

THE BURLINGTON BARK

Burlington, Iowa | May 1, 2023



Members of Burlington High School's Bring Change to Mind Club lead the way Friday, April 28, 2023, along the Sixth Street bridge during the second annual Burlington Community Walk to Fight Suicide.

NO ONE WALKS ALONE

Community turns up for 2nd annual Burlington Community Walk to Fight Suicide.

Stephen Kastantin seemed happy.

In fact, it wasn't uncommon for the Burlington High School student, now a senior, to spread cheer among his peers by showing up at school wearing a hotdog or gorilla costume.

"They saw that I was happy on the outside," Kastantin told the crowd of more than 100 people gathered Friday at the Port of Burlington. "That wasn't true. I just put on a facade."

Kastantin, one of the organizers of the second annual Burlington Community Walk to Fight Suicide, explained that he had been struggling with anxiety and depression since seventh grade, but it wasn't until his junior year of high school that he was diagnosed with depression and anxiety disorder.

QUICK SIX

- 1. May 5**
Two-hour early out
- 2. May 8 & 23**
Burlington School Board will meet at 6 p.m.
- 3. May 7**
Dragon Boat races
- 4. May 22**
Senior Awards Night at 7 p.m. at BHS
- 5. May 29**
No school - Memorial Day
- 6. June 1**
Last Day of School

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Groundbreaking marks major phase of construction at BHS

Leo Club offers flexible volunteer opportunities

Sustainability program provides hands-on learning

April's Instagram poll results

How a pilot science curriculum is taking shape at BHS

THIS IS BURLINGTON



Students, staff and community members walk Friday, April 28, 2023, along the Sixth Street bridge during the second annual Burlington Community Walk to Fight Suicide, which began at Bracewell Stadium and ended at the Port of Burlington.

“When I went to BHS, I became even more anxious,” Kastantin said. “This lasted until 11th grade, when I realized other kids felt the same way as I did, so I decided to try to cheer them up the best way I could, which was going to school in goofy outfits like a hotdog suit, a gorilla suit, or even just shaving my head.”

After Kastantin’s diagnosis, he joined Mind Blowing Connections, an after-school club formed by former BHS student Zakiyah Timmons-Crear in an effort to destigmatize mental illness and raise awareness surrounding mental health issues while fostering connections.

That club organized the first walk to fight suicide and now is called Bring Change to Mind.

“When I found this group of people, this is when I found my love of helping people who were going through the same thing as I am,” Kastantin said.

As Kastantin and others spoke, Timmons-Crear stood off to the side with a box of tissues for those on the verge of or already shedding tears. People in the crowd carried posters and some wore t-shirts displaying pictures of loved ones lost to suicide. Others wore t-shirts displaying a logo designed by BHS junior Selena Jannsens and held signs displaying messages of hope and understanding that they had carried there from Bracewell Stadium.

“It’s extremely humbling to see how many people share my



Angie Leinbach, a counselor at Burlington High School, holds a sign while participating Friday, April 28, 2023, in the second annual Burlington Community Walk to Fight Suicide. The event was organized by the school's Bring Change to Mind Club.

passion,” Kastantin said. “To the counselors and the students who helped put this together, thank you. We couldn’t do this without you. We need you. Thank you very much. If you have thoughts about suicide, please call the 988 suicide hotline, or even just talk to a friend, someone at school, a trusted adult, anyone.”

It was a message spoken many times throughout the event: Reach out; don’t suffer in silence; don’t walk alone.



Students, staff and community members walk Friday, April 28, 2023, along the Sixth Street bridge during the second annual Burlington Community Walk to Fight Suicide, which began at Bracewell Stadium and ended at the Port of Burlington.

There on behalf of the Big O Foundation, a nonprofit launched by Joe and Jenny Skelley in honor of their son, Owen, who attended Sunnyside Elementary School before he and his family moved to North Liberty, took his life, Kelly Augustine, a long time friend of the Skelley family, spoke of the joy that Owen had brought to his family and the devastation left in the wake of his death.

“I want every person here to know that someone on this earth loves you very much. Losing your child is every parent’s worst nightmare,” she said. “If you have any suicidal thoughts, if you feel depressed, please get help and do it swiftly.

“If you break an arm, you go to the hospital, you have an x-ray, you get a cast. If you have strep throat, you likely take penicillin. Having depression, mental illness or suicidal ideation is not something to take lightly and it’s not anything to be ashamed of. Please take care of yourself and seek help. You don’t need to struggle alone, and I don’t want it to be too late.”

