



A LEGACY OF EXCELLENCE: KPS GRADUATES MATCH INTO MEDICAL RESIDENCIES

Each March, Match Week marks a defining moment for medical students across the country — a culmination of years of dedication, perseverance, and purpose. This year, at least four graduates of Kentwood Public Schools reached that milestone, earning placements in competitive residency programs as they continue their journeys to becoming physicians. While there may be additional KPS alumni celebrating Match Week successes, these are the stories we’ve had the opportunity to learn about with each reflecting the strong foundation and lasting impact of a Kentwood education.

For Quynh Tran, a 2017 graduate of East Kentwood High School (Explorer, Pinewood, Freshman Campus), Match Week represents the next step in a path defined by both academic excellence and a deep commitment to advocacy. After studying at the University of Michigan and Michigan State University’s College of Human Medicine, she distinguished herself through research, presentations, and leadership. She matched into an OB/GYN residency at Henry Ford Health in Detroit and plans to continue advancing women’s health and reproductive rights.

“My teachers nurtured the shy little girl who dreamed of becoming a doctor, and all these years later, here she is.”
-Quynh Tran

Quynh credits Kentwood Public Schools for helping shape both her success and her purpose. “Growing up in

Kentwood and attending KPS is one of the reasons why serving minority and under-resourced communities is so important to me,” she shared. “My teachers nurtured the shy little girl who dreamed of becoming a doctor, and all these years later, here she is.”

Gabrielle Dykhouse, a 2018 East Kentwood graduate (Endeavor, Challenger, Crestwood, Freshman Campus), also experienced a dream realized on Match Day. After

Continued on page 2...

BOND INFORMATION SHARED WITH COMMUNITY

There is less than one month to go before the May election where Kentwood Public Schools is asking voters to consider a bond proposal. If approved, the bond will provide funds for improvements across the district for items such as safety and security, enhancements to career and technical education offerings, a new middle school, mechanical upgrades to the ice arena, and improvements to fine arts facilities.

District leaders have been sharing information about the bond at a series of town hall meetings held across the district over the past couple of months.

More information, including informative videos, can be found at kentwoodbond.com.



A Legacy of Excellence: KPS Graduates Match into Medical Residencies

Continued from page 1

studying neuroscience at the University of Michigan she will graduate with her M.D. from Cornell University next month and matched into a highly competitive orthopedic surgery residency with Northwell Health in New York.

"Most of all, my education through KPS has made me open-minded. I know that I am an adaptable, curious, and empathetic individual because of the diversity that surrounded me growing up."

-Gabrielle Dykehouse

"It was surreal," she said of opening her letter, describing a moment that reflected years of hard work and the support of family and mentors. Gabrielle's passion for musculoskeletal health continues to guide her path, with hopes of specializing in orthopedic sports medicine.

She points to her KPS experience as a key foundation.

"Growing up with people from across the world...meant that I was equipped to work in the real world where not everyone has the same life experience," she explained. "Most of all, my education through KPS has made me open-minded. I know that I am an adaptable, curious, and empathetic individual because of the diversity that surrounded me growing up."



Jonathan Henry, a 2010 graduate of East Kentwood (Pinewood, Freshman Campus), matched into the

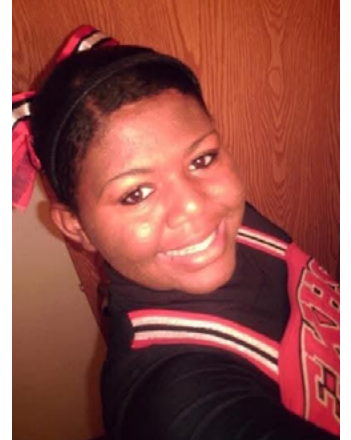
Harvard South Shore Psychiatry Residency Program. A former state champion athlete, his journey took him from Western Michigan University to Harvard, where he completed graduate studies and conducted clinical research, and then onto the American University of the Caribbean School of Medicine where he earned his medical degree.

Reflecting on Match Day, he described "a deep sense of gratitude, relief, and excitement." His future in psychiatry will focus on advancing equitable, evidence-based mental health care.

"Kentwood provided a strong foundation academically and personally," Jonathan said. "It helped instill the

work ethic, resilience, and confidence that have carried me through each stage of my journey."

For Brittany Childs, also a 2010 graduate (Brookwood, Valleywood, Freshman Campus), Match Week brought a powerful sense of full circle. After earning degrees in physiology and public health while balancing multiple jobs, she is completing medical school and has matched into a Family Medicine residency in Ohio.



"Matching into a residency program is the result of years of sacrifice, persistence, and faith," she shared. "It was a very emotional moment." She looks forward to serving patients across all stages of life while continuing to give back to communities in need.

She credits KPS for helping her believe in what was possible. "My time in Kentwood Public Schools helped build the foundation for the person I am today," she said. "The support of teachers, classmates, and the larger school community helped prepare me academically, but also taught me perseverance, responsibility, and the importance of continuing to strive for more."

Together, these four graduates represent more than individual success stories—they embody the enduring impact of a Kentwood education. From classrooms to careers in medicine, their journeys reflect KPS's commitment to Excellence and Equity in Education and continue a proud legacy of graduates making a difference in the world.

(Please scan the QR code to watch a video as we were able to share in Quynh's Match Day moment.)



EAST KENTWOOD WE THE PEOPLE TEAM HONORED AT STATE CAPITOL

East Kentwood's We the People team was recognized at the Michigan State Capitol for their recent state championship. State Representative Phil Skaggs presented the team with an official proclamation signed by himself, Senate Majority Leader Winnie Brinks, Governor Gretchen Whitmer, and Lieutenant Governor Garlin Gilchrist.

The team then participated in the 2026 We the People Showcase, hosted by the Michigan Center for Civic Education in the Anderson Building. Students practiced hearings in the Mackinac Room, working with senators, representatives, staff members, nonprofit leaders, and MCCE board members who served as judges and offered coaching to prepare them for the national finals.

Team members also met Michigan's new Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Glenn Maleyko, and connected with We the People teams from East Grand Rapids, Pinckney, and Howell. Throughout the day, students visited the offices of state Representatives to invite them to the event, putting their civic advocacy skills into action.

The visit offered hands-on civic education, celebrating the team's achievements while giving them the chance to practice their skills and engage with Michigan lawmakers. The team returned from the Capitol inspired and ready for the national competition.



STUDENT VOICE AND LEADERSHIP SHINE IN ROTARY RECOGNITION

Kentwood Public Schools is proud to recognize East Kentwood High School students Mohammad Shirzad and Juliette Islas as Rotary Students of the Month.

Mohammad has demonstrated strong leadership as captain of the varsity esports team, helping lead multiple state championship teams while fostering a positive and supportive environment. He plans to pursue engineering at the University of Michigan and hopes to become an entrepreneur.

Juliette serves as President of the Production Club and Executive Producer of the school news, leading a team of nearly 50 students while helping tell the stories of the EK community. Through her involvement in Educators Rising, National Honor Society, and volunteer work, she is passionate about supporting others and plans to pursue a career in education.

Both students exemplify leadership, service, and a commitment to excellence. We are proud to celebrate their achievements and the positive impact they continue to make.



EAST KENTWOOD JAZZ I NAMED MOST OUTSTANDING BAND AT WMU JAZZ FESTIVAL

East Kentwood High School's Jazz I ensemble has capped off a remarkable festival season with another major honor, earning the title of Most Outstanding Band at the Western Michigan University Jazz Festival.

The recognition marks a historic achievement for the group, as East Kentwood Jazz I took top honors at both the Central Michigan University Jazz Festival and the Western Michigan University Jazz Festival, the two largest high school jazz competitions in Michigan. Their success across both events highlights the ensemble's exceptional musicianship, dedication, and teamwork throughout the season.

Jazz I is directed by Michael Gozzard, whose leadership continues to guide the program to a high level of performance and recognition. Congratulations to the talented student musicians of East Kentwood Jazz!!



BUILDING ENVIRONMENTS WHERE STUDENTS FEEL SEEN, HEARD, AND VALUED

Kentwood Public Schools continues to strengthen its commitment to building safe, supportive, and relationship-centered learning environments through the work of our Restorative Practices Leads. Across the district, Restorative Practices Leads are supporting their buildings by modeling proactive relationship-building strategies, facilitating restorative conversations, and helping staff respond to conflict in ways that focus on accountability, reflection, and repairing harm. Their work helps create stronger connections between students and staff while reinforcing a culture where every student feels seen, heard, and valued.

Through staff meeting discussions, collaborative problem-solving, and ongoing learning opportunities, these leaders are helping teams deepen their understanding of restorative practices and apply them in meaningful ways. This work contributes to improved school climate, stronger relationships, and more supportive responses to student behavior.

We would like to highlight Hannah Barrett and Joe Dykstra, who recently shared their leadership and impactful strategies to their building staff. Their willingness to facilitate conversations and support staff learning demonstrates the powerful impact that building-based leadership can have in advancing restorative practices across our district. Way to go Hannah and Joe!



CREATING OPPORTUNITY BEYOND THE CLASSROOM: KPSEF SUPPORTS THE KIDS PROGRAM

At Kentwood Public Schools, opportunities for students extend far beyond the school day. Thanks to the support of the Kentwood Public Schools Education Foundation (KPSEF) and community partners, those opportunities continue to grow.

One of the most impactful programs KPSEF helps fund is the KIDS (Kentwood In-District Sports) Program, which provides affordable, high-quality after-school and summer experiences for thousands of KPS students each year. From athletics and fitness to STEM, arts, and enrichment classes, KIDS gives students the chance to explore new interests, build confidence, and stay connected in a safe, supportive environment.

While families contribute a small participation fee, the true cost of these programs is much greater. Support from KPSEF, along with partners like Amway, Corewell Health, and KPS staff, helps ensure programs remain accessible so no student is turned away due to financial need.

Each year, more than 6,000 student registrations are recorded across hundreds of classes, providing meaningful opportunities during critical out-of-school hours.

What makes the KIDS Program especially impactful is the people behind it. Nearly all classes are led by KPS teachers, coaches, and staff who bring passion, mentorship, and a deep commitment to student success. In these settings, students build confidence, form friendships, and develop important life skills like teamwork, perseverance, and problem-solving.

As one KPS educator shared, these programs create moments where students can “feel seen and valued,” fostering a sense of belonging that carries into the classroom and beyond.

Through the collective support of KPSEF, community partners, and KPS staff, the KIDS Program continues to expand access and create opportunities for every student to succeed because, when we invest in our students, we invest in the strength and future of our community.

To support the KIDS Program, visit www.kpsef.org/donate.



EAST KENTWOOD MOCK TRIAL RETURNS, TEAM HEADS TO STATE



After nearly a decade without a program, Mock Trial has returned to East Kentwood High School, and it is already seeing success. Fifteen students joined the team in September 2025, stepping into the courtroom-style competition for the first time in years.

The team recently competed in two regional tournaments in Leelanau County and Oakland County, with both groups performing strongly. One team finished in the top portion of a competitive regional field, while the other placed first and earned a spot at the state tournament. Only 12 of more than 75 teams across Michigan advance to the state competition, which is held in March in Lansing.

In mock trial, students take on the roles of attorneys and witnesses, presenting their cases before practicing lawyers and judges. The team practices several times each week to build courtroom skills such as questioning witnesses, understanding legal procedures, and delivering persuasive arguments. Head coach Marcus Miller praised the students' dedication, saying, "These students demonstrated a grasp of the law that

surpasses many law students and even practicing attorneys."

Students say the experience has helped them grow both in and out of the courtroom. Junior Townsend Moore shared, "Mock trial has improved my ability to public speak in high pressure situations." For many on the team, the program has also helped build strong relationships and a sense of teamwork as they prepare for the state competition.

REAL WORLD LEARNING IN ACTION: COOKING UP EXCELLENCE AT EAST KENTWOOD

Nearly two-and-a-half years ago, real-world learning for Kentwood Public Schools students reached a new level at East Kentwood High School with the opening of the new Culinary Arts Center.

Since then, the impact has been remarkable. Students are thriving in this state-of-the-art space, engaging in career and technical education (CTE) experiences that are shaping their daily learning and, for some, opening the door to future careers in the culinary arts.

East Kentwood has expanded its offerings with new, advanced coursework for students interested in culinary arts. In some cases, students can earn

college credit through the program, as well as industry-recognized certifications that create immediate opportunities for employment in the culinary field. Even more advanced courses and innovative program opportunities are envisioned for the future, continuing to expand what's possible for students and strengthening real-world learning experiences for years to come.

The Culinary Arts Center was made possible through a previous bond program, and its success reflects what we continue to hear from our community. Recent survey data shows that both families and students are eager to see even more career and technical education opportunities across our schools.

To see students in action, scan the QR code to watch a video featuring the Culinary Arts Center and hear directly from the teachers who bring this program to life.



EXPLORING THE WORLD THROUGH LANGUAGE AND SONG

At East Kentwood Freshman Campus, students in Madame Pieper's French classes recently participated in Manie Musicale, a March Madness-style competition featuring French-language music from around the world.

A global event reaching nearly one million students across more than 7,000 schools, Manie Musicale introduced students to a diverse playlist of 16 songs representing artists from regions such as Madagascar, Haiti, and Ivory Coast. In class, students listened to and analyzed songs, compared artists, and voted in each round, all while practicing their French.

Beyond language development, the experience encouraged students to explore culture, express their perspectives, and make connections across global communities. Through music and discussion, students gained a deeper understanding of both language and shared human experiences.

The competition concluded with a final vote before spring break, followed by a creative project highlighting students' favorite artists.

Manie Musicale was one example of the engaging, globally connected learning experiences taking place at the Freshman Campus which are helping students build skills while exploring the richness of the French-speaking world.



ENDEAVOR STUDENTS LEAD WITH HEART: A LESSON IN SERVICE

At Endeavor Elementary, excellence isn't just found in the classroom; it's found in the way our students serve their community. This March, our 4th and 5th-grade Student Council members turned a simple meeting into a massive community impact through their ongoing partnership with Hand2Hand (H2H).

What began as a conversation during a Community Schools Leadership Team meeting has evolved into the Student Council's hallmark project. Students spearheaded a fundraiser to give back to H2H and cover the transportation costs to go and serve in person.

The project culminated in a high-energy "packing day," where students prepared 1,118 bags of food for peers in need. Dave Feenstra, H2H School Specialist, noted that the students represented Kentwood Public Schools exceptionally well, impressing adult volunteers with their polite and hardworking attitudes.

"Our students will be talking about this for months," says Principal Mark Bea. "They know their work helps neighbors in need, and that sense of purpose is a vital part of their education." By modeling service and gratitude, Endeavor continues to prove that our students are not just learners, but compassionate leaders.



CRESTWOOD BAND SHOWCASES EXCELLENCE AT REGIONAL FESTIVAL

The Crestwood Middle School Band recently made history with its first performance at the Music for All Great Lakes Concert Band Festival, held at Eastern Michigan University in Pease Auditorium.

Under the direction of Stephen Chitta, the ensemble—composed of dedicated 7th and 8th grade musicians—performed an ambitious six-piece program, showcasing their growth and talent on a prestigious stage. Notably, Crestwood was the only middle school band selected to perform at the festival.

While the event did not include ratings, students received valuable feedback from nationally recognized clinicians and gained a memorable performance experience. The trip also included a stop in Ypsilanti, giving students time to relax and celebrate their accomplishment together.

This milestone performance capped off an outstanding season for the Crestwood Band, including recent Superior ratings, and was made possible through the support of staff, families, and chaperones.

EXCELLENCE IN ACTION: EMPOWERING STUDENTS THROUGH PEER-TO-PEER MATH INTERVENTION

At Crestwood Middle School, the definition of “Excellence in Education” is evolving. No longer only about the instruction delivered from the front of the classroom; it is about the powerful academic discourse happening between the desks. Now in its third year, our Peer-to-Peer Math Intervention has officially evolved from a small 8th-grade pilot into a school-wide culture of academic mentorship.

Our math department, in partnership with our Instructional Coach, developed a system where students serve as math tutors for their peers. They analyze data to identify students who have demonstrated mastery of specific mathematical standards and skills. These “experts” are then paired with peers who are still working toward proficiency in those exact areas. The student leaders become trained “academic coaches” who help their classmates navigate complex concepts in a relatable, low-stakes environment. Through the power of “peer assist”, we have created a culture where asking for help is celebrated and mastering a mathematical standard is a collective win.

This targeted approach ensures that mastery is celebrated, and math confidence is built. Being selected as a tutor is a badge of honor, acknowledging a student’s hard work and deep understanding of the curriculum, while tutees feel more comfortable taking risks and asking questions in a peer-led setting. “Seeing a student’s ‘lightbulb moment’ happen because a classmate explained it in a new way is the ultimate example of a thriving learning community,” says Instructional Coach, Brianne Daye.



As we move into the final marking period of the year, we remain committed to innovative interventions that prove when we invest in student leadership, we achieve excellence together.



KENTWOOD PUBLIC SCHOOLS School Calendar 2025-26

- Mar 4..... ½ Day K-12 / PD for Staff
- Apr 2..... ½ Day K-12/KEA Records Day (staff non-report)
- Apr 3 - Apr 10.... No School / Spring Break
- May 25 No School / Memorial Day
- June 4..... ½ Day K-12 /KEA Records Day (staff non-report)
- June 5..... Last Day of School - Half Day for Students & Staff

School	Start	Dismissal	Half Day Dismissal
Elementary	9:00 AM	4:05 PM	12:15 PM
Middle	8:19 AM	3:04 PM	11:35 AM
EKFC & EKHS	7:35 AM	2:20 PM	10:50 AM
Crossroads	7:34 AM	2:10 PM	10:40 AM

MARCH							APRIL						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7				1	2	3	4
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
29	30	31					26	27	28	29	30		

MAY/JUNE						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	1	2	3	4	5	6

No School For Students
 Half Day

Kentwood Board of Education
KENTWOOD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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KENTWOOD, MI 49508

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KENTWOOD PARKS & RECREATION OFFERS PROGRAMS FOR KIDS AGES 1-15!

STARTING IN APRIL:

- Moovin' & Groovin'
- Youth Lyrical Dance
- Martial Arts
- Sculpting
- Musical Theatre
- Zumba Kids
- Guitar Lessons
- Keyboard Piano Lessons
- Music & Motion
- Little Dribblers Clinic & Games
- Tiny Sparks Basketball
- Kids in the Kitchen: Sandwich Masters

COMING IN MAY:

- STEM Sprouts & Explorers
- Sports Around the World
- Make Mom A Gift
- Twisted Gems
- Slap Shot Street Hockey
- Fishing 101
- And More!



CITY OF KENTWOOD
PARKS & RECREATION

REGISTER ONLINE AT
KENTWOOD.US/PARKS

