act.

The support for Senate Bill 457 comes from a wide range of groups including the Buckeye Institute, the Ohio Manufacturers' Association, Ohio Consumers' Council, and the Northwest Ohio Aggregation Coalition.

"This is a simple bill," Sen. Romanchuk said. "You should only pay for the actual cost, not the projected cost from inflated forecasts."

Inflated forecasts raise electricity prices and overstate the need for new transmission investments and new generation that may not actually be needed. The Electricity Forecast Integrity Act encourages more accurate forecasting to protect consumers.

"I'm proud to join Senator Hicks-Hudson on this bipartisan effort to keep money in Ohioans' wallets," he continued. "I look forward to seeing more support coalesce around our effort."

SB 457 was introduced and waits to be referred to committee.

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# CLASSIFIEDS

## LEGAL NOTICE

The following is a succinct summary of the legislation adopted by the Council of the City of Ontario, at their regular meeting held on June 17, 2026.

The complete text of this Ordinance may be viewed and copies obtained at the Office of the Clerk of Council, Ontario Municipal Building, 555 Stumbo Road, Ontario, Ohio, during regular business hours.

ORDINANCE NO. 26-12 – AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY TO PAY ONE HUNDRED FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$105,000) TO THE ONTARIO COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT CORPORATION TO PURCHASE REAL PROPERTY TO BE USED FOR THE PUBLIC, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Abbey Beaver  
Asst. Clerk of Council  
City of Ontario, Ohio  
(T-C 6-25, 7-2 '26) 23L

## Rt. 13/250 changes to four-way stop

On Tuesday, June 23, the intersection of U.S. 250 and State Route 13/Fitchville River Road in Fitchville Township was converted to an all-way stop intersection, meaning all approaches to the intersection will be required to stop. In the past, this intersection operates as a two-way stop requiring only traffic along SR 13/Fitchville River Road to stop before entering or crossing U.S. 250.

ODOT will continue to monitor the intersection to ensure the all-way stop is operating as intended.

## Coast-to-coast relay to celebrate America 250 starts July 1

In 2026, the American Discovery Trail Society (ADTS) celebrates the outdoors and 250 years of our independence with the American Discovery 250 Relay—a 6,800-mile (11,000 km) journey along the entire American Discovery Trail from California to Delaware, starting in July and ending around Thanksgiving.

This event will be the longest continuous, non-motorized relay in world history. The ADTS invites all to join in the celebration by participating for a day or more in a relay, attending one of over 100 local events, or sharing your story of personal growth and adventure. Together, we commemorate America's past and unify our country.

Participants will carry a specialized baton and carrying a replica of the Declaration of Independence. There will be three batons to choose from, each engraved with the three founding principles: Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness.

The celebration kicks off on July 1, from Point Reyes National Seashore in California and crosses the Golden Gate Bridge on July 4. The relay calendar is available at [discoverytrail.org/adt-relay-calendar](http://discoverytrail.org/adt-relay-calendar)

Interested participants or teams can register free at [discoverytrail.org/america-250-relay](http://discoverytrail.org/america-250-relay). Runners, cyclists, hikers, wheelchair users and horseback riders are all encouraged to take part.

# Sports Highlights

## Nathan's Annual Hot Dog Eating Contest is 4th of July Weekend

By Kris Leiter

Well, it's that time of year again and the annual Nathan's Hot Dog Eating Contest will be held on July 4, at the original flagship restaurant on Coney Island, New York

Located on the corner of Surf and Stillwell Avenues, it has been ongoing since 1972! That's amazing!

This is such a big deal that ESPN has exclusive live broadcast rights. An entire afternoon is packed full of activities.

The pre-show festivities begin at 10 am, with several live musical and dance acts.

The women's competition begins at 11 am and the men's will begin at 12:30 pm.

The ladies have been competing since 2011 and the first female to claim the first hot dog pink belt was Sonya Thomas, who devoured 40 hot dogs in 10 minutes!

### Reigning Champions

Male: Joey Chestnut — 2025: 70.5 hot dogs in 10 minutes. He has a record-setting 17 wins

Female: Miki Sudo — 2025: 33 hot dogs in 10 minutes

So if you are questioning whether this is a "real" sport, let Merriam-Webster's Dictionary define the word, "A physical activity engaged in for pleasure, or a specific activity like an athletic contest."

Professional eating is an actual job. The official term is Major League Eating (MLE). These people literally get paid to compete to eat. Where was this job when I was a kid? I missed my calling.

There are contests all throughout the year and it does take some training to achieve the level of endurance some of these people possess.

So, grab the family, fire up the grill this holiday, gather around the television and enjoy the show!



Joey Chestnut and Miki Sudo



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