



KCSD96

# staff newsletter

Staff (staf) n., 1. a group of people working together for a common goal

Kildeer Countryside School District 96 • June 2021

## End-of-Year Reflections

As I listened to our Superintendent Award recipients and our middle school principals give their graduation speeches to students and parents, I thought about the unprecedented journey we took to reach that single end-of-year milestone ceremony.

The traditional view of our students dressed in blue graduation robes filing in, with proud parents, grandparents, and faculty seated nearby, looked like any other year. You would never guess from that scene the turbulence of the previous school year.

Just hearing spoken aloud the new additions to our vocabulary that were noted – *self-certification, remote, in-person, roomies, zoomies, spit testing, synchronous and asynchronous learning, materials pick-up and drop-off, contact tracing*– brought back vivid details of the tumultuous journey of planning and pivoting we have taken together.

I think you'd agree that resilience and perseverance have never been more essential than in the past year. I know that I discovered coping skills I was unaware I had–and others I need to work on!

I also discovered a new understanding of what I truly value.

My relationships with my family and my friends are a higher priority for me now. I appreciate simplicity and spontaneity in ways I never did before. Perhaps you are feeling the same way?

As school years end, we typically celebrate our students' academic growth and our progress toward meeting goals set for the year.

I believe that–particularly this year–we need to continue to celebrate our growth, **even as we acknowledge that it looks different in 2021.**

Again, I share my heartfelt thanks and speak for the Board of Education, as well, for the countless ways you stretched yourselves this year to help in any and every way you could.

Indeed, it took every listening ear, every

caring heart, and every determined effort to make this a year we can characterize as successful.

And I'm in no doubt that it was a successful year, by the most meaningful and enduring measurements as envisioned by **Ralph Waldo Emerson.**

I hope you'll take a moment to read and reflect on his poem that I shared at Staff Recognition last week and find and celebrate yourself and your work this year in the verses.

-- Supt. Julie Schmidt

### Success

by Ralph Waldo Emerson

To earn the respect of intelligent people and to win the affection of children;

To appreciate the beauty in nature and all that surrounds us;

To seek out and nurture the best in others;

To give the gift of yourself to others without the slightest thought of return, for it is in giving that we receive;

To have accomplished a task, whether it be saving a lost soul, healing a sick child, writing a book, or risking your life for a friend;

To have celebrated and laughed with great joy and enthusiasm and sung with exaltation;

To have hope even in times of despair, for as long as you have hope, you have life;

To love and be loved;

To be understood and to understand;

To know that even one life has breathed easier because you have lived;

This is the meaning of success.

# APPLAUSE

**Congratulations to Jen Didech**, Twin Groves Grade 6 math teacher, and her husband **Dan**—both KCSD96 alumni. They lovingly welcomed **Theo James Didech** on June 17, 2020.

**Congratulations to Joann Sherlock**, Ivy Hall speech and language pathologist, who welcomed another daughter. **Everly Ann Sherlock** was born on Oct. 21, 2020.

**Congratulations to Beth Bryan**, whose son **Alex**—an Ivy Hall alumnus—graduated from college in Dec. 2020. He earned a degree in electro-mechanical automation.

**Congratulations to Katherine Lindgren**, Ivy Hall art teacher, on the birth of **Miles Luke** on Dec. 2, 2020. Miles joins two big brothers.

**Congratulations to Cara Anderson**, Twin Groves/Prairie orchestra teacher/director, and her husband **Garth**—proud parents of **Ingrid Mae Anderson**, born Jan. 28, 2021.

**Congratulations to Sarah Fallon**, Country Meadows music teacher, proud mom of **Emma Louise Murray**. Emma was born Jan. 28, 2021.

**Congratulations to Natalie Kulig**, Woodlawn instructional aide, on becoming a grandma. Her son **Zachary** and daughter-in-law **Courtney Levy** (a Twin Groves 2005 alumna) are the proud parents of **Addison Molly Kulig**, born Mar. 4, 2021.

**Congratulations to Kristyn Everett**, Twin Groves math coach and her husband **Justin**, who welcomed **Colin Patrick Everett** on Mar. 11, 2021. Colin joins proud and adoring big brother **Aidan**.



# APPLAUSE

**Congratulations to Meghan Bird**, Country Meadows principal, on the birth of **Waylon Ford Bird** on Mar. 18, 2021. He joins big sister **Maisie**.

**Congratulations to Lori Fouts-Kiefer**, Country Meadows Grade 2 teacher, whose daughter **Julie** was married on Apr. 3 (4-3-21!). In addition, Lori's daughter **Allison** had her third son join the family on Apr. 20, 2021.

**Congratulations to Sheila O'Gara**, Willow Grove PE teacher, whose son **Ryan** married **Audrey Kirby**. Their wedding was in Lexington, Kentucky, during Memorial Day weekend 2021.

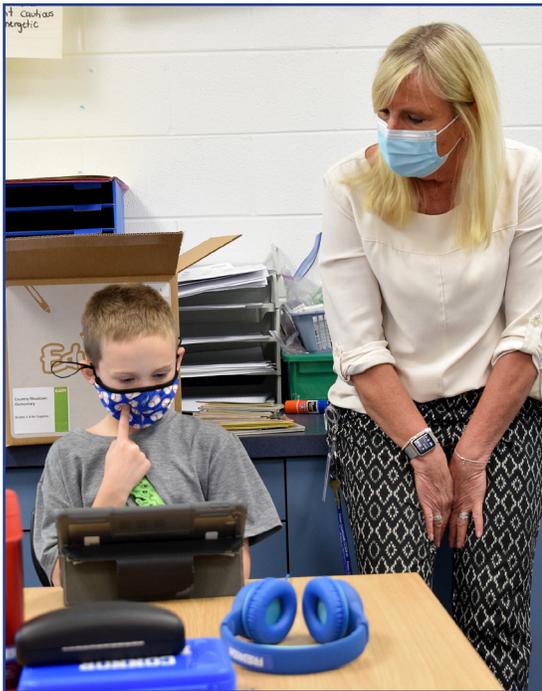
**Congratulations to Clara Casas-Maya**, Willow Grove Dual Language kindergarten teacher, whose son **Samuel** is a Stevenson High School graduate in the *Class of 2021*. Samuel will attend the Geis School of Business at the

**Best wishes to Nina Baker**, Country Meadows special education aide, who will be married on June 12, 2021.

**Best wishes to Kendra Cappelen**, Ivy Hall Grade 2 teacher, expecting her second son in August 2021.

**Best wishes to Hanna Lee**, Ivy Hall special education guided teacher, who is planning her September 2021 wedding in Chicago.

University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana.



# Retirees' Reflections & New Directions

## Best wishes to each one of our KCSD96 2021 retirees:

**Lori Fouts-Kiefer, Betsy Fresen, Ellen Gartenberg, Laurie Kuxhouse, and Mary McDevitt.**

They share their reflections and plans for their next chapter...

### Lori Fouts-Kiefer

**Grade 2 Teacher, Country Meadows Elementary School**

*Pandemic. Remote and Hybrid learning.* I never would have guessed that these words would become my reality.

I am in awe of the District 96 staff. During this turbulent past year and a half, I witnessed each and every staff member rise to challenges with such tenacity and perseverance. You are rock stars!

I am certainly going to miss the smiles, joy, laughter, positivity, and overall excitement from students and colleagues each day. I will cherish all the friendships and connections I've made here at Country Meadows, as well as throughout the District. You are definitely "family" to me.

I will also miss those days in class when students "get it." It just shines from their faces. Or when a previous student stops by or reaches out to say hello. It is what made me want to teach and want to come back every day.

What I won't miss is remote learning, daily slideshows, sub plans, report cards, or Sunday being a work night. :-)

If I had to offer advice, I would say to be sure to show your students that you care. Students may not remember what was taught, but they will remember how you made them feel. As teachers, you have incredible opportunities to impact your students positively.

Retirement. Grandchildren. Lake life. These words are my NEW reality. I look forward to the journey....

**"Be sure to show your students that you care. Students may not remember what was taught, but they will remember how you made them feel."**

## Betsy Fresen

### Public Information Coordinator

When I joined District 96 as an employee, I came as a KCSD96 parent without an understanding of how school districts function. I knew this was a great school district—but not why.

The reason became evident.... I've had the good fortune to work with and learn from dynamic leaders and staff in the District/Business Office, in the boardroom, and in our schools. Your all-consuming commitment and what you accomplish together makes sharing our KCSD96 story a pleasure.

I've had the best seat in the house, stepping into your classrooms where you make magic happen and witnessing firsthand your students' aha moments and your delight in each one.