She went on to list symptoms of depression: difficulty falling and/or staying asleep, frequent irritability and/or agitation, loss of interest in hobbies or activities, changes in appetite, and consistent feelings of anxiety, sadness or emptiness.

“Any of these feelings every once in awhile is probably normal, but if you’re living in these emotions day in and day out, I want you to get help, and if you don’t feel you need to go to the doctor, perhaps you can talk to your pastor or someone in your school,” she said.



Stephen Kastantin speaks Friday, April 28, 2023, at the Port of Burlington during the second annual Burlington Community Walk to Fight Suicide.

She described Owen as being full of life, a talented athlete, someone who always looked out for the underdog and encouraged his friends to be nice to everyone. But, much like Kastantin and so many others who struggle with depression, Owen was good at putting up a facade.

“Many of you know that Owen left a letter explaining that he hid all these feelings from his parents,” Augustine said. “He didn’t want anyone to worry about him and he didn’t want to be a burden to anyone. I promise you that his family would have moved mountains to get Owen the care that he needed if only they had known these



Students, staff and community members gather Friday, April 28, 2023, at Bracewell Stadium before walking to the Port of Burlington for the second annual Burlington Community Walk to Fight Suicide. Below: Selena Janssens speaks Friday, April 28, 2023, at the Port of Burlington during the second annual Burlington Community Walk to Fight Suicide.

thoughts were going through his head.”

She again urged people to seek help.

“My message is that depression is a liar,” Augustine said. “It has robbed us of our joy and I’m working hard to regain mine. I’m begging everyone here to do the work. Get help for yourself, your loved ones. I don’t want another family to suffer like this.”

Janssens, too, spoke of the importance of seeking up.

“Don’t be strong, because it’s OK to be weak,” she said. “Please be brave and ask for help. Ask for help from your school counselors like our lovely Ms. Bray, Ms. Frice, Ms. Mumm and Ms. Leinbach or any of your trusted teachers.”

Other speakers were Gigi and Shawn Johnson, the parents of Zephaniah “Zephy” Johnson, who died in February 2022. She was in ninth grade.

Shawn Johnson said his daughter taught him three things in her short life: Time is short, enjoy the now and take care of yourself.

“Somebody is watching you, whether it’s your little brother, little sister, your niece, your nephew, your uncles, your sister, mom, dad, somebody’s watching you,” he said. “And somebody is holding on because of you.”



Gigi Johnson thanked those in attendance and encouraged people to be themselves and reach out.

“It’s OK to be yourself. It’s OK to not be OK,” Gigi Johnson said. “It’s OK to reach out to other people if you need to. Don’t be afraid to talk to other people. One thing that this journey that I have been through now for about a year has taught me is if your path demands you to walk through hell, make sure you walk in that place like you own it. Live it each day. Own it. Own who you are.”

A memorial bench engraved with the names of Zephy and Bennett Kirk, purchased with money raised last year by Janssens, has been placed at the high school.



Burlington High School Assistant Principal Annie Perez, Athletic Director Jay Huff, Assistant Principal Nathan Marting, Superintendent Rob Scott, Burlington School Board President Deb Hatteberg, BHS Principal Monica Myers, school board members Darven Kendell and Anika McVay, Business Director Greg Reynolds and BHS Dean of Students Brandon Kurovski break ground Wednesday, April 12, 2023, at the site of the future weight room outside BHS during a groundbreaking ceremony.

BREAKING GROUND

Phase II of the \$35 million renovation of and addition to Burlington High School has begun.

Within temporary fencing set up just north of the Burlington High School tennis courts, an excavator and work crew are digging into the ground to lay the foundation for what will be a fitness center and the first in a long list of improvements coming to the campus.

On a windy but sunny afternoon in April, Burlington Community School District and BHS administrators and teachers gathered here with school board members, city leaders and representatives of construction management agency Carl A. Nelson & Co. and Davenport-based Bray Architects to break ground on what will be the largest construction project to take place in Burlington since work on the Catfish Bend Casino began in 2006.

“Today, after years of planning, we are breaking ground on a \$35 million renovation project that will bring this building forward to the state-of-the-art status and glory our students and staff deserve,” BHS Principal Monica Myers told those in attendance.

The first phase of the project began last summer with air quality improvement. The groundbreaking marked the start of Phase II of the project.

