



The Firelands Express



Volume 12, Issue 100

January 2022

Serving the communities of Amherst, Amherst Twp., Birmingham, Brownhelm Twp., Camden Twp., Florence Twp., Henrietta Twp., Kipton Village, New Russia Twp., South Amherst Village, Vermilion and Vermilion Twp.

Behind the Scenes at the New Firelands High School



Looking down from the 2nd floor



Looking up to the 2nd floor

The construction of the new Firelands High School is continuing right on target for a Fall 2022 opening. Behind the scenes, as many as 70 workers a day are in the building and focused on installing and fine-tuning the mechanics and infrastructure. Tim Rini, who is the project manager for Greenspace Construction Services (GCS), said that there are 23 prime contractors with additional subcontractors working for each prime.

Rini said that the biggest challenge has been securing the materials during the pandemic so that the project remains on

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You may view this issue online at:
www.firelandsschools.org

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THE FIRELANDS EXPRESS

Behind the Scenes, from p. 1

schedule. That being said, he feels very lucky and enjoys working with a great group of craftsmen and women on the construction of the new high school. He added that daily coordination with the project superintendent Lucio Velotta, and project administrator Alesio Asorio, makes the project run smoothly. With everyone's efforts and cooperation, the school will be ready to open in August of 2022.

By the Numbers

The new high school is 106,630 square feet consisting of the following:

- 74,716 concrete masonry units (cement block)
- 161,221 face bricks
- 8,569 feet of water pipes
- 4,773 gallons of paint
- 1,324 cubic yards of concrete
- 1,060 Electrical receptacles
- 213 tons of steel
- 27 classrooms
- 21 restrooms
- 17 offices
- 6 mechanical rooms
- 2 gyms
- 1 boiler room
- 1 lunchroom

Planning for the logistics of moving two buildings has been well underway and we are excited to move forward. Our new high school will be ready for occupancy by early August. The existing high school will transition to a middle school and will serve students in grades 6-8. South Amherst Middle School will no longer be used and the district is currently in negotiations to sell the building.

Plans to say goodbye to SAMS while celebrating the opening of our new high school will be shared in the coming months.



Clockwise from left: Looking towards the stage in the new auditorium, ceiling work being done in the new main gymnasium, one of six mechanical rooms, and part of the boiler room.

Open Enrollment for 2022-2023 Begins on February 1st

The application process for open enrollment for the 2022-2023 school year will begin on February 1, 2022 at 7:30 a.m. At that time, the online application will go live and parents and guardians can begin applying through the website for available open enrollment slots.

The application is a Google form that is linked at the bottom of the "Student Registration" page of the www.FirelandsSchools.org website.

Open enrollment space is given on a first-come, first-

served basis. The amount of slots we can offer depends on our current enrollment. Parents will be notified of acceptance or denial no later than the end of March.

Accepted students can be registered online as soon as they receive notification. There is one exception - kindergarten applicants for open enrollment can register in March with district residents. We will not be able to project the amount of kindergarten open enrollment slots until after that registration

period. We encourage district families with new kindergartners to register them in March. More information about kindergarten registration will follow in the next issue of the Express.

See page 3 for a list of important enrollment related dates. More information about open enrollment is posted on the "Student Registration" section of the Firelands website. If you have questions, please contact the board office at 440-965-5821 x.1010.

Enrollment Timeline

February 1st

- Online open enrollment application is available for K-12 students. Out of district kindergarten parents **must** complete this process before March registration.
- Online confirmation of open enrollment status for returning students begins. This annual process is required for all open enrolled students after the first year.

March 1st

- Status notifications for open enrollment applications, Grades 1-12, are sent from Superintendent's Office.
- Registration for accepted open enrollment students, Grades 1-12, will begin through Final Forms.

March 2nd

- Registration through Final Forms opens for kindergarten. Process can be completed online. This includes BOTH district residents and open enrollment applicants.

March 2nd & 3rd

- The Board of Education Office is open and staffed to assist kindergarten parents if needed. Location is 112 N. Lake St., South Amherst.

April 1st

- Status notifications for kindergarten open enrollment applications are sent from the Superintendent's Office.

