

BUTLER SCHOOL DISTRICT 53

# newsline

Summer 2016

## COMMENCEMENT 2016

# “Butler will always have a place in our hearts”

During commencement exercises, Butler Junior High 8th grade students spoke of the bond and community they shared and the privilege it was to be part of Butler District 53.

“Brook Forest and Butler will always have a place in our hearts,” recounted Lexi Hui, Student Service Board Vice President. “We have had lots of opportunities to explore who we are and who we want to be.”

Nikhil Patel echoed that the school was like a family. “We have worked together as a family would, helping each other and making sure no one gets left behind.”

While many students have been in District 53 for nine years, Mia Gaddis, Student Government President, said she was welcomed when she moved to the District in 8th grade. “An advantage to being in such a small school district is that we were able to make a connection with every person in our grade,” she noted.

Indeed, the 59 students shared something extraordinary – years of fellowship, learning and fun. Yet, while students are challenged, at the same time, they are not afraid to take risks. That shows, said Principal Amy Read, “that our students felt safe to learn and grow in their very own exceptional way.”

Taking risks and supporting each other allowed the class to excel, said students in noting some highlights of their three years at Butler Junior High.



- Butler Junior High was named a Blue Ribbon School for the second time,
- They were the first 7th grade group to go on the Philadelphia field trip,
- Broadcast Journalism and STEM classes made their debut,
- The MathCounts Teams qualified for State competition all three years,
- Science Olympiad Teams qualified for State for the last two years and won two events at State this year,
- Leadership band, a student-led and run band, began this year,
- The Girls Volleyball Team went undefeated in 2015-16 and celebrated as conference champs,

“One thing I will never forget about this school is making new memories every single day,” said Mia.

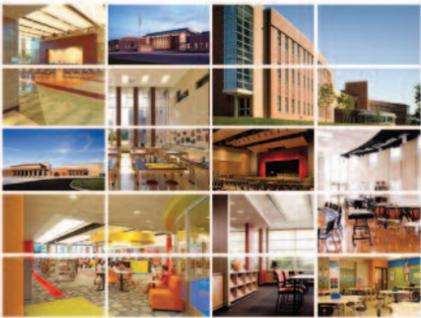
At far right are Citizenship awards winners XX and XX. Academic award winners are at right, XX and XX.

## Exploremore Day



Exploremore Day, a cherished tradition at Brook Forest, featured dozens of sports, activities and crafts to try out on the last day of school. At top left, clockwise, XX meets a giant lizard; XX and XX build and ace lego cars; XX tests a fire truck and XX and XX, learn dance and cheerleading.

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2015-16

## Good News

### Sign up now!

Before and after school care will be offered at Brook Forest School beginning in August. Called *Dolphin Station*, the program is a cooperative venture between Butler School District 53 and the Oak Brook Park District. Registration is open and online at [www.obparks.org](http://www.obparks.org). The program requires a minimum number of participants to be offered in the fall. If there is sufficient enrollment, the program will be held 7 a.m. - 8:15 a.m. before school and 3:30 - 6 p.m. after school. The program will include physical activity, play, games, homework/reading time, after school snacks, arts and crafts, and socialization under the supervision of qualified, caring staff.

### GeoBee winner

Congratulations to Adi Badlani, who finished 11th in the state in the Illinois State Geography Bee. The contest was held in April at the College of DuPage.

### Science Olympiad at State

The Science Olympiad Team had a phenomenal year, according to coaches, and finished 11th in the state.

### National and State Spanish Exam winners

Students participate in the Spanish Exam at the national level and Chicago chapter. On the national level, 44 students earned Gold Medal status by achieving 95th percentile and above. In addition, 24 students won prizes in the Chicago chapter. Chicago chapter winners are Shivani Rao, Sophia Lee, Rohan Tolani, Jui Khankari, Shiven Shah, Rhea Kumar, Athena Koulouris, Kavin Anand, Alisha Kumar, Luke Berg, Jay Amin, Adi Badlani, Aanika Atluri, Alivia Gianatasio, Yahya Junejo, Merwin D'souza, Savita Sundar, Zayn Bajwa, Arjun Krishnan, Carolina Rico, Gaia Quaranta, Tolu Akin, Alyssa Lee and Ansh Shah.

## The "more the merrier" when it comes to both schools' musicals

### BROOK FOREST

Music teacher Rich Sobak has a motto for musicals at Brook Forest – "the more the merrier."

So, he chose *Willy Wonka Kids*, which allowed for an unlimited Oompa Loompa chorus and a large supporting cast. But it also turned out to be the most complicated musical at Brook Forest because of the 20 different scenes and four major set changes. An unprecedented company of 62 4th and 5th grade students joined the production and an additional 30 Butler Junior High students volunteered to paint the set designed by Nina Angelillo.

"It was a real whole district endeavor this year," said Sobka, who retired in May. "Many of the junior high students came to see the evening performance so that they could see the sets they helped to create."

The main characters embraced their roles enthusiastically, memorizing lines the second week of rehearsal. "That made stage blocking and choreography much easier than usual," he said.

The reviews were glowing, said Principal Kelly Voliva. "Honestly, this could not have been a better 'final musical' at Brook Forest for Mr. Sobak," she said. "It was like professional children's theater," she said.

It was a proud moment for the veteran music teacher. "I was bursting with happiness and pride from the performances of all the actors and stage crew."

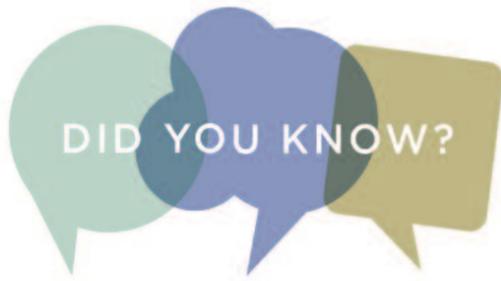
### BUTLER JUNIOR HIGH

In *Beauty and the Beast* 35 students were on stage in the junior high production and six worked behind the scenes as crew.

The students chose the musical by debating the pros and cons of their choices. One negative of this musical was the costumes. They were elaborate and could be a challenge for the young actors who were trying to put their stamp on the character. Fortunately, said teacher and director Jennifer Vargoeko, students, parents and Mary Haley teamed up to work on the costumes. Students made the gold hardware in one number.

"The students were involved in everything from Day One," she said. "They wanted to make it the best show yet. They were never satisfied with just learning melodies, they wanted to incorporate harmonies. They expected and encouraged each other to fully develop each character," said Vargoeko.





**Students at Butler Junior High have more than 25 school-sponsored activities/athletics to get involved in; Brook Forest students have 17. This is in addition to PTO after school activities, field trips and social events. With this wide offering, the goal is to encourage well-rounded children who are involved in academics, the arts, sports and service.**

### Butler Junior High

- Science Olympiad
- Intramurals
- Math Team
- Book Club
- Science Fair
- Spelling Bee
- Choir
- Band
- Student Council
- Chess Club/Game Club
- Student Service Board
- Musical
- Rotary Essay Contest
- Yearbook
- Geography Bee
- Fall Play
- Student Council

- Girls/Boys Basketball
- Girls/Boys Volleyball
- Girls/Boys Cross Country
- Girls/Boys Soccer
- Girls Soccer
- Girls/Boys Track
- Girls/Boys Swimming
- Dance Team

### Brook Forest

- 4th-5th grade musical
- Homework Club
- Draw Squad
- Lego Club
- Student Council
- Yearbook
- Band
- Choir
- Wordmaster
- Rocket Club
- STEAM
- Spelling Bee
- Reading Night
- Art Studio
- 2nd-3rd grade musical
- Dissection Club
- STEM
- Athletics

## COMMUNITY SERVICE

# “Passion and selflessness”

Some of life’s most important lessons aren’t learned in the classroom in Butler School District 53. Across the school community – from student groups and the parent community to the PTO, faculty and board, service to others is a top priority.

For instance, on a rainy day this spring, 60-some students from Brook Forest Student Council packed meals to give to people in Uganda, Nicaragua and other impoverished areas across the globe. Sixty-some students were involved, wearing hairnets and scooping up food and sealing bags and working in teams in the Aurora center of Feed My Starving Children.

They learned some of life’s most important lessons: awareness, compassion, respect, responsibility, gratitude and empowerment.

On another day, teachers joined PTO members in a May walk and race to help fight breast cancer. It was the 6th annual Pink 5K Run/Walk with the Oak Brook Park District.

Still another, students from each homeroom in Butler Junior High School contributed cake mixes, cards, plates and other sundries so that the school’s Student Service Board could assemble birthday bags for needy children.

While student groups – Student Councils at both schools and Service Board at Butler Junior High – conduct the bulk of service activities, others projects are run by individuals and the PTO.

One popular service project is Brook Forest’s annual Jump Rope for Heart. The families raised \$13,000 this year for the American Heart Association. “Our families are so generous,” said Health and Fitness Week Director and PE Teacher Todd Beyer. “Each year, families surpass the previous year’s fundraising mark.”

“We’ve really made a tremendous impact for others,” said Lisa Owen, who sponsors Brook Forest Student Council with fellow 5th Grade Teacher Ellen Wozny. Most projects mesh with the school calendar – collecting Halloween Candy and giving it to the needy, collecting mittens and shoes during the winter months. Students also raise money and donate it to causes that they research and vote on. In February, they declared one Friday “Bubble Gum Day” and sold gum to students. Money from that project went to Good Steps, an organization helping those on the autism spectrum.

Each year, students vote on where to send funds that are not earmarked for special projects. Last year, they voted to purchase Apple TVs for Brook Forest classrooms.

Similarly, the Butler Junior High Service Board



plans one project a month and meets each week at lunchtime to map out their plans. Their goal is to help the school, the local community and the needy nationally and globally. Their work isn’t just raising money but performing service as well. One notable project was developing a book drive for the needy, which was tied to a book swap for students. Globally, they raised money through Global Giving to provide service dogs to war veterans.