“Beginning this phase of our project is a culmination of many months of preparation and planning,” school board president Deborah Hatteberg said. “Contractors have diligently been working over the past year to update our mechanical facilities, but much of the progress was hidden by walls, ceilings and floors.”

The current phase involves the addition of a weight room, reconfigurations of the nearly 300,000-square-foot building’s two-



Burlington Community School District Superintendent Rob Scott speaks Wednesday, April 12, 2023, at the site of the future weight room outside Burlington High School during a groundbreaking ceremony.

story academic wing, updated classrooms and science labs, a reconfigured media center, an enclosed walkway between the main building and Industrial Arts building, and more.

“We are so very excited to be moving forward on this renovation project to provide a facility where students are excited to collaborate and learn, an environment in which our teachers provide vigorous lessons with attentive feedback, and a building which brings pride to the community of Burlington,” Myers said.

The school first opened its doors to students in 1969 and subsequently saw the addition of the gym and metal shop in 1975, followed by the addition of the concession stand building in 1998, and the addition of a tornado-safe room in 2013.

The district undertook its Newer and Fewer initiative in the early

2000s that, as the name of the initiative implies, resulted in newer and fewer elementary buildings. That work was followed by the construction of two new middle schools, making BHS the oldest attendance center in the district.

By 2025, much of the building will look new, with a canopy and signage placed in the courtyard marking the new office area and a host of other upgrades and changes awaiting students and staff inside.

“In a little more than two years from now, we will be where everybody wants to come and see our school,” Superintendent Rob Scott said. “There’ll be people talking about construction projects throughout the rest of the state, out of the state, and will say, ‘You really need to go see Burlington High School because they did it right. That is what a first-class school, educational environment looks like,’ and we’re going to be excited to have those people visit us and for us to kind of celebrate the great building and work we’ve put in.”

Hatteberg said the improvements will further enhance students’ experiences.

“It is our belief that this renovation of BHS will only enhance the many educational experiences that we currently offer and provide a safe, healthy and motivational facility for all,” Hatteberg said before thanking CANCo and Bray Architects, along with BCSD administrators and staff. “We want to recognize Superintendent Scott and his administrative team; Monica Myers, BHS principal; the entire BHS staff; and the district maintenance staff for their continuing efforts and contributions to make this dream a reality.”

Scott, who is nearing the end of his first school year as the superintendent of BCSD, commended staff, administrators, and board members for the work done before his arrival.

“This is the beginning, but really it’s not, because the beginning started many years ago in the planning of this project and putting a lot of stakeholders together,” Scott said. “This is not four or five people sitting in a room and making decisions. These are teachers, a lot of people figuring out what’s needed in our school system here and the real effort to improve the educational facilities of the high school.”

Scott went on to pre-emptively thank high school staff for putting up with the work over the next several years. While that work is scheduled to be as noninvasive as possible, there will be some temporary shifting of classrooms.

He also thanked Bray Associates and those he’s worked with at CANCo for their guidance and patience before picking up a shovel and turning dirt alongside Hatteberg and Myers, each of their hard hats displaying a purple pawprint sticker.

HOW IT’S PAID FOR

The project is being paid for through a combination of Elementary and Secondary Education Relief and Secure an Advanced Vision for Education funds.

The ESSER funds are the result of the federal American Rescue



Burlington High School Principal Monica Myers, top, and Burlington School Board President Deborah Hatteberg, bottom, speak Wednesday, April 12, 2023, during a groundbreaking ceremony for Phase II of the \$35 million renovation and addition project at BHS.

“ **IN A LITTLE MORE THAN TWO YEARS FROM NOW, WE WILL BE WHERE EVERYBODY WANTS TO COME AND SEE OUR SCHOOL.** ”
— ROB SCOTT —
BCSD SUPERINTENDENT

Plan Act that was spurred by the pandemic, while SAVE funds are generated by Iowa’s penny sales tax and distributed to Iowa school districts to be used for major infrastructure projects.

This project has no impact on property tax.

WHY NOT AN AUDITORIUM

Initial discussions about the future of BHS that took place around the time the Legislature extended SAVE's sunset date from 2029 to 2049 had considered the possibility of building an auditorium at the high school — an idea that has come up repeatedly throughout the school's history.

As planning for the project continued, however, it was determined that the auditorium alone would carry a price tag of \$23 million.

This would not have allowed for much else to be done at the high school, much less the addition of a new weight room, which is needed due to the current weight room's noncompliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act.