May 18th

- Kindergarten Screening at FES. (Required). Your screening time slot will be scheduled during March registration.

May 1-31

- Final push to have all students registered for Fall.

June 1st

- Open enrollment ends.
- All registration documents are due.

Resources

Website with additional links:
https://www.firelandsschools.org/studentregistration_home.aspx

Open Enrollment Questions?

Call Sue Schaefer
Board of Education
440-965-5821 x. 1010
sschaefer@firelandsschools.org

Kindergarten Questions?

Call Valerie Schuster
School Counselor
Firelands Elementary School
440-965-5381 x. 2503

Registration Questions?

Call Lisa Maver
Board of Education
EMIS Coordinator/Registration
440-965-5821 x. 1025

Volunteers Needed

Junior Achievement

Junior achievement is a program offered to students to inspire and prepare young people to succeed in a global economy. The lessons are based on state standards and are interesting for the students. JA provides all the materials volunteers will need to present the lessons. There are five lessons lasting 30-45 minutes.

If you would like to volunteer we will match you with our teachers. Please contact Nancy Mitchell at 216-407-6155 or mitchell3206@gmail.com.

FES Shows Gratitude & Giving

At the end of the year, the students at Firelands Elementary School were involved in many activities including a Veterans Day program, Thanksgiving Feast, and collections for Christmas. Read more about FES on page 6.



Club Invention at FES

Students in grades K-4 completed a week long program of Club Invention in December. More than 125 students were able to experience STEM activities. Club Invention is a program through the National Inventors Hall of Fame and is provided free of charge thanks to the generosity of the Nordson Community Foundation. All the students had a great time and we are looking forward to holding Camp Invention on June 13-17. Please stay tuned for registration information and discounts.

submitted by Nancy Mitchell



<https://www.invent.org/programs>

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Grants Awarded to Firelands for Over \$10,000

Chuck Latto: Introduction to Flight & UAVs

Mr. Chuck Latto, teacher at South Amherst Middle School, has been notified that he received a Martha Holden Jennings Grant for his project, Introduction to Flight and UAVs in the amount of \$2,980.00! The grant has enabled Mr. Latto to purchase a class set of drones, which further enhances understanding of drone technology, coding, project based learning and more. The drones arrived earlier this month!



This opportunity will allow students to explore the history of aviation starting with the Wright Brothers and the testing of their first practical plane at Huffman Prairie in Dayton, Ohio. Part of their research will include viewing the documentary "On Great White Wings" which Mr. Latto purchased at the Wright Brothers Memorial. Students will select a type of airplane or drone as a technological artifact to research and present to the class in the form of a Google Slide show.

One example that students may recognize is the Ingenuity drone that was recently flown on Mars and NOAA's Saildrone that collected data while navigating through hurricane Sam off the Atlantic coast. The students will then investigate the science of flight while building and testing several airplane models. The models will help them understand the movement of planes such as roll, pitch, and yaw and the forces such as drag and lift. This information will be supported by curriculum materials that have been obtained from our local Civil Air Patrol at the Lorain County Airport.

Latto has also arranged an opportunity for his students to

practice flying an airplane with flight simulators that will be on loan from a local airport!

Once students arrive at this point of the curriculum, they will then apply their understanding of flight to autonomously program and fly the class set of drones. Students will follow an online curriculum containing lessons and assessments that they can work through at their own pace

depending on their previous experiences with coding.

The culmination of the project will involve students participating in a presentation by a local commercial pilot that will share information about the principles of flight and his career in aviation.

Latto states, "I want to inspire students to explore career pathways that will lead them to in demand jobs and successful career opportunities. Research shows that students in middle school are already making decisions about their high school scheduling and career choices. Because of this grant funding, students will have the opportunity to practice 21st century skills related to aviation. I am proud of my students-even when things get challenging, they never want to give up."

Early in October, Latto was notified that he received a grant for over \$500 in order for his STEM students to build cigar box guitars. This year alone he has utilized outside resources exceeding \$3,500 for additional opportunities for his students!

