



*Believe in Your Greatness*

For the parents, students, staff, and community of Clay Middle School

# CLAY NATION NEWS

## PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Dear Clay Nation,

As we approach the remainder of the school year, we are doing everything with one thing in mind.... "FINISH STRONG"! Sometimes the toughest thing for our students during their adolescent years is to stay focused as there is a great deal going on towards the end of the school year.

As summer break is quickly approaching at the end of this week, we ask for your continued efforts to best support your child during this time when final projects and assignments are coming to completion and final assessments and exams may be coming soon for select courses. As grade level teams send important notices and reminders home to parents, please make sure that you are reading all of this information for important dates, changes or announcements so you can best support your child and maintain a good partnership with the team of teachers as we close out the year.

Since this is the last newsletter that will go out for this school year, I want to thank you as parents for all of your support throughout this entire school year. Without your support for Clay, we cannot do the things we do at the highest level. As principals of Clay

Middle School please know how much you matter and how much I appreciate you. **THE CLAY WAY!**

## CLAY HIGHLIGHTS

*This month we had so many GREAT things going on at Clay, so I would like to take time to capture these signs of CLAY GREATNESS as we close out another very successful school year.*

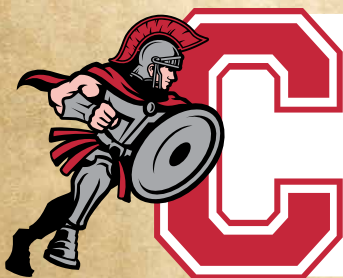
### 2024 Riley – Clay Dance Marathon

On May 10, 2024 Clay Middle School students attended in large numbers the Riley – Clay Dance Marathon. This year our school was chasing our own national and state record set last year. Even though we did not break last year's record, through your generous donations and contributions I am so excited to announce that with the help of our Clay community and our awesome student body in partnership with our CHS Dance Marathon team, Clay Middle School collected \$9,378.54. **THANK YOU SO MUCH CLAY NATION!**

### Teacher Appreciation Week

During the week of May 6-10 we celebrated our teachers

*...continued on the next page*



## ADMINISTRATION

Todd Crosby, Principal

Catherine Gahl, Assistant Principal

Mark Smith, Assistant Principal

John Corcoran, Athletic/Activities Director



**PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE** *continues...*

for all they do for our students, school and greater school community. Clay has a rich tradition of excellence with a hard working teaching staff that is committed to our student's success and social and emotional well-being. Teachers are inspiring our students to **GREATNESS** each and every day - thank you to all teachers for everything they do to make Clay GREAT. PLEASE KNOW HOW MUCH WE APPRECIATE AND VALUE YOU!

**Nurse Appreciation Week**

During the month of May, Clay celebrated Nurse Appreciation Week and throughout the week recognized all the important work Mrs. Julie Dickson and Ms. Regan Gross does for Clay Middle School to take care of our students and staff. You are awesome – THANK YOU!

**ILEARN was a Huge Success!**

This year, ILEARN lasted only one week, and I would like to acknowledge our students and how well they did throughout the week to focus on doing their best for each test that was given. KUDOS students, on a job well done! I would also like to thank our entire teaching staff and all of our support staff who helped prepare for such a big endeavor. In addition, I would also like to give a big thank you to Mrs. Catherine Gahl (Clay Testing Coordinator / Assistant Principal), Mr. Jeff Naas (Clay Special Education Department Chairperson), and Mrs. Holly Baker-Banninga (Clay Student Services Administrative Assistant) who played a huge role in working with our nine grade level teams across the building to organize the entire building's testing schedule, host training sessions prior to testing, and working hard to ensure that all students' needs were met during this state wide testing period.

**Clay Spring Sports**

Our spring sports for softball, baseball and track and field are starting to come to a close and it has been an impressive spring. Our student athletes have been competing hard and representing Clay Middle School with great sportsmanship. Win or lose, our teams play with character. In victory, they are humble and appreciative and they do it with class. On the other hand, in the face of defeat they find a way to keep a positive attitude and learn from the loss how to fight back and compete. As parents, please be proud of this observation. This is the result of good parenting and support for your children as they go through their adolescent years and grow and mature. I would like to take a moment to thank all of our coaches and our athletic director, John Corcoran for all of their support in modeling a winning attitude for our student athletes. I would also like to thank you as parents for all of your support and pride for Clay Middle School.