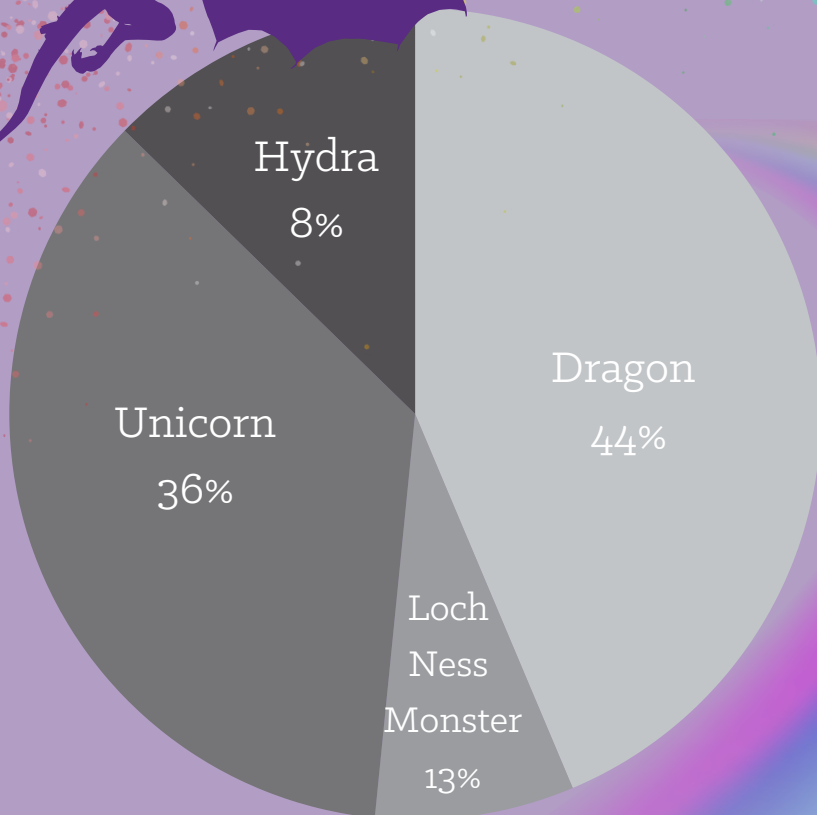
The current weight room will be used to house the new HVAC system, and students already have begun helping to clear the area for work to begin.



A rendering shows the future canopy and signage that will mark the new office entrance to Burlington High School.

INSTAGRAM POLL RESULTS

WHICH IMAGINARY CREATURE WOULD MAKE THE BEST PET?



TOTAL VOTES: 126

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PIECES students plant seeds Wednesday, April 19, 2023, at Sunnyside Elementary School. The activity was brought to them by Brianne Sly, Green Iowa AmeriCorps sustainability coordinator.

GIVING LESSONS IN SUSTAINABILITY

Green Iowa Americorps empowers students to live green with hands-on activities.

On a recent afternoon in April, Brianne Sly stood before two long rows of pint-sized Grayhounds in the cafeteria of Grimes Elementary School.

The kindergartners eyed the materials on the tables in front of them, eager to begin applying the glue to toilet paper. For what? They weren't quite sure, but they were about to find out.

Sly held in her hands "Rah, Rah, Radishes!" – a celebration of fresh vegetables, their naturally occurring bright colors, and healthy eating by April Sayre in the form of a children's book – and began to read.

The book gave the students a brief introduction to the types of vegetables they would be helping to grow.

After Sly finished the book, she distributed small cups containing seeds – okra seeds, beet seeds, turnip seeds, bush bean seeds, collard greens seeds, lettuce seeds, Swiss chard seeds and, of course, radish seeds. At long last, the kindergartners could finally pick up the bottles of glue.

They took turns putting small dabs of the glue onto the toilet paper strips before them. Once the glue was in place, they carefully applied a single seed to each drop.

They remarked on the size and shapes of the seeds, and how they compared to the seeds being used by nearby students. Later this summer, they'll be able to see the fruits (or veggies) of their labor in the nearby South Hill Community Garden, where the seed strips will be deployed.

"My goal this year is to get everybody's hands dirty, because I think that's important," Sly said. "All the kindergartners, they need to get their hands in the dirt and connect with that natural element."



Brianne Sly, Green Iowa AmeriCorps sustainability coordinator, helps kindergartners make seed strips Wednesday, April 19, 2023, at Grimes Elementary School.