Submitted by Jennifer Butchko

Lori Roemer: Safety Training & Cameras

Congratulations to the FLSD Director of Educational Services, Mrs. Lori Roemer! Roemer was notified recently that she received a safety grant from the Ohio Attorney General's FY 22 School Safety Grant in the amount of \$8,803.07.

Firelands will utilize the grant funding to continue the training of school staff and our school resource officer to identify, properly respond to, and report threats or behaviors of concern that may pose an issue to the safety of an individual attending or working in our schools. In

addition, Firelands will conduct professional development trainings on de-escalation and identifying and reporting behaviors of concern. Further, our district will send our school

resource officer to the most up-to-date training on safety topics and procedures. Our district is also looking to upgrade surveillance cameras throughout the elementary school.

Roemer stated,

"Safety continues to be our top priority. I am pleased to be able to secure additional sources of revenue for our district."

Submitted by Jennifer Butchko



Pictured above: Jacob Clifford, Colin Elkin, and Patrick Finnegan with new Semi-autonomous Codable Indoor/Outdoor Drones.



Academic Challenge Teams Take 1st Place in County

Congratulations to both the 5th/6th grade and 7th/8th grade Firelands Academic Challenge Teams! On Tuesday, November 16, 2021 the teams competed against other Lorain County school districts in the annual Academic Challenge competition sponsored by the Educational Service Center of Lorain County. Both teams earned first place!

The process of preparing for the competition was a challenge itself! Following tryouts, the teams began practicing together twice weekly. They were required to read a designated novel, learn about current events, and study from a list of almost 30 topics in the categories of math, reading, science, social studies, and geography. Besides attending the practices, students also committed to studying independently outside of school in order to be as prepared as possible to face the difficult

questions and problem solving.

The teams' advisors, Mrs. Teresa Dempsey and Mrs. Tasia Socha, are proud of the students for the time, effort, and hard work that they each contributed in order to achieve this goal. Even more important than learning tons of new information, the

students learned to work well as a team, maximizing each others' strengths in order to work together for a common goal.

5th/6th Grade Team: Aaron Powers, Claire Hasley, Cole Deitz, Hailey Crockett, Amelia Branco, Elise Bednar, Jennifer Keets, Sebastian Citak, and

Mariah Rodriguez.

7th/8th Grade Team: Maggie Tansey, Justin Wagner, Brody Schlecter, Preston Kirschner, Gianna Camera, Katie Smith, Jordyn Simpson, Logan Parker and Nathan Ludwig.

