



EKHS LAUNCHES GRADUATES FOR SUCCESS

Under a clear blue sky with a bit of a chill in the air, East Kentwood High School celebrated the class of 2023 at Falcon Stadium on May 25. In the presence of thousands of family members, friends, and proud Kentwood Public Schools staff, 592 graduates took part in the ceremony. There was plenty to celebrate as the graduates successfully finished their careers at Kentwood Public Schools and looked with anticipation toward their futures.



Fifty-nine of the EK class of '23 graduated Cum Laude, with a grade point average within the 3.5 to 3.79 range. Forty-seven students graduated Magna Cum Laude, with a grade point average in the 3.8 to 3.99 range. Seventy-six students graduated Summa Cum Laude, completing their courses of study at East Kentwood High School with a grade point average of 4.0 or higher. Collectively these students demonstrated excellence in academics.

East Kentwood graduates have gained a multicultural education that prepares them to thrive in a diverse world

The evening kicked off with the traditional procession of students into a packed Falcon Stadium as the strains of

“Pomp and Circumstance” filled the air. The ceremonies began with students and guests watching [this video highlighting the essence of what it means to be a student at East Kentwood High School](#). Following the video several graduates, staff members, and East Kentwood Principal Omar Bakri delivered speeches.

The theme of the evening was on the diverse yet inclusive nature of East Kentwood High School and the importance of the KPS vision of Excellence and Equity in Education. In recapping the evening, EKHS Principal Omar Bakri noted, “With a multi-cultural education, East Kentwood graduates are prepared to thrive and compete in a diverse and changing world.”



In his speech to the graduates, Bakri urged graduates to go boldly forward into their futures, to share their voices, while standing firmly on the foundation of the unique education they received in Kentwood Public Schools. He encouraged the graduates to use their experiences at East Kentwood High School to further embrace differences while championing inclusivity.

Bakri is confident that the graduates will be successful.

Continued on page 3...



PINEWOOD EXCELS IN REGIONAL AND CONFERENCE TRACK MEETS

In mid-May, the Pinewood Middle School Boys and Girls Track and Field Team competed in the Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA) Middle School Zone 6 Regional Track Meet. This event was the pilot track meet held by the MHSAA for middle schools to compete in state-wide track competitions. Both the Girls and Boys teams from Pinewood were crowned champions and brought home the regional trophies! Also in mid-May, the Pinewood 8th grade boys and the 7th grade girls track teams both won the MKO conference championship!

Congratulations to the Pinewood Middle School student-athletes and coaches for these amazing accomplishments! Go Falcons!!



CROSSROADS CELEBRATES STUDENTS AT GRADUATION

Nearly 60 students from Crossroads Alternative High School celebrated the completion of their high school careers at a joyful ceremony held in mid-May at the Kentwood Fine Arts Auditorium. The ceremony took place in front of proud family members, friends, and staff from Crossroads and Kentwood Public Schools. Speakers included students, staff members, and Principal Ian Gibson.

The ceremony marked the conclusion of an innovative year of instruction at Crossroads where intentional work by building leaders and staff brought numerous hands-on experiences to students at the school. This work included partnering with leaders and organizations in the community, providing students opportunities to gain work experience that will positively impact them beyond graduation. West Michigan Center for Arts and Technology and Grand Rapids Community College are just two examples of these partnerships.

One highlight of the evening was when [this video, created by our friends and partners at AVES Films, was shared which highlighted Crossroads, its students, and its staff.](#) Another highlight, of course, was when students proudly walked across the stage and received their diplomas to the warm cheers of those in attendance.

"I'm so excited for our students graduating this evening," commented Crossroads Principal Ian Gibson. "This year I've seen, firsthand, students working in authentic settings in various industries out in the community. It has motivated them and helped to prepare them for their next steps beyond tonight's ceremony. They have earned this celebration."



VALLEYWOOD CELEBRATES FIRST GAMES IN THE VALLEY

In May, Valleywood wrapped up the last day of MSTEP state testing for our 8th grade students, and celebrated our first ever “Games in The Valley”!

Fourth hour classes divided into teams and created team names, logos, and banners. The teams competed in one of nine events: Class T-shirt Design, Puzzle Contest, Marshmallow Challenge, Shark Tank, Duct Tape Fashion Show, Dance Battle, STEM Challenge, and two Athletic Combos.

Games in The Valley was a fantastic kickoff to other end of year celebrations for our 8th graders. An additional celebratory event was the 8th Grade Banquet, an exciting culmination of middle school prior to advancing to EK’s Freshman Campus.

Throughout Games in The Valley, students were excited, engaged, and exhibited true Falcon Pride! Many students commented on how much they enjoyed the afternoon and all the end of the year middle school celebrations.



TO THE LUNCHROOM AND BEYOND!

Kentwood Public Schools’ youngest learners are preparing for elementary school! In May, students at Hamilton Early Childhood Center and the preschool classrooms at Explorer Elementary transitioned from eating meals in their classroom, family style, to learning how to have their meals in the cafeteria with their peers. This was a big step for these young learners and is another step to prepare them for elementary school. The countdown is on for these students to come to an elementary school near you!!

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Continued from page 1

“The class of 2023,” he says, “is truly a ‘throw-back’ class. These students embodied togetherness and participated in every extracurricular activity and club that East Kentwood has to offer.”

Once the speeches concluded, students enjoyed their moment in the spotlight, hearing their names announced, and walking proudly across the field to receive their diplomas as graduates of East Kentwood. The students’ joy was apparent as they moved their tassels from one side to the other, signifying their transition from students to graduates.

While the ceremony marked the end of the graduates’ time at East Kentwood High School they will continue to be connected to the school and our district. “Graduation is our seniors’ last day as high school students,” says Principal Bakri. “However, make no mistake about it, it is not their last day as a Falcon. The diplomas they received solidify their bond to EK, and, from this day forward, they shall always, and forever, be Falcons.”

[Click here to view more photos of the graduation ceremony plus a video look back at the evening, all from our friends and partners at AVES Films.](#)



PBIS COLOR RUN

Calling all Bowen Arrows! Dress up and celebrate the happiest one-mile walk/run of the school year! The first annual Bowen Color Run marked the end of our school year and our highly successful PBIS program.

Wearing our white Bowen Arrow t-shirts, students ran/walked around the designated course. At each quarter mile marker, the staff doused students in vivid colors of powder. We celebrated their positive behavior choices with music, dance breaks, plenty of colors and loads of laughter. Our students felt honored for being respectful, being responsible and making safe choices throughout the 2022-2023 school year.

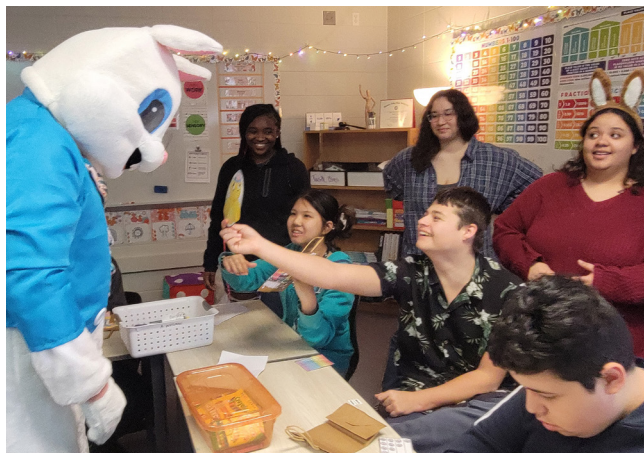
And, that was not all! Once the one-mile walk/run was over, the fun continued with a PTC sponsored ice cream cart. The beautiful sunshine, positive attitudes and cold treats made for a joy-filled and colorful experience our Bowen Arrows won't soon forget.



EKFC CELEBRATES STUDENTS OF THE MONTH, CAREER OPPORTUNITIES, AND SUPERBUDDIES

Although scholars and staff at East Kentwood's Freshman Campus have enjoyed celebrating various successes throughout the 2022/2023 school year; we want to celebrate and highlight some of their most recent accomplishments and activities. Our scholars have invested a great deal of time and effort in their classwork, extracurricular programs, and relationship building. For the month of April, our teachers had the opportunity to nominate scholars who have demonstrated a commitment to being compassionate individuals throughout the year. We are so grateful for each of our Student of the Month recipients this year and know they will continue to show Falcon PRIDE Forever!

East Kentwood's Freshman Campus hosted their second annual Glow Up Conference where 220 young women attended, excited to learn. More than twenty volunteer speakers shared their time and talents highlighting traditional and non-traditional education and career paths for our young ladies. The vision for the conference was two-fold: Women empowering young women to see themselves in various career paths to jumpstart their thinking about future goals and encouraging our scholars to grow in stamina and self-esteem. Our young ladies were engaged and excited throughout the day. We look forward to hosting this event again in the future.



Some of our students have partnered with Crossroads for our Superbuddies program this year. The students have fostered amazing connections and celebrated so many things throughout the year together. In early April, our friends from Crossroads worked with our students to celebrate spring. While the activities were a big hit, the highlight of the day was seeing the students' faces light up when the Easter Bunny visited campus! This was a great chance for our students to build authentic connections and foster a better understanding of one another. We look forward to furthering this connection and continuing to see amazing growth in many of our scholars.



BROOKWOOD SMOOTHIE BOOTCAMP

Put down the Hot Cheetos, Skittles, candy bars, and Takis and eat something HEALTHY!

At Brookwood, we are extremely grateful for our partnership with Grand Rapids African American Health Institute (GRAAHI). Near the end of this school year, 5th grade students engaged in a six-week "Smoothie Bootcamp." During this bootcamp, students created nutritious smoothies consisting of both familiar and unfamiliar fruits and vegetables. Our students engaged in healthy and clean food choices. They LOVED the Smoothies! Students also enjoyed experimenting and creating their own recipes.

At the conclusion of bootcamp, students received a blender to prepare healthy smoothies for their families at home. Thank you GRAAHI for investing in our community and students.

CRESTWOOD CELEBRATES GROWTH!

During the month of May, Crestwood celebrated our NWEA growth with a Kona Ice party! Students who met their individual growth goals in both Math and ELA were invited to join a party complete with the Kona Ice truck. Students enjoyed music and delicious shaved ice in any flavor of their choice...some even tried multiple flavors! One student said, "This made taking my time on that test so worth it!" Students who met their individual growth goal in at least one area also received a special treat.

We are so proud of the growth our students have shown this year. Their hard work, paired with the instruction and encouragement of our teachers, led to many reasons to celebrate at Crestwood.



REGISTRATION FOR SCHOOL

Please make sure to register your child for the upcoming 2023 - 2024 school year. All Kentwood Public Schools students, including returning students, new students, and school of choice students, who plan to attend a KPS school for the 2023 - 2024 school year in grades Young 5's and Kindergarten through 12th grade, must complete an online registration.

To register your child(ren) for next school year, please go to <https://www.kentwoodps.org/registration/olr/>. If you are a current family, you will login to your existing ParentVUE account to begin the registration process. New families will first create a ParentVUE account to start the registration process. Please follow the directions to complete each section and upload the needed documents. Everyone who registers is required to show proof of residency.

If parents have any questions during this process, please contact your child's school where the office team will be able to answer questions and offer support.

FIRST CAREER DAY AT TOWNLINE

Townline Elementary students had a rich day of learning in May with an eye on their futures as the school held its 1st Annual College and Career Day.

The day unfolded in two parts. In the morning, representatives from local colleges, universities and technical schools came to Townline to present a college fair for our students. Students had the opportunity to visit booths from participating schools to learn what each had to offer and to ask questions about attending college.

In the afternoon, the focus shifted to careers. Dozens of professionals were on hand at the school to present what advantages various careers have to offer. Classrooms of students rotated through the presentations and learned about possible career options, including careers in real estate, law, and communications.



SUPERBUDDIES ENJOY AN UNFORGETTABLE DAY AT THE ZOO!

Crossroads Superbuddies, along with their friends in the ASD and MOCI Programs at East Kentwood's Freshman Campus, ended their year with an unforgettable day at Boulder Ridge Wild Animal Park!

Students and staff toured the zoo, learned about different animal species, fed animals, and even had their own personal animal encounter with a baby kangaroo, snake, and lizard!

The day was filled with joy, fellowship, smiles, and laughter! This partnership continues to flourish, and the relationships between Crossroads and ASD/MOCI students and staff becomes stronger each year!



IMPORTANT 2023 - 2024 CALENDAR DATES

As we work to put the finishing touches on the calendar for the upcoming school year, here are some dates to keep in mind:

- Start date for students: August 21
- Thanksgiving Break: November 22 - 24
- Winter Break: Begins at the end of school day December 22, 2023; School resumes on January 8, 2024
- Midwinter Break: February 19 - 20
- Spring Break: March 29 - April 7



ENDEAVOR CELEBRATES HARD WORK, GRIT, AND READING SUCCESS!

In May, Endeavor Elementary celebrated students who participated in Lindamood-Bell reading intervention groups this school year. To celebrate their hard work, grit, and reading growth, students and families enjoyed a treat of donuts and juice before awards were handed out to each student. Students also selected a free book to take home with them for the summer!

Lindamood-Bell, a reading program used in the district, teaches students to decode and read words. Almost 60 students in grades one through five took part in reading intervention groups this year at Endeavor. There was a great turnout of parents and family members who came to support their students at the celebration. We are so proud of our students' hard work and reading growth this year!

HAVE A GREAT SUMMER!