Sly has been working in the Burlington Community School District for nearly five years, the first three of which she was an associate, first at Grimes, then at Burlington High School. She now is in her second year as sustainability coordinator, a position made possible by Green Iowa AmeriCorps, a grant-funded program through the University of Northern Iowa that was brought to Burlington by the Renewable Energy Conservation Committee via the Burlington City Council. Grimes was selected as the host site.

Sly's new role came on the heels of the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in lowered student participation in groups such as Green Club that previously had done recycling duty.

"My (daughters) are a junior and senior in high school right now, and when they were (at Grimes), they had fourth- or fifth-graders collect recycling," Sly recalled. "Once you hit that grade level, it was a big deal because you had this big kid job. But due to staff retirements and then COVID, you couldn't do anything. We were virtual, so we lost a lot of those kid-based clubs, so then everything was falling on staff."

But staff time is limited, and Sly was tasked with getting school recycling programs back on track. She recruited about 25 students at Grimes to collect paper recycling once a week and works with BHS students to gather recycling twice weekly.

Another component of Sly's position involves providing on-demand support to teaching staff with hands-on activities to their students that coincide with lessons. She worked last year alongside STEM specialist Liz Sanning to put on STEM days and continues to apply



Kindergartners make seed strips Wednesday, April 19, 2023, at Grimes Elementary School.

what she learned from Sanning to those activities.

"I think it's really important for kids to have hands-on opportunities, and I know teachers try their hardest to get that in the classroom, but they only have so many hours in the day to do the planning, the prep work, and to organize it," Sly said.

Some of those activities involve making things out of recycled materials, such as assembling tin can robots, crafting coral reefs and fish out of recycled tissue paper to top off a lesson on pollution in the coral reef, and making planter boxes out of recycled newspaper.



Brianne Sly, Green Iowa AmeriCorps sustainability coordinator, helps a student plant seeds Wednesday, April 19, 2023, during the PiECES program at Sunnyside Elementary School.

Another lesson and activity focuses on pollution in the Mississippi River. Students fill plastic bottles with water, food coloring, glitter (depending on the age group), and bits of other materials like candy wrappers and box binding.

"We talk about how pesticides get into their water and, especially here, we're able to talk about how the river's just down this hill and when it rains, you can see it just go down the hill in the street, and if there's trash there, what type of trash goes into the river," Sly said. "Then, when you shake (the bottle), the students can tell you about all the different kinds of pollution that go around while they're looking at them."

She once spent a day teaching fifth-graders what they can do on an individual level to reduce their carbon footprint and is a frequent presence in after-school programs.

Sly recently worked with city forester Patrick Moore to help high school and PiECES students plant trees. As part of the tree planting at Aldo, she asked PiECES students to write down a caption to go with a picture of the tree that will be there for years to come.

"We will be friends again," one student wrote, indicating they plan to return one day when both the tree and the student have grown.

Sly's favorite part about her job is that it allows her to help students feel empowered about their futures by teaching them about sustainable practices.

"Overall, the big umbrella is environmental stewardship and sustainability, how do we get the community as a whole to learn about how to live a more sustainable life, whether that's through recycling or gardening," Sly said. "Food security issues can be solved with community and personal gardens, just all of those little pieces that build up our individual carbon footprint."

Sly said three to four weeks' notice is ideal for projects so she has time to prepare lessons and gather materials.

She also is looking for a summer intern who will serve alongside her to gain hands-on skills and experience related to sustainability, conservation, and more.

The internship comes with a living stipend, Segal Education award, individualized professional development opportunities, public service loan forgiveness qualification, and other benefits.

To learn more and/or apply, visit GreenIowaAmeriCorps.org/open-positions.



Burlington High School Leo Club members transport Easter baskets from a truck to the FunCity Turf Sunday, April 23, 2023, ahead of the Through Joshua's Eyes Easter Egg Hunt.

WHERE THERE'S A NEED, THERE'S A LEO

More than 120 special needs individuals and their families filed into the FunCity Turf on April 23, eager to get onto the indoor soccer fields.

But it wasn't soccer they would be playing. What they were after were the more than 7,000 brightly colored Easter eggs that had been scattered there by Burlington High School Leo Club members just hours earlier.

"When you get to see all the kids run out onto the field and experience Easter, it's pretty special," said BHS junior and Leo Executive Board member David Hoth.

After carrying more than 120 Easter baskets — one for each participant — from a truck to the tables inside, the Leos divided into groups and dispersed throughout the fields, carefully placing the eggs to keep them from popping open. In the portion of the field where wheelchairs would be, the eggs were placed further apart. On the east end of the facility, the eggs were placed closer together for those who would be participating with siblings.