*Submitted by Teresa Dempsey
Gifted Specialist*

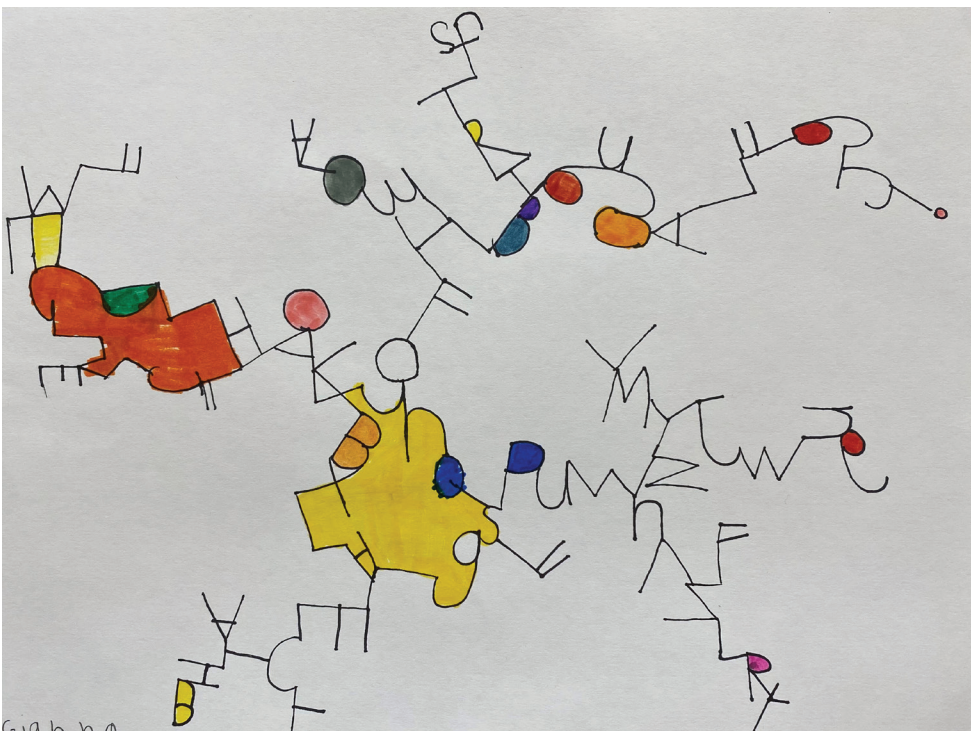


Firelands Artists Continue to Create Amazing Art

Featured below are two submissions from the elementary school. On the left, 1st grader Gianna Rosario's "Alphabet on Parade." On the right, 3rd grader Amelia Holland's "Rainforest Bird." The Firelands website continues to feature online art galleries for each building. You can find them by going to www.firelandsschools.org and choosing

the building on the left side menu. From there scroll to the bottom of each page and enjoy!

Special thanks to our art teachers for all they do to inspire creativity and teach skills!



Firelands Elementary School News & Activities

4th Graders Salute Veterans

The 4th grade students at Firelands Elementary School saluted their veterans this year with a "Veterans Appreciation Pop-In" after school on November 11, 2021. We were honored to have 30 veterans come in to take a picture by our red, white and blue handprint flag. Students who came in with their veteran presented them with an American flag hat and specially made cookie, baked by Sprinkles 'N Crumbs bakery. We were happy to be able to continue the tradition of 4th graders honoring our veterans, even during COVID. Thank you to the PTG for all of their support with our program! (Photos p. 10)



on a class game called Genius Square, a fun and challenging STEM puzzle.

Fibonacci Poem

written by Ava Partridge

*The
Dogs
Sit by
The fireplace
While the fire crackles
Hoping Santa will come tonight*

Fibonacci Day

To celebrate Fibonacci Day on 11/23, Mrs. Dempsey's gifted math and ELA students learned about the mathematician Fibonacci and created Fibonacci Poetry. This poetry is similar to Haiku and is a form of constrained writing. Students wrote poems that were six lines long, with each line containing the number of syllables that reflect the Fibonacci Sequence (1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8...) The poetry was then submitted to a contest, where the class was chosen in a random drawing to win their choice of a prize! Students voted

The COSI Assembly

written by FES 2nd Graders, Room 26

At the COSI assembly, we learned a lot. COSI taught us about space. We learned about the Milky Way, the sun, and the moon. The sun is the biggest star in our solar system. Another big star is the North Star. Jupiter is the biggest planet in the solar system. We learned how a Sprite bottle can fly.

We did experiments at the second assembly. We read books like There was a Black Hole who Swallowed the Earth. We built different rovers that

could go on different surfaces. It was kind of hard, but some of us saw the sun and the moon in a telescope. We figured out if you were seven years old you would be three on Jupiter.

A lady let oxygen out of a tank, and it made stuff bigger. We looked at pictures of lights and had to guess what kind of rainbow they were. We think COSI was amazing because we learned a lot about the atmosphere and space.

Thank you to the PTG for organizing this great event!

Annual Third Grade FES Thanksgiving Parade

This year FES' 3rd graders studied the history of Tony Sarg and the famous tradition of the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade by reading books, internet articles, and watching video clips. These creative third graders made timelines, crafted puppets, performed a reader's theater, created quizzes, and wrote

letters to Mr. Macy convincing him to add a new balloon to his parade. With the help of their teachers and volunteers, each student created a new balloon that they would like to see in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. As a culminating event, on Tuesday, November 22nd, students showcased their balloons in the 8th annual FES Thanksgiving Day Parade.

5th Grade Thanksgiving Feast

Mrs. Lee, Mrs. Watson, and Ms. Snyder's 5th grade students were treated to an early Thanksgiving feast. The menu included turkey, ham, mashed potatoes, stuffing, corn, green beans, rolls with butter, cranberry sauce, along with assorted delicious pies and cookies.