**For more information, please feel free to contact our Clay Activities / Athletic Director, Mr. John Corcoran at [jcorcoran@ccs.k12.in.us](mailto:jcorcoran@ccs.k12.in.us) OR visit our new website at <https://www.ccs.k12.in.us/clm>.**

**8th grade Ohio / Kings Island Trip**

This last weekend, about 250 of our 8th grade performing arts students competed in Ohio. There are schools from the Midwest in this competition and I am delighted to announce that the Clay Orchestra, Band and Choir did an incredible job. Thank you to all the parents that helped to chaperone on this trip.

**Clay Orchestra –  
Superior Rating (1st place overall)**

**Clay Band –  
Superior Rating (1st place overall)**

**Clay Choir –  
Superior Rating (2nd place overall)**

These last three weeks of school we have had our spring performing arts concerts with great crowds. Please know how much we appreciate all your support for your child in performing arts. We are very proud of how far all of our students have come and the development throughout one year in their respective concentrations of band, orchestra or choir. We are very fortunate to have a performing arts department with directors such as Jeff Frizzi, Gretta Pote, Chris Grifa, and Sierra Reed that challenge our students at such a high level. These teachers and directors give an enormous amount of time to our students at Clay Middle School so that our school can compete at such a high level. This kind of effort allows our students to experience success at the highest level. We thank them for all they do!

**Young Artist Award Winner**

Congratulations to Alexa F. on being selected as Clay's Young Artist Award Winner. This past week on Monday May 13, 2024. Lexi was recognized for her artwork that will go on display at our Educational Service Center for Carmel Clay Schools for the next several months. We are proud of you Lexi and thank you to Mrs. Kirsten Fleming (Lexi's art teacher) for all her hard work and commitment to student excellence.

**Clay Friendship Circles Tailgate and Unified Track Event**

During the week of May 6-10, our Clay Friendship Circles had an amazing tailgate and also did some unified track events before our regularly scheduled track meet. Thank you to our Clay Friendship Circles sponsors for organizing this fun event.

**Clay Student Leaders Visit 5th Graders**

The last three weeks of school Clay Principal Todd Crosby, one guidance counselor, one social worker, along with 5-6 6th graders are selected to go back to their "feeder elementary school" and talk with our 5th graders before they leave for the summer about middle school. These visits are always a good time for us to reassure our 5th graders that even though middle school is a big transition, they are all going to be OK and we are going to take care of them. Thank you to our awesome feeder elementary schools (Cherry Tree, Woodbrook,

continued on next page....





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Prairie Trace, and Mohawk Trails) for allowing us to come visit and talk with the students. Great job to all of our chosen student leaders - you really did a remarkable job displaying your GREATNESS!

### **National Junior Honor Society (NJHS) Scholarship Award Winner**

A special congratulations goes out to **Eleanor S.** (8th grader at Clay) for winning a very prestigious national scholarship worth \$500. There was only two students chosen from all of Carmel Clay Schools and Eleanor was one of them. Thank you for your leadership, service, character and academic excellence.

### **2024 Golden Greyhound Award Winner**

Congratulations to Mrs. Liz Wegner on winning the 2024 Golden Greyhound Award from Carmel Clay Schools. Liz was honored last week by Dr. Beresford, Mrs. Terri Roberts-Leonard, and Dr. Oestreich for her work with equity and inclusion initiatives at Clay Middle School and throughout Carmel Clay Schools. We are so proud of you Liz on this astounding accomplishment.

### **2024 Clay Teachers of the Year**

A round of applause goes out to our 2024 Clay Teachers of the Year. Congratulations to two exceptional teachers who were awarded this prestigious award at the end of April. Mrs. Jamie Sanders (7th grade PE/Wellness teacher) and Mr. Chris Grifa (Clay Band teacher

/ director) was selected as our own 2024 Teachers of the Year. On May 1, 2024 they attended a banquet to recognize them and all of their accomplishments. On behalf of our Clay administrative team, please know we could not be more proud of you and we thank you for your dedication, commitment and hard work to make Clay Middle School the best we can be. **Congratulations again to Mrs. Sanders and Mr. Grifa!**

### **2024 Support Staff Person of the Year**

Congratulations to Mrs. Carole Fitzgerald who was selected as the 2024 Support Staff Person of the Year for all of Carmel Clay Schools. On behalf of our Clay administrative team, please know we could not be more proud of Carole and we thank her for consistent dedication, commitment and hard work to make Clay Middle School the best it can be. We are so happy for you Carole on this outstanding award.

I challenge all Clay Trojans to **Believe in Your Greatness** and together we will take Clay Middle School to even greater heights. As principal, I believe it is my position to help provide vision, leadership, oversight, safety and the best instruction to every student that attends Clay Middle School. I truly realize that success cannot be accomplished without an active school community to continue to take Clay Middle School in the direction of continuous success and excellence. I am happy to announce that the Clay Nation is alive and well.

Sincerely,

Todd A. Crosby, Principal



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## FROM STUDENT SERVICES

### Course Selection and Scheduling 2024-2025

It's hard to believe that we are entering the final weeks of the school year. We are proud of all of our students for their resilience and perseverance through yet another unique school year. We hope that all of our families enjoy summer break and begin to look forward to next school year.

We have completed our staffing and will continue to work to finalize 2024-2025 schedules throughout the summer. Requests for changes to course requests were due March 1, 2024. At this time, we have met the maximum number of requests for the majority of our 9-week elective offerings. Questions may be emailed to the appropriate counselor as noted below.

Regarding team placements, we want to remind students and parents that we do not take requests. Students will receive final schedules in early August. Although our student services staff does not work full time during the summer, we will be checking email messages periodically. We wish each of you a safe, joyful, and relaxing summer.



Erin Naas  
All 8th Grade Students  
6th Grade Students  
[enaas@ccs.k12.in.us](mailto:enaas@ccs.k12.in.us)

Michelle Janson  
All 7th Grade Students  
6th Grade Students  
[mjanson@ccs.k12.in.us](mailto:mjanson@ccs.k12.in.us)



**MAY  
IS MENTAL  
HEALTH  
AWARENESS  
MONTH**

May is Mental Health Awareness Month! Mental health is essential to everyone's overall health and well-being, and mental illnesses are common and treatable. So much of what we do physically impacts us mentally – it's important to pay attention to both your physical health and your mental health, which can help you achieve overall wellness and set you on a path to recovery.

A healthy lifestyle can help to prevent the onset or worsening of mental health conditions, as well as chronic conditions like heart disease, diabetes, and obesity. It can also help people recover from these conditions. For those dealing with a chronic health condition and the people who care for them, it can be especially important to focus on mental health. When dealing with dueling diagnoses, focusing on both physical and mental health concerns can be daunting – but critically important in achieving overall wellness.

There are things you can do that may help. Finding a reason to laugh, going for a walk with a friend, meditating, playing with a pet, or working from home once a week can go a long way in making you both physically and mentally healthy. The company of animals – whether as pets or service animals— can have a profound impact on a person's quality of life and ability to recover from illnesses. A pet can be a source of comfort and can help us to live mentally healthier lives. And whether you go to church, meditate daily, or simply find time to enjoy that cup of tea each morning while checking in with yourself – it can be important to connect with your spiritual side in order to find that mind-body connection.

Living a healthy lifestyle may not always be easy, but it can be achieved by gradually making small changes and building on those successes. Finding the balance between work and play, the ups and downs of life, physical health and mental health, can help you on the path towards attaining and maintaining mental wellness.

For more information, visit [www.mentalhealthamerica.net/may](http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/may).



## 2024/25 REMINDER

**Clay 6th, 7th & 8th Grade  
Welcome Back Days**  
Monday July 29  
(2:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.)

**Clay 6th, 7th & 8th Grade  
Welcome Back Days**  
Tuesday July 30  
(8:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.)

**Students Report Back to School**  
Monday August 5 (First Student Day)





## JUST DANCE COMPETITION

**The 8th grade wellness classes wrapped up another successful session of Just Dance-Off 2024!**

Our students always start off a bit apprehensive but finish with a love for this unit! They rock the dances and their dedication and hard work is evident when they perform on their final days. They become super competitive and intense in their pursuit of the championship Just Dance Championship Sticker! This year was also super cool because it was the first time we had the Celebrity Judge Panel! We were super lucky to have former teachers, current teachers, administrators, counselors, high school coaches, central office staff and more present to help make it the most special of occasions!

We are proud of our 8th graders and if you haven't heard about this or seen your child's dance yet! Ask them to see it for yourself – better yet, have them teach it to you!

Enjoy!! 8th Wellness Teachers:  
Stan, Stopher, Kenney



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## GERMAN STUDENTS

March has been another busy month for German classes. This month 2 German students, Carly O. and Michael D. were recognized at the Clay Leadership Breakfast. All German classes participated in the März Musik Madness, a friendly music competition. Each day we listened to two songs in German and students voted on their favorite. The competition ended with the song "Zeit" as the winner. Our exploratory language class topped off learning about food with a day of German sweets and treats. Students enjoyed chocolate, chocolate and more chocolate along with gummy bears and many other treats. Everyone did a wonderful job of pitching in. Frau O'Bryhim and Carmel High School German Club hosted a table at Mohawk Elementary School's International night. Families were entertained by the choir and a dance group. At the German table students were able to make a ladybug craft, play a game and learn some German.



## SERTOMA ESSAY CONTEST

Congratulations to the following students for being selected as a Sertoma Essay Contest Classroom winner! Those students highlighted in yellow were Sertoma's winners and received a monetary check and certificate!

Clay's sixth grade students have been participating in the Sertoma Essay Contest for many years, thanks to Clay's sixth grade Social Studies teachers Mr. Patrick Anderson, Mr. Brian McGuckin, and Mrs. Kristi Myers.

Sertoma International is a service organization, founded in 1912. Sertoma is an acronym for "Service to Mankind". The Sertoma Club provides financial support to charitable causes in Central Indiana; conducts programs to promote prevention of hearing loss; and sponsors an annual National Heritage Essay Contest for sixth grade students.

The contest is open to all sixth-grade students attending public and private schools in Carmel, Fishers, Zionsville, and northern Indianapolis. "What Freedom Means to Me" is the topic students are asked to address in their essay.



	Anderson Team Justice	McGuckin Team Avengers	Myers Team Titans
1-2A	Thamaneeswar S-K Addison M Katie M	Genevieve Y Delaney Y Henry J	David O Evan S Alexander S
3-4A	Caleb L Camryn P Kaden L	Neve S Emelyn W Kenzie K	Lexie F Ben T Elsie W
7-8A	Norah G Alexandra V Sophia P	Milana A Chloe K Lucy K	Brienne B Hadley B Jasmine K
1-2B	Jake D Teyone L Catalina R-T	Julia W Gabby L Max R	Iris G Nora S Chloe V
7-8B	Lucas N Alexis P-S Nate B	Jane P Rosemary C Elan L	Audrey C Colten M Wesley W



Team Justice/Anderson



Team Avengers/McGuckin



Team Titans/Myers



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## THE GREEN SCENE

Recently, our Green Team participated in the Earth Hour Art Contest sponsored by the Carmel Green Initiative.

Here are the top 20 entries from Clay. Their work has been made into postcards and will be on display through Earth Day at the Carmel Library, The Monon Center, and Muldoon's.

Earth Day is Monday, April 22nd. Please help us celebrate by stopping by one of these locations and enjoying these beautiful works of art with important messages about our earth!



## NEW FAMILIES OF CLAY MIDDLE SCHOOL

If you have not submitted your two proofs of residency (1. A purchase agreement, closing documents, deed, lease, mortgage document, property tax statement, AND 2. A gas or electric utility bill-other utilities are not accepted) please bring in a current copy to the office or scan and email Holly Baker Banninga at [hbakerba@ccs.k12.in.us](mailto:hbakerba@ccs.k12.in.us).

If your student is leaving Carmel Clay Schools at the end of the school year, please email Holly Baker Banninga ([hbakerba@ccs.k12.in.us](mailto:hbakerba@ccs.k12.in.us)) for an Official Withdrawal Form. Please complete the form, email it back, and we will withdraw your student after the last day of school.

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The 21st Century Scholars Program provides income-eligible students the opportunity to earn a scholarship that covers up to four years of tuition and regularly assessed fees. 21st Century Scholars support eligible students and parents with the tools they need to prepare for college, graduate on time and begin a successful career.

Indiana's 7th and 8th grade students can apply for the 21st Century Scholars Program if their families meet the eligibility guidelines. All students must apply by June 30 of their 8th grade year. Please visit <http://scholars.in.gov/> to learn more and apply!

**If you have any questions please contact Gina Potter, LCSW at [gpotter@ccs.k12.in.us](mailto:gpotter@ccs.k12.in.us).**



## FROM THE CAFETERIA

### Lunch Account Balance

As we approach the end of the school year, be sure to keep an eye on your lunch account balance. Log into your EZSchoolpay account and make sure you have enough funds to get you through to the last day of school. Please be sure to clean up any outstanding balances before the end of the school year, too.



**Is your child realizing their potential in math?** Results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress show an alarming decline in math scores nationwide<sup>1</sup> – clear evidence of the toll the pandemic has taken on students. But there's plenty of time to turn things around with personalized math instruction at Mathnasium. A customized learning plan will focus on what your child needs to improve their math skills and build their confidence for the rest of the school year! <sup>1</sup>National Assessment of Educational Progress

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## CARMEL CLAY HISTORY SOCIETY SPRING TEA

Thirteen eighth grade students were selected to attend the Carmel Clay History Society Spring Tea on April 26th due in part to a grant from Clay Middle School's PTO. Social Studies Department Chair, Liana Giles loves connecting her students to the community and what better connection than young women exploring why women in leadership is important.

Throughout Women's History Month, Social Studies

classes explored how women have been an integral part of American history and the continued fight for social reform. The Spring Tea seemed a perfect opportunity for students to hear history firsthand, via Jane Reiman and Dottie Hancock, both past Carmel mayors. As well as, hearing where we are going through the plans of current Carmel mayor, Sue Finkham.

Students enjoyed a lovely afternoon of storytelling, introductions, and plans for the future.



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## SUMMER BOOK CHECKOUT



Clay Media Center  
Book Checkout  
June 26th @ 9:00 - 11:00 a.m.  
Follow us on Twitter  
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## FROM THE MEDIA CENTER

### Clay Media Center Volunteers Needed: 2024-2025

We will have 10-12 openings next year due to graduations and we will need your help! Volunteers serve on a bi weekly rotation but we also have a sub list that you can join. Volunteer duties are numerous; a few examples include student book check in/check out, book covering, media center displays and projects and shelving books. A background check through Carmel Clay Schools is required of all volunteers. If you are interested in joining our media center team please contact Angela Frazier at [claymediavolunteer@gmail.com](mailto:claymediavolunteer@gmail.com).

Have a great summer and happy reading!

### Recommended Summer Reads from the Media Specialist

[2024-2025 Young Hoosier Book Award Nominees](#)

[Middle Grade Summer Reading Recommendations](#)

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**317-773-5515**







## WALK TO CURE ARTHRITIS

The Walk to Cure Arthritis took place Friday, April 26th at Connor Prairie. Clay Middle School's very own Lisa Baker and Lilly C. were named honorees for this. They both have been making a difference with the Arthritis Foundation by raising funds for research to find better treatments for people who suffer with arthritis like they do. This was Lilly's 10th year participating in the walk and Lilly has raised over \$186,000 towards Peyton Manning Children's Hospital and the Arthritis Foundation over those years! Congratulations to Lisa and Lilly in all of your efforts for this year's Walk to Cure Arthritis!





# 12 *Believe in Your Greatness*

FINDING THE POWER OF **OUR** OUR STUDENTS... OUR PARENTS... AND OUR COMMUNITY