Burlington High School Leo Club members Hannah Wenzel and Galilaia Sutton volunteer Thursday, April 20, 2023, at Area Recyclers.

"We couldn't do it without them," Teresa Heitmeier, a sixth grade teacher at Aldo Leopold Intermediate School, said of the Leos as she put the finishing touches on the seventh annual Through



Burlington High School Leo Club members Lauren McDowell, Lauren Briggs, Hannah Wenzel, David King, Galilaila Sutton, and Hailie Brill pose for a photo Thursday, April 20, 2023, at Area Recyclers, where they were volunteering for Clean Out Your Files Day.

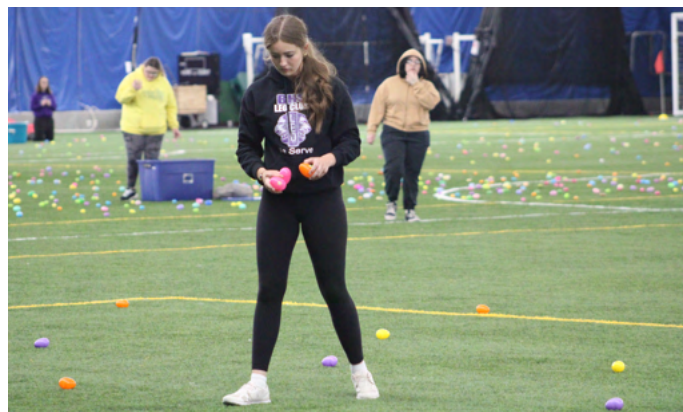
Joshua's Eyes Easter Egg Hunt. "They've always been hard workers and the families appreciate their help."

Heitmeier, who founded Through Joshua's Eyes to provide support to special needs families in Des Moines County, enjoys seeing her former students – some of whom are former classmates of her son, Joshua – as Leos.

"Some of them will actually help with the hunt, too," she said. "Like if somebody has a special kid and a sibling, the hunts are at different times, so they may help keep the sibling entertained."

It's not uncommon to find Leos volunteering at events such as these. The club's presence has also become a staple of Oktoberfest and Trunk or Treat, but they can be found helping out just about anywhere.

"Basically anybody who needs volunteers can contact Mrs. (Jessica) King or myself and we can offer that as an opportunity and send students out," said Lara Kendell, co-advisor of the BHS Leo Club. "And then through participating in those activities, (the students) are gaining leadership skills, they are growing in their understanding of service to others, they're getting more confident in their abilities and their interpersonal skills, so we see a lot of growth between we have our freshman Leos and we have our senior Leos. We see a tremendous amount of growth in our comfort levels, in our confidence levels in dealing with the public."



Burlington High School Leo Club members distribute Easter eggs Sunday, April 23, 2023, ahead of the Joshua's Eyes Easter Egg Hunt at the FunCity Turf.

Leo Club is the junior version of the Lions Club International, which is the largest service organization in the world. Kendell said the hope is that Leo Club members will go on to become Lions or join some other community service-oriented organization as adults.

Hoth said being a Leo has already changed his perspective on community service.

"I think Leo Club in this environment has probably winnowed out some of the flaws I had with my thoughts on community outreach," Hoth said. "Before this club, I may have been volunteering for the



Teresa Heitmeier, a teacher at Aldo Leopold Intermediate School and founder of Through Joshua's Eyes, gives instructions to members of the Burlington High School Leo Club Sunday, April 23, 2023, ahead of a special needs Easter egg hunt at the FunCity Turf.

wrong reasons, or maybe like just so I could get silver cord hours or maybe because of what someone will say about me.”

Hoth said his first time volunteering at the egg hunt allowed him to see the true value of volunteering on the faces of participants.

That’s not to say there aren’t other benefits to being a Leo.

“I think our Leos also have a really good understanding that colleges and scholarship committees are looking for service, so it is a resume builder,” Jessica King said. “It also allows for people who are sophomores, juniors and seniors to have leadership opportunities here while they’re in high school, which is definitely a resume builder if you can put that you have some leadership experience on your college and scholarship applications and National Honor Society applications.”

Leo stands for Leadership, Experience, and Opportunities.

David King, a junior and member of the Leo Club Executive Board, said his membership has helped him to develop leadership skills in a safe environment.