Nyomi Colon rated the feast a 10 out of 10. Sophia Sonner said, "It was perfect!" Gerald Brown responded, "It was my first time having pumpkin pie, and I loved it." Khloe Kozdron said, "***It was so good I do not want to leave 5th grade.***"

In the classroom students helped to prepare the stuffing, and several students were in charge of cleaning up.

Students created a "Happy Thanksgiving" banner; some completed coordinate grids with a cornucopia; and many wrote

continued on page 8



Upcoming FES Important Dates

February 2
PTG Sponsored Lego Night

February 3
PTG Meeting at 6 PM via Zoom

February 17
Evening Parent/Teacher Conferences (Grades K-2, 4-5)

February 18 & 21
No School for students



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Firelands High School Information & Events



Teen Leadership Corps (TLC)

The Firelands TLC group has been busy. On December 10th, they ran a blood drive during the school day in the high school gymnasium. In addition, the TLC group ran a toy drive in partnership with the Ronald McDonald House. They asked for new or slightly used toys to be brought in to students 4th or 5th period classes. Around 50 toys were collected and taken to the Ronald McDonald House in Cleveland on December 21st.

Holiday Concert (Pictured Above)

On December 14th, the music department held their annual Holiday band and choir concert. This is a tradition that we unfortunately were not able to do last year due to Covid, but are excited to bring back for the 2021 Holiday season.

Exams and Scheduling

Midterm Exams were held January 12th through the 14th. Students followed an adjusted schedule with no more than three exams each day. Tutoring times were built into the schedule so that students were able to get additional help prior to their exam if they needed it. Students had early dismissal on the exam days with lunches

and a study hall provided in the afternoon for the students that needed to ride a bus.

Counselors are beginning the process of course selection with students this month. This is a two part process where students will meet with counselors to learn about the courses available. They will take home some information to share with parents and then come back and complete the course selections.

Kindness Closet

Firelands High School now has a Kindness Closet. In this closet we have the following items in youth and adult sizes:

- Pullover or zip-up hoodies
- Crewnecks
- Joggers
- Jackets & some winter coats
- Socks and T-shirts
- Polo shirts
- Dress pants
- Back packs
- Masks and toiletry items
- Shoes
- Winter hats

These are all new items and we will have them available to anyone who needs them! Thank you to Deanna Watts and Mrs. Urbansky for organizing this.

*submitted by Cathy Keener
FHS Principal*

Firelands Band Boosters Recognized at State Level

The Firelands Band Boosters have been named the Outstanding Music Support Group for 2022 by the Ohio Music Education Association. The boosters will be recognized at the Ohio Music Education Association Conference during the General Session in February.

I am honored that our booster program has received this recognition. There have been many years of trial and error as we have advanced to this point. I am blessed with an amazing group of parents who truly have

the needs of the students in the forefront.

If you see any of our band parents and boosters, please thank them for their hard work and commitment to instrumental music education in our district. I would not be able to do my job without their hard work and dedication. This is truly an honor for every band parent who has volunteered their time for our students.

*submitted by Dustin Wiley
Firelands Band Director*

FBB Meeting Schedule

The Firelands Band Boosters meet on the third Tuesday of every month at 7:00 p.m. Our mission is to provide support for the Firelands Instrumental Music Program. We meet in the high school band room at 7:00 p.m.

The remaining meeting dates for the 2021-2022 school year are as follows:

February 15, 2022, March 15, 2022, April 19, 2022, May 17, 2022, and June 21, 2022.

For more information contact
firelandsbandboosters@gmail.com



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FES continued from page 6

what they were thankful for on paper turkey feathers.

Mrs. Lee, Mrs. Watson, and Ms. Snyder would like to thank all of the parents and family members who helped make this an amazing event, as well as thanks to Mrs. Choe and Mrs. Groboske for helping serve the food.

Not Forgotten Box Collection

Thanks to the Firelands community for donating hundreds of toys in the Not Forgotten Box collection. FES partners with the Salvation Army and the Chronicle Telegram to provide toys to children in the area! Thanks to FES Falcon Leaders for helping load the toys to be taken to the Salvation Army for distribution.

FES Parent Teacher Group

Firelands Elementary is very lucky to have an active PTG (Parent Teacher Group). Parents of FES students are encouraged to become involved with this group. They meet monthly and find ways to further enrich the FES environment for all of our students. Their next meeting will be February 3 at 6:00 pm. Feel free to reach out to them to see how you can assist and hear more about how you can be involved during the 2021-2022 school year! You can find them on Facebook (Firelands Elementary School PTG) or on Twitter (@FESPTG).

*submitted by Laura Groboske
FES Assistant Principal*

Below: Paige Wallhead carefully adds the finishing touches to her mitten project.



Basketball Coach Dave Kudela Celebrates 300th Win



With a 52-25 defeat over the Black River Pirates, Coach Kudela achieved his 300th career win. He has been head coach at Firelands for the past 20 of 27 years of coaching. Congratulations Coach!

It's School Board Appreciation Month!

Governor Mike DeWine and Lieutenant Governor Jon Husted issued a proclamation recognizing January as School Board Recognition Month. The proclamation honors school board members for their important role in "creating and monitoring district plans to make sure students have the tools and skills to reach their full potential," and for playing "an important role in providing safe, ongoing instruction to students" throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Firelands school board members include Mike O'Keefe, Tom Myers, Dan Pycraft, Ben

Gibson, and Ellen Gundersen. The January board meeting started with an organizational meeting in which Mike O'Keefe was elected President and Tom Myers was elected Vice-President. The organizational meeting includes oaths of office, committee appointments, and setting the meeting schedule for the coming year.

Firelands is honored to have a strong and dedicated team of board members who have given selflessly of their time, expertise and support to our district.

**THANK YOU
BOARD MEMBERS!**

**Celebrating
School Boards**

School Board
Recognition Month



THE FIRELANDS EXPRESS

Bus Driver of the Year



At the November board meeting, we recognized Betty Jo Hickman as the Firelands Bus Driver of the Year.

Jo has been driving bus for Firelands since 2014. She started off as a bus monitor in 2009 and we talked her into driving bus. She has really enjoyed it! She truly is a kid at heart, and will dress the part at the holidays. We have pictures to prove it.

Jo and her husband Kurt have been married for 30 years and have two sons, Dylan 24, and Mason 17. I first met her when she was a dental assistant at my dental office. Little did I know we would soon be talking about transporting her

son to preschool. Then when both Mason and Dylan were in school, I got her to work as a bus monitor. One day in the parking lot we had cones set up doing some bus backing maneuvers, and she said "I would like to try that", and well, the rest is history.

Jo loves her horses and pets, sometimes more than her family my source told me. She likes to ride side by side with her husband. Jo also loves to sew, making all of her own costumes.

She is fun to work with! Thank you, Jo Hickman, for your 12 years plus of total service to the Firelands Local School District.

submitted by Milt Saylor



Food Service News

If you received a Direct Certification letter saying your child was approved for free meals, you MUST sign and return the form in order to get fees waived. Fees will not automatically be waived.

Free meals for all students for 2021-2022- USDA has extended the free meals for all students regardless of need. All students may get a free breakfast and lunch every day.

School meals - Our number of meals have more than doubled from last year. This is great for our students to be able to have access to nutritious meals. Students must take the required components to qualify for a reimbursable free meal.

Ala cart items are not free. Items may be purchased using money that has been put on your child's account or they can bring money to school in the form of check or cash. Accounts cannot go into the negative for ala cart items. Students must have money on account or cash to purchase.

Meal / Fee application: The meal application is being used to determine if your child/children qualify to have instructional fees waived. If you have completed a meal / fee application and receive a letter stating your child qualified for reduced or denied meals, they can still get FREE meals this year, the instructional school fees will not be waived.

Food supply shortages: Nationwide food supply chain shortages due to issues with labor, transportation, and raw materials continue to affect breakfast and lunch menus. This continues to be a great issue each week. Many vendors have halted production on certain products hoping they can get caught up on their better selling items. These shortages have

forced us to make substitutions at short notice.

Firelands App: Scan the QR code below with your phone's camera to download this free app and have information at your fingertips. There is a menu



link for all three schools. You can also go to the Food Service tab to see our department news.

Online menus: Download the free my school menu app for free or you can use the above, Firelands app. You can filter the menu for allergens, check the nutritional information as well as print the menu. Due to the supply chain issues, menus many not be up to date.

Links for Food Service

Online payments and Meal application / fee waiver www.payschoolscentral.com mark the box for fee waiver

Menus – www.myschoolmenus.com or use the Firelands App, select the district then the school or download the free Firelands app or download the free my school menu app. When you download the free apps it should recognize your district, saving a step.

Food Service Director – Judy Baumann, jbaumann@firelandsschools.org, (440) 965-5821 ext 1011

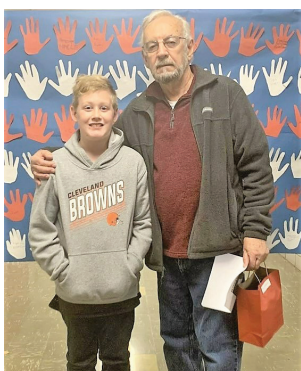
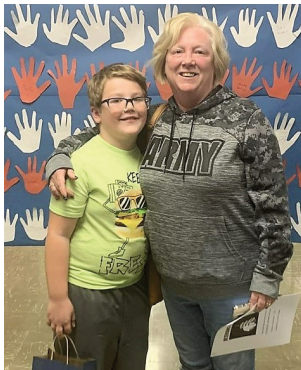
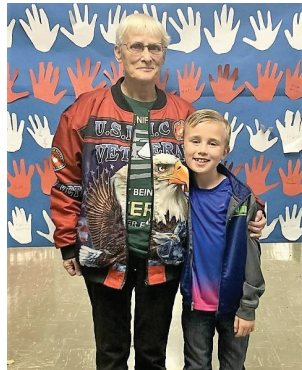
THANK YOU to all the Food Service staff for your hard work each and every day. **YOU** are very much appreciated!!

Thank you

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Photo Gallery: FES 4th Graders Honor Veterans

See story on page 6



**THANK
YOU
VETERANS!**

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**I AM
a substitute
TEACHER**

I'm the person who steps in, sometimes at a moments notice, to save the school day when the regular teacher can't be there. I make sure the students are safe, engaged and the process of learning continues. Some people say I'm a hero. I just say I'm here to help. I make \$130.00 a day.



Begin Your Journey in Education

Rachel Wixey & Associates supports Firelands Local School's mission by providing qualified substitute teachers that can continue the process of education and ensure students are safe and engaged.

**Become a Substitute Teacher
at Firelands Local Schools!**

Learn more at www.northcoastssa.org



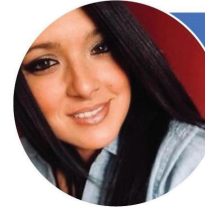
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[@FirelandsFalcon](https://twitter.com/FirelandsFalcon)

French Toast, Pancake & Sausage Breakfast



ALL YOU CAN EAT

Wakeman Masonic Lodge
34 Pleasant Street
Sunday, February 20, 2022
9:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
Donations Accepted

kw CITYWIDE
KELLERWILLIAMS.

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REALTOR®



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Westlake, OH 44145



Terri@HewlettHomeSales.com

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Firelands
App



Need Help?

Deanna Watts, LSW, LSSW is a full-time social worker for our district. She explains her role here:

My main goal is to provide as much support as possible for our families, students, and school staff. As your school Social Worker, I can help provide and/or assist with Mental Health Supports, Community Resources, Kinship Care Resources, Liaison from home to school concerns. Please feel free to contact the school guidance counselor or me directly via email or phone. Confidentiality and safety are my highest priorities. Email: watts@escl.org or dwatts@firelandsschools.org. Call or text: 440-334-8801.



The next meeting of the Firelands Board of Education will be held at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, February 14, 2022 at the board office building. We are located at 112 North Lake Street in South Amherst. For more information call the board office at 440-965-5821 x. 1010.

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Dewey Pelton
Septic Tank Cleaning
Pumping & Installation
440-965-8919
Go Falcons!



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