I'll miss the hilariously candid kindergartners, the cool and self-conscious tweens, the exuberant elementary kids, and you—the teachers and staff with endless patience, humor, and determination—helping them figure it out and discover their voices.

And, as many KCSD96 retirees before me have noted, I'll miss my smart, fun, funny, dependable, kind, resourceful, and generous colleagues district wide. I thank you all and wish you and your families good health and time to do what makes you happy.

**"I thank you all and wish you and your families good health and time to do what makes you happy."**

## Ellen Gartenberg

### Grade 6 Math Teacher, Woodlawn Middle School

I always wanted to be a teacher and was lucky enough to spend my entire teaching career in District 96.

I was 22 when I was hired at Twin Groves, which is now called Ivy Hall. And, I had no idea what I was doing. The staff became my mentors. They taught me how to teach, manage a classroom, work with parents, and so much more. They became my beloved friends and guided me not only through teaching, but parenting and the joys and hardships of life. My teaching friends were at my wedding. They watched my children grow and participated in all my life events. As time went on and I got older, the tables turned and I was lucky to be the mentor of many newly hired teachers. I learned from them just as they learned from me. (Oh, the technology!)

*(Ellen Gartenberg continues next page)*

# Retirees' Reflections & New Directions

## Ellen Gartenberg (continued from previous page)

During my tenure at District 96, so much has changed and evolved. When I started, we had only 4 telephone lines in the building. If a parent called, the teacher would run to the teacher's lounge to answer the call. If someone was already on that phone, the teacher would have to run through the building to try to find an available phone.

When Ivy Hall was getting an addition, we asked for phones in the classrooms. It wasn't allowed because "teachers shouldn't be on the phone during the school day." Now we take pictures and tweet during class!

I remember staff smoking in the teacher's lounge, signing up to bring students to use a computer, using Scantrons with #2 pencils....

And the Xerox machine was older than I was (although I don't remember it ever breaking).

I remember the end-of-the-year recognition was held in the Kildeer library, as was every District gathering. We all fit in there and many of the teachers had been teaching longer than I was alive. Now it's true for me??? *Now the tables are turned.*

Through all the laughter and tears are wonderful memories, countless lives impacted, and profound situations that have made me who I am today. I have felt like a valuable member of our District 96 community. Thank you to all those who have guided, befriended, and believed in me. I'm grateful to all and proud to have been a part of such a wonderful community.

**"Through all the laughter and tears are wonderful memories, countless lives impacted, and profound situations that have made me who I am today."**

## Laurie Kuxhouse

### Human Resources Secretary

Thanks to District 96 for all the good times and for keeping me busy.

I'm truly lucky to have worked with almost everyone in the District and it's been an honor to work closely with such dedicated people.

All the best to all of you and yours.

**"It's been an honor to work closely with such dedicated people."**

# Retirees' Reflections & New

## Mary McDevitt

### School Social Worker, Twin Groves Middle School

I'm grateful for the last almost 20 years to be able to work with students to grow and develop in so many ways.

As a school social worker, I hope I made a difference in the lives of these students.

**"I put my heart into every day, every person; in return, I felt others' hearts open up to me."**

I am thankful to the staff at Twin Groves and Woodlawn for sharing this journey with me.

Working with middle school students can be challenging, but also a lot of fun—it requires a good sense of humor and a constant learning curve to keep up with the latest crazes/phases. It has kept me young at heart.

But I am now older—and hopefully a bit wiser—as I approach retirement. I look forward to being able to travel as the world opens up after a long quarantine.

I also look forward to spending time with my growing family—to be *Mimi* to my grandbabies.

I do cherish the years I worked in District 96 and will miss all the students, families, and staff I encountered along the way. I put my heart into every day, every person; in return, I felt others' hearts open up to me. I hope to bring this same openness to my life in retirement and look forward to what life has in store for me.



*The Class of 2021: Graduation ceremonies were held on the track infield on the Woodlawn campus.*

## KEA Officers/ Building Representatives for 2021-2022

**President:** Ben Leven  
**Vice President:** Jeff Cummings  
**Treasurer:** Jill Leone  
**Secretary:** Samantha Schaefer

**Regional Council Representative:**  
Kelly Russell

### Building Representatives

**Willow Grove:**  
Melody Martinez  
Shelly Scoville

**Country Meadows:**  
Heather Lockhart

**Ivy Hall:**  
Marci Fooden  
Todd Halstead

**Kildeer:**  
Felice Chan  
Gwen Flaskamp

**Prairie:**  
Chris Morris  
Ramona Smith

**Twin Groves:**  
Jeff Cummings  
Jeff Williams

**Woodlawn:**  
Liz Doherty  
Kelly Russell



## ESP Officers/ Building Representatives for 2021-2022

**Co-Presidents:**  
Scott Eichaker  
Lorna Jaegers  
**Secretary:** Trisha Pazdioch  
**Treasurer:** Wendy Weiner

**Regional Council Rep:**  
OPEN

### Building Representatives

**Willow Grove:**  
OPEN

**Country Meadows:**  
Cindy Rosenberg  
Deb Stanton

**Ivy Hall:**  
Scott Eichaker  
Wendy Weiner

**Kildeer:**  
Adriana Nieft

**Prairie:**  
Clint Miller

**Twin Groves:**  
Melissa Lundeen  
Patricia Pazdioch

**Woodlawn:**  
Terri Chiodo

*How to eat a cupcake*



# Years of Service milestones...

## + 25 YRS:

Kevin McThenia - 26 yrs.  
Elinor Tripp - 26 yrs.  
Christine Welsh - 26 yrs.  
Jennifer Cigrand - 27 yrs.  
Beth Dalton - 27 yrs.  
Dawn Kaminski - 27 yrs.  
Deborah Stanton - 27 yrs.  
Greg Grana - 28 yrs.  
Dawn Bussert - 29 yrs.  
Mara Barry - 30 yrs.  
Felicia Sladek - 30 yrs.  
Kenneth Goodlow - 31 yrs.  
Julie Holzhauer - 31 yrs.  
Todd Spangler - 31 yrs.  
Jeff Cummings 32 yrs.  
Ellen Gartenberg\* - 32 yrs.  
Kathryn Naples-Angel - 33 yrs.  
Pamela Kupsco - 34 yrs.  
James Cichowski - 36 yrs.

\* - Retiring

## 25 YRS:

Jane Coleman  
Brandon Dahlstrom  
Deborah Feldman

## 20 YRS:

Cindy Ann Borzych  
Debbie Echaes  
Marci Fooden  
Kristina Harvat  
Sara Khan  
Mladen Lijev  
Linda Litvan  
Sheila O'Gara  
Ariana Ray

## 15 YRS:

Jaime Appell  
Elizabeth Doherty  
Leesa Drazner  
Luke Emde  
Kristyn Everett  
Nicole Guarino  
Jacqueline Jessogne  
Tim Mivelaz  
Ramona Smith  
Jessica Woods

## 10 YRS:

Brittany Balek  
Elizabeth Busch  
Lucas Cowden  
Laurel Deeter  
Jennifer Didech  
Elizabeth Dupree  
Jaclyn Griffin  
Jessica Groncki  
Jill Hammer  
Julie Henhapl  
Carrie Kroes  
Carol Pio  
Peter VanNaarden  
Nicole Yandura

## ADVANCED DEGREES:

Kellie Cristofaro  
Emma Degen  
Anna Derry  
Nicole Dorfman  
Theresa Eisinger  
Mae Flavin  
Sarah Gord  
Allison Groessl  
Abigail Heuer  
Anne Innocentini  
Jessica Jacobson  
Hanna Lee

## District/Business Offices Summer Hours/UPDATE

The **District and Business Offices** will be open to the public on the following **summer schedule**:

June 7 through Aug. 6, 2021

**Mon. – Thurs.:**

8:00 AM – 4:30 PM

**Fri.:**

7:30 AM – 11:30 AM

**July 4:** Closed in observance of Independence Day

**Please note:**

The **Business Office** will operate from Woodlawn Middle School due to summer construction scheduled.

Access to the **District Office** will be via the door facing the small parking lot and Clohesey Lane. The door will be equipped with a buzzer. Street parking will be necessary, due to scheduled parking lot construction.

Brigitte Lyman  
Ashley Markiewicz  
Hoang Anh Nguyen  
Melanie Ohnsted  
Rianne Rybinski  
Samantha Schaefer  
Ellen Stewart  
Esther Thompson  
Mina Wang  
Diana Wittenberg  
Amy Wood  
Eileen Wronkiewicz