“There are events where we’ll be managing stuff or we’ll be placed under stress, but it’s in a low-stakes environment where we’re able to learn how to organize things and how to make mistakes and recover from them without any serious repercussions, so that kind of helps us prepare for the

professional world,” he said.

Sophomore and executive board member Ace Whalen said he feels comfortable volunteering through Leo Club because he knows that whatever the event is will be safe.

With between 80 and 100 service opportunities each year, Leo Club offers its members plenty of experiences and opportunities to try new things, such as putting on social events.

“A lot of our freshman Leos are shy, so it’s just some opportunities to relax a little bit and get to know each other,” Kendell said.

David King said the social events are held as a way to help their peers branch out. Occasionally, those events will involve a volunteer component, such as decorating cookies to be delivered to the Burlington Fire Department.

Other events Leos often help with include running concession stands, school and other non-profit events at Camp Eastman, Safety Town, and Clean Out Your Files Day, during which the BHS Leo Club partners with the fairly new Notre Dame Catholic High School Leo Club to help people properly dispose of their files.

There are currently 71 Leos on the club roster. The Leos meet monthly except for September and May, when meetings are held twice. Students wanting to join the Leo Club should contact Kendell or Jessica King.



Nathaniel Roozeboom-Hemming talks to students Thursday, April 27, 2023, during Biology class at Burlington High School. Roozeboom-Hemming is in his fifth year of teaching at BHS and in his second year of teaching Biology using OpenSciEd, a pilot curriculum the Burlington Community School District has been field testing for the past six years.

TEST DRIVING OPENSIED

What do a pigeon, a rat, and clover have in common?

They're all being used to teach students in Nathaniel Roozeboom-Hemming's Biology classes about the effects of urbanization on native species at a genetic level.

City pigeons tend to be darker in color because they have higher levels of melanin, which binds with heavy metals, thus preventing the heavy metals found in urban areas from binding with the actual pigeon itself and allowing the birds to survive long enough to pass on their genes.

Rats have been spotted in urban areas hauling whole pieces of pizza along public walkways, presumably to eat. Rural rats are unable to digest that much cheese, but, much like with their flying counterparts and melanin, urban rodents are able to digest more foods because their ancestors passed along genes that allow them to do so.

And rural clover produces higher levels of hydrogen cyanide than does urban clover because it discourages predators, and there are more clover predators in rural areas than urban ones.

"In essence, what we're doing here is we're teaching natural selection without just saying natural selection," Roozeboom-Hemming said.

And thus is the premise of OpenSciEd, a science curriculum that the Burlington Community School District has been field testing for more than six years, first with sixth through eighth grade.

OpenSciEd is in its second year of use at the high school and will be rolled out at the fifth grade level in the coming fall.

Teachers who pilot the curriculum at each level provide feedback to the curriculum developers, who in turn use that feedback to adjust the relatively new material.

"The thing to understand about OpenSciEd and how it works is there's a really particular order to the way that students learn," Roozeboom-Hemming said. "So it starts with the anchoring phenomena, which is this big anchoring idea that sort of anchors students down to all the learning that they're doing through the entire unit."

The curriculum involves less direct instruction and more critical thinking on the part of the students.

"If you're going for we've got to have a bunch of kids who know lots of general things, direct instruction is fine. It does its task of getting people to know basic things," Roozeboom-Hemming said. "If you want to dig deeper, you have to start, as a teacher, stepping away and letting the students do the work themselves and struggle through it. Those deeper levels of understanding come from that struggle."

There are also plenty of hands-on and modeling activities with sometimes intentionally vague instruction.

"It's very purposeful sense-making, where they're purposefully confused for a little while, because that feeling of confusion, as soon as you resolve it, things stick better," Roozeboom-Hemming said. "It's building the struggle and then resolving the struggle makes those ideas stick better. It's confusing, but it's intentionally confusing, which is fun."

The curriculum also allows for more multiple science standards to be covered at once, and students are expected to be able to take what they learn and apply it to different scenarios.

The last unit Roozeboom-Hemming taught, for example, focused

largely on cancer.

"We spent about four weeks going through what cancer is and how cancer happens and some particular causes of cancer, and then the assessment isn't about cancer at all," Roozeboom-Hemming said. "Not one bit of cancer on there. It's about a completely different genetic disorder, so they have to apply what they know about cancer to a completely different genetic disorder."

Roozeboom-Hemming, who also teaches AP Biology, Zoology and Science Research, is hopeful that OpenSciEd will spark an interest in his students that spurs them to enroll in more advanced science classes in the future.

"AP Bio and Zoology, they're already interested. That's why they're there. With bio, they're not interested in going in, and so trying to get them a little bit interested, I think that's where OpenSciEd shines because these storylines are meant to be engaging, they're meant to grab attention, so you have something to say, well isn't this thing cool at least over here? And you can kind of lean into that a little more," he said.

It appears to be working for sophomore Crystal Parsons.

"Most days, I go home and tell my family about what's going on in here because this is one of the main classes that I focus in," she said.



2023 Prom king nominees, from top left, were Hunter Ford, Kaden Eaves, Alex Fawcett, Trenton Huffman, Kyler Schwartz, and Christian Snyder. Queen nominees, from bottom left, are Emily Reed, Melanie Reid, Lilly Bartels, Sophia Preader, Raegan Wellman, and Daniele Ebert.

BURLINGTON ACTIVITIES DEPT.

To view the Activities schedule [click here!](#)

THE RECAP



UPCOMING EVENTS

BURLINGTON COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

- May 2 - BCSD Homeschool Assistance Program art show at Art Center of Burlington
- May 3 - Colloquium from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m. at Ed Stone
- May 5 - Build My Future at Southeastern Community College fairgrounds
- May 5 - Two-hour early out
- May 7 - Dragon Boat Races at Big Hollow
- May 8 and 23 - School board meeting at 6 p.m.
- May 9 - 8th Grade Welcome Night at 5:30 p.m. at Burlington High School.
- May 24 - Retirement Banquet at 5 p.m. at The Drake
- May 29 - No school
- June 1 - Last Day of School

BURLINGTON HIGH SCHOOL

- May 3 - Operation Prom Night at 1 p.m.
- May 5-19 - BHS Art Show at Art Center of Burlington
- May 15 - Maurice Wright Music Festival at 7 p.m. at BHS
- May 19 - Seniors' last day
- May 22 - Senior Awards Night at 7 p.m. at BHS
- June 3 - Graduation at 7 p.m. at Bracewell Auditorium

EDWARD STONE MIDDLE SCHOOL

- May 2 - ESMS Spring vocal concert at 7 p.m.
- May 16- Spring Orchestra Concert at 7 p.m.
- May 18 - Spring Band Concert at 7 p.m.
- June 1 - 8th Grade Bridging Ceremony at 10:30 a.m. at Burlington Memorial Auditorium

ALDO LEOPOLD INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL

- May 5 - Talent Show at 9 a.m.
- May 9 - ALIS Band/Choir Concert at 7 p.m.
- May 11 - Spring Orchestra Concert at 7 p.m.
- May 12 - Sixth-grade track meet at BHS

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS & CORSE EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER

- May 1 - Corse Early Childhood Center PTO meeting at 5:30 p.m.
- May 2 - Black Hawk PTO meeting at 5 p.m.
- May 11 - Corse Early Childhood Center Ice Cream Social
- May 16-19 - CECC 4-year-old preschool graduations at 5:30 p.m.
- May 18 - Last day of preschool
- May 24 - North Hill Field Day
- May 25 - Sunnyside Field Day

VIBE VIRTUAL LEARNING PROGRAM

- May 4 - Vibe Piano and Ukulele Recital at 7 in Room 26
- May 9: Blood Drive from 1:30 to 5:30 p.m. at JMEC in the Municipal Band Room
- May 24 - VIBE Kindergarten Round-up/Visitation/Q&A from 1 to 3 p.m. at JMEC



AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS

[Click here to view the PiECES Calendar and activities!](#)

Saturday Movie!

May 13 at 1 p.m. at the Capitol Theatre

Saturdays with PiECES

May 6, 13 & 20

NO PiECES

May 5 & 17

Club M Closing Party

May 17 from 3:30 to 4:20 p.m. at BHS

Last Day for PiECES

May 26

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AT BCSD, WE ARE RAISING GRAYHOUNDS!



BURLINGTON COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT NONDISCRIMINATION NOTICE

It is the policy of the Burlington Community School District not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, creed, age (for employment), marital status (for programs), sexual orientation, gender identity and socioeconomic status (for programs) in its educational programs and its employment practices. There is a grievance procedure for processing complaints of discrimination. If you have questions or a grievance related to this policy please contact the district's Equity Coordinators at the District Administrative Office, 1429 West Avenue, Burlington, IA 52601; (319) 753-6791.

For Educational Programs: Cory Johnson, Director of Curriