Indian Creek Kicks Off Bond Issue Campaign

A crowd of community members turned out for Indian Creek’s campaign kick-off meeting to brainstorm ideas supporting the construction and renovation of school buildings.

Dozens of parents, teachers and other school officials gathered at Crossroads Christian Church on March 8 to discuss ways of increasing participation at the polls since an attempt last fall failed by less than 200 votes. The district recently placed a 6.1-mill measure on the May 8 primary election ballot to secure financing for the updates and the push is on now to attract more voters—namely parents—to make a decision and bring the plan into fruition.

Superintendent Dr. T.C. Chappelear explained that the funding would help construct a new high school and elementary school in Wintersville to replace outdated facilities, while Hills Elementary in Mingo Junction would receive improvements. Dr. Chappelear said the new buildings were much needed in light of antiquated equipment and current security factors.

“The master plan has not changed,” he said. “We’re still looking at renovating Hills. We’re still looking at building a new high school. We’re still looking at building a new elementary school.”

He explained that the millage decreased from last fall’s total of 6.49 to 6.1 because of a slight increase in taxable millage and it was cheaper to borrow funding. The project also increased by $700,000 in order to meet new international building codes.

“We have the same need. If you follow the school district, you see we really struggle. The buildings are getting older and harder to repair and buildings that were built in the 40s, 50s and 60s had school security, but it was different then. We feel it’s extremely important.”

Among the main talking points were that the two Wintersville schools would be demolished and the new high school would be located on the current campus, while the new elementary school would be built at the current district office location on Bantam Ridge Road. Hills Elementary also would be renovated to a more modernized facility to better serve its students. The State of Ohio will contribute $18,055,290 towards the project and the local portion would equal $45.7 million. Taxpayer costs would break down to $17.79 per month or $13.34 per month under the Homestead Exemption based on valuations of a home costing $100,000. Moreover, Kettlewell Stadium and Indian Creek Middle School will not be affected by the project but the Bantam Ridge Sports Fields will be moved to an as-yet-unnamed site.

Officials said the new and updated buildings would provide enhanced educational opportunities with integrated technology and a flexible design to provide a modern education, plus it would prepare students for a changing world, allow for great staff flexibility and collaboration and program offerings and also promote a positive atmosphere to improve academic performance. Additionally, it would address student safety and security with vestibules to monitor entering guests and improved traffic safety and state-of-the-art technology to provide lockdown in the event of an intruder. If approved, buildings could open during the 2021-22 school year based on the construction timeline.

The consensus of the meeting was to get out into the community and share information.
ICHGS Engineering Design Team Places Eighth at CRCC

Students in Barbara Turner’s engineering and design class at Indian Creek High School recently gained accolades for their invention during a regional contest.

The team of seniors Daniel Pergi and Garret Callahan and juniors Trent Bolek and Zach Barnett earned eighth place out of 40 schools for their Creekland Amusement Park project during the 17th Annual Chain Reaction Contraption Contest, which was hosted by the Carnegie Science Center and Westinghouse Electric Company on Dec. 7. The competition is open to students in grades 9-12 and is one of the events highlighted during National Engineers Week. It also intends to foster an interest in engineering by challenging students to create a machine that will accomplish a specific task using a series of steps.

Students were required to submit a preliminary design drawing and a series of progress photos showing the machine’s evolution, then build a machine accomplishing the assigned task. The exhibit included a minimum of 20 steps following the theme “Weigh It!” and incorporated basic principles of physics such as gravity and kinetic energy. Turner said she had divided her class into groups to work on their projects between September and December and two teams attended the competition. All of the entries were then judged upon their success and presentation.

“The top eight went to the finals and were judged by a team of engineers. They had to have a theme and chose the Creekland Amusement Park,” Turner added, saying a second team of Keith Maple, Evan Coppa, Aaron Robinson and Parker Mazik also competed and she was proud of all of her students.

“I was very happy,” she commented, adding that it was the third time that ICHS participated in the contest.

Meanwhile, the top teams also got a chance to display their projects at the Carnegie Science Center during the Engineer the Future program on Feb. 22-24. The event, which was powered by the EQT Foundation, helped attendees learn different types of engineering by engaging in hands-on activities, meeting local professionals and viewing presentations at more than 40 event tables.

CAMPAIGN (Continued from Page 1)

...with parents. Shea McMahon of SHP, the project manager for the district, said only 40 percent of voters last fall were parents of Indian Creek students. Of those, a majority were parents of high schoolers.

McMahon shared statistics on the project and voter registration, saying construction costs are likely to increase by 3 to 5 percent every calendar year due to material and building prices. He added that information from the Jefferson County Board of Elections showed how and when people voted, which was the most important, and any assertions people had about the issue went out the window in November.

“During a presidential election, there is an 80- to 90-percent turnout. Now during a governor’s election, there is a 40-percent turnout. We need to focus on the people who are going to stay home and not battle to change people’s minds. Let’s motivate the people who do care,” he continued. “This is the No. 1 statistic: About 39 percent of parents voted in the election. Three out of five people stayed home. Turnout is essential in passing an issue. If half of those people had voted, we would have won by 44 votes.”

McMahon suggested speaking to community groups and writing letters to the editor in area newspapers to help the cause. Meanwhile, Dr. Chappelear said applications were available for absentee ballots and information would be offered at school events, plus he would speak to groups if necessary to spread the word. He announced that he would be at Wintersville Elementary on March 11 for its literacy night event and at Hills on March 15 for Family Fun Night while the election board would have voting machines on site for demonstration.

Jeff Greco, campaign committee chairman, also chimed in on the importance to bolster interest in passing the bond issue.

“Ninety percent of the teachers in the district voted, but more high school parents voted than parents of elementary students. That is not a reflection on our teachers. Our target is the elementary parents and it’s important to contact parents who voted to vote again.”

People attending the session were then split into smaller workgroups to focus on parents and the community. Among the ideas presented were to provide information at school pickup lines and events; send informational postcards; post info on social media; have volunteers contact local residents to share information and encourage them to vote; and offer transportation to polling sites or inform them about absentee ballots.

Meanwhile, Dr. Chappelear said another work session would be held in the near future.
Students at schools in Steubenville, Wintersville and Mingo Junction got a special visit from the Cat in the Hat and friends as members of the Indian Creek Middle School Media Club took part in Read Across America activities on March 1.

Twenty club members traveled to the School of Bright Promise, Wintersville Elementary and Hills Elementary and dressed as the Cat, Thing 1 and Thing 2 to read Dr. Seuss books to kids in preschool to fourth grade. The organization has taken part in the event for the past two decades and continue to enjoy the interaction with youngsters.

Eighth-graders Sam Markovich, Hannah Lee, Bailey Harris and Lizzie Gillette headed to the School of Bright Promise to delight special needs students with such tales as “The Cat in the Hat,” “Green Eggs and Ham” and “Hop on Pop” and said they liked the experience.

“I like how the kids enjoy it,” said Markovich. “They give you hugs and it’s fun to see them happy.”

“I love it,” noted Lee. “I like making kids happy and reading.”

“It’s fun,” said Harris.

“It’s fun. I like being able to do stuff like this,” Gillette added.

Indian Creek Middle School Media Club members visited area schools to share Dr. Seuss books for Read Across America on March 1 and dressed as story characters in honor of Dr. Seuss’s birthday. Pictured are, from left, School of Bright Promise pupils Gerry Christian, Jason Markja and Jacob Wells; Back; SBP student Logan Briggs, ICMS students Lizzie Gillette, Hannah Lee, Sam Markovich and Bailey Harris and SBP student Jason Galloway.

Students at the School of Bright Promise also enjoyed the visit and Principal Rachel Bodo was grateful that her pupils could be a part of the fun.

“The students at Indian Creek always do an amazing job when they come to the school to read to our students. Bright Promise is always excited when they come,” Bodo added.

Media Club advisor Michele Fabbro initiated the program after attending a National Education Association Representative Assembly in Los Angeles, Calif., in 1998. At that time, a small reading task force had established the event to inspire reading and Fabbro added that her club members enjoyed participating in the program.

“They love reading and interacting with the younger students and the elementary students also love the event,” she said. “Most children love to be read to, no matter what their age. Most of the Media Club members remember the visit from the Cat in the Hat when they were in elementary school, so it’s been a good learning experience and tradition for many years now.”

Read Across America is an annual reading and awareness program that calls for every child in every community to celebrate reading on March 2 or as close as possible to that date, which is Dr. Seuss’s birthday.

Destination Imagination Teams Excel at Regional Competition

Three Destination Imagination teams at Indian Creek Local Schools fared well during the regional competition March 3 at Union Local High School, and now look ahead to the state match-up later this month.

Teams from Indian Creek High School and Indian Creek Middle School advanced to the state contest set for March 24 at Mt. Vernon after receiving first place for their unique challenges at the recent event.

The ICHS team Pizza-Knots used elements of an amusement park to create a new “unlikely attraction” and will take it to compete later this month. Team managers are Jaime Price and Carrie Buzzard with members Abdul Ade, Michael Buzzard, Shane McClug and Owen Price.

The ICMS team Radical Puppies won the improvisational challenge and is coached by Natalie Ujeich and Staci Copeland. Members include Autumn Brown, Carson Copeland, Katie Donahue, Joey Foust, Ciarra Rossi, Reese Scott and Madeline Ujeich.

Also state-bound is the middle school team Super 6, which won the service learning category and based their project on helping the homeless. Members include Matthew Barnes, Addy Breddin, Hannah Long, Riley Tongate, Blake Turner and Ryan Voiers and the team manager is Amanda Dyson.

Other highlights include the Spontaneous Six from ICMS finishing second in its Unlikely Attraction Challenge. Members are Brooklyn Evans, Logan Evans, Megan Gampolo, Leyla Gibson, Leah Parks and Ashley Taylor and team managers are Angie Bell and Cheasy Mills. ICMS student Sydney Melea, a member of the middle school team Drowning Fishes that is coached by Jaime Price, also won the prestigious DaVinci Award for exceptional creativity by creating a giant, outdoor three-dimensional pop-up scene.

Additionally, the Sockettes based at Hills Elementary, received the highest team challenge score in their division and placed second overall in “Change of Tune.” Members include Easton Alteri, Arabella Brown-Hess, Ava Hardman, Harper Long, Sophia Tongate, Bella Wilson, Khloe Buchanan and team manager Lisa Longo.
Wintersville Elementary Students Create Chemo Care Bags

Students at Wintersville Elementary School have collected items to help ease cancer patients during treatment with the Chemo Care Bags program.

The service learning project, which was started three years ago by second-grade teacher Sarah Hayes, provides items from blankets and hats to snacks and leisure goods to help comfort patients undergoing treatment at the Tony Teramana Cancer Center in Steubenville. Hayes said 200 bags were being donated during an assembly on March 15.

Each bag included a blanket, scarf or hat, fuzzy socks, bottled water, a reusable plastic cup, Biotene or other oral care product, lotion, hand sanitizer, packaged snacks such as cookies, granola bars or crackers and gum, puzzle or adult coloring books, a journal or planner, a deck of cards and a stuffed animal, book, puzzle or travel game. Coffee, tea, snacks and suckers were also donated to patients and their family members at the center, while the medical staff also received a few goodies.

“We did not forget the doctors or nurses either. They are the heart of Teramana and we sent a basket of mints for their ‘commit-mint,’ ‘encourage-mint’ ‘invest-mint’ and ‘involve-mint.’”

She continued that students have done other community projects in the past, but the cancer care bags have been an overwhelmingly popular program.

“‘I got a phone call from the Walmart Distribution Center and they had asked [Indian Creek Superintendent Dr. T.C. Chappelear] for free and reduced lunch totals for schools. We were in the top two for qualifying that high for free and reduced lunches,’” Minto explained, adding that East Garfield Elementary in Steubenville was the other site. “‘They are coming in on March 19 and every child in the building will get free shoes and socks with the option of getting their feet washed. We also have the option to not participate and donate shoes either to the school or back to the organization.’

Forms were sent home to parents and sizes will be tallied for boys and girls to receive their new athletic shoes. Minto added that about 399 students will benefit from the program and she was grateful for the chance to participate.

“I think it’s great that they have an opportunity because we have children in situations where new shoes aren’t an option for them,” she said.

“‘We've had other distribution centers that worked with Samaritan’s Feet and our distribution center in Columbus reached out to us and asked if we wanted to participate,’” Whitmore said.

She added that an estimated 800 pairs of shoes will be distributed between both sites and she hopes to expand the program in the future.

“I think it’s great that they have an opportunity because we have children in situations where new shoes aren’t an option for them,” she said. Amanda Whitmore, human resources office manager at Walmart Distribution Center, is organizing the event and said it was a first for her location.

“We’ve had other distribution centers that worked with Samaritan’s Feet and our distribution center in Columbus reached out to us and asked if we wanted to participate,” Whitmore said.

Hills Elementary Benefits from Samaritan’s Feet Project

Hills Elementary School students are getting some new shoes through the generosity of Samaritan’s Feet and the Wintersville Walmart Distribution Center.

On March 19, more than 50 Walmart associates and members of the Christian organization will visit Hills at 8:30 a.m. to wash students’ feet and present them with new steppers in time for the Easter holiday. Hills Elementary Principal Michele Minto was appreciative of the support and said it will definitely brighten the lives of students in her charge.

“This one has received such positivity that we are continuing it,” she noted. “It keeps getting bigger and bigger each year. We have had several people from the community come forward after they found out about the project and offer to help.”

Kind-hearted students Michael Campana and Mara Camp even donated a portion of their birthday money to help purchase items and former students have also gotten involved. Hayes said the students love to help others whenever they can and it gives them a sense of purpose.

“‘I believe this really says a lot about the students’ feelings about the project and how much it impacted them. In fact, I know of students who went to their third- and fourth-grade teachers asking if they could do a service learning project in those grades. When it comes time to help someone in need, our building steps up. I am so proud of the Wintersville Elementary family.”

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“They feel good about themselves when they help and they know they are making others feel good at the same time. When we begin this project, I explain to the students what cancer is, how it affects people, and that they go to the Tony Teramana Cancer Center for treatment. I believe it is important to be honest with them, but also to explain it at a level they can understand. Most of the students and their families have had a personal connection with the disease and for them, this is a way that they can honor their loved ones.’”

Hayes said the project began following a conversation with her mother, who was a patient at the center and had mentioned how fortunate she was to have loved ones accompany her to appointments. She often saw others undergoing treatment who were alone and worried about whether they had food, medicine and care. At the time, Hayes was looking for a different service learning project and was inspired to help those patients. Other teachers and Principal Lorrie Jarrett were soon on board and the rest is history.

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Hills Elementary School collected 200 Chemo Care Bags to benefit patients at the Tony Teramana Cancer Center in Steubenville as part of the school’s annual service learning project. Pictured packing a few of the bags are, from left, second-graders Samantha Gruber, Kaylin Lee, Kyler Snyder and Michael Campana.

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