“The kids show a real passion, and selflessness in wanting to help students at Butler as well as people around the world,” said Service Board Sponsor and Language Arts Teacher Melissa Zaniewski. “In doing so, they embody Butler’s model of caring for others.”

## Goals of service

- 1. Awareness.** Learning about concerns and causes half a world away opens up their awareness and causes to look away from themselves,
- 2. Compassion.** It helps increase compassion exponentially,
- 3. Respect.** It reinforces the message that no matter what you look like and where you’re from, you have the right to respect and basic needs,
- 4. Responsibility.** It helps children to believe that “it’s up to all of us” to help when someone is in need,
- 5. Gratitude.** It reinforces being grateful and to see a different perspective,
- 6. Empowerment.** It helps children realize that they can affect change,

# YEAR IN REVIEW

## CURRICULUM

- Implemented Reading and Writing Workshop models to further students' higher order reading and writing skills,
- Launched a new broadcast studio at Butler Junior High, giving students real life experiences on camera and behind the scenes,
- Launched a new STEM program at the junior high where students can have hands-on experiences in science, math, engineering and technology,
- Successfully reported on the results of new test scores, called PARCC. Butler students ranked 2nd in the state

## STAFFING

- Reviewed current staffing and implemented a new plan for next year that will incorporate a Teacher on Assignment for curriculum, instruction, assessment and professional growth.

## OPERATIONS

- Implemented stagger start and end times at each school to ease difficulties in dropping off students.
- Developed a new school calendar for the current year, which maximized student-learning time, added more professional growth time for teachers and dedicated evening time for parent-teacher conferences.

## FINANCES

- Reviewed long-term financial projections. The District continues to be in a good financial position and plans to put away \$500,000 a year to maintain the aging buildings.
- Continued the Board's practice of instituting balanced budgets despite decreased support from federal and state revenue sources,
- Retained the highest rating from Standards and Poors, boasted one of the lowest tax rates in the state and maintains a small fund balance.

## BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

- Approved a plan to add a vestibule off the gym at Butler Junior High to increase safety of students waiting for buses and parents. Improved the flow of traffic by adding a roadway, and improved the visitor entrance to the District office (see story at right).

## TECHNOLOGY

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## GOVERNANCE

- Assembled as a Board XX times for regular business meetings, XX times for committee of the whole meetings and dozens more times in committee meetings. In fact, board members shared 14 other year-long assignments, ranging from PTO liaison, committee members and Illinois Association of School Board representative.

## PTO

- Donated nearly \$50,000 in supplemental gifts to the schools. This included interactive Smart Boards, performance microphones, projectors, other technology and buddy benches. This is in addition to the nearly \$50,000 already donated toward field trips and special events like Exploremore Day, Sock Hops, assemblies and sports programs, among others.

# Summer construction



You may have noticed construction at Butler Junior High this summer. To improve the safety and security of students using the gym for after school sports, events and activities, a vestibule is being built off the gym this summer. The work will also include new driveways and additional parking on the south side of the school and an improved visitor entrance to the District office.

The vestibule will create a secure area for students waiting for pick up after school. It will also allow a place for visiting teams to assemble before and after games and matches.

Before, students waited outside or propped open the doors. It became a problem to supervise students, for students to visually see parents pull-up and to keep the gym efficiently cooled or heated. It also mixed visiting team bus traffic with car traffic. None of these issues met current standards for school safety and energy efficiency.

"The plan will not only improve the safety and security of students during after school activities, but it will be more energy efficient and improve the aesthetics of the building," said Business Manager Dr. Sandra Martin.

The plan also requires cars to exit by the front of the building onto York Road and provides green space in front of the vestibule. There were four bids for the work, all within one percent of costs. The Board approved a bid for \$2.32 million to the lowest responsible bidder.

Work began the day after school released for the summer. It should be completed in October.

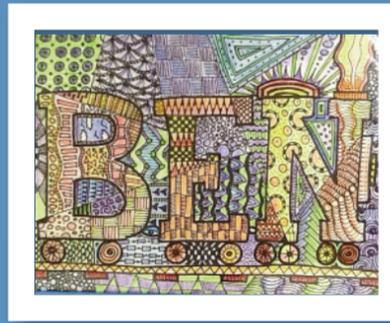
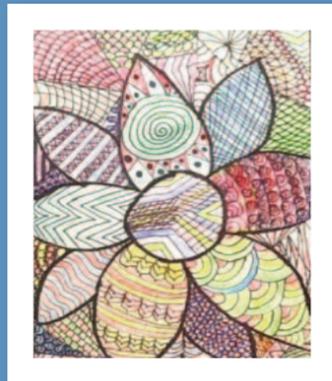
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[www.Butler53.com](http://www.Butler53.com)

## Art Board

Butler District 53 students display their artwork on [artsonia.com](http://artsonia.com)  
 Pictured here (from l to r) are 3rd and 4th grade free choice projects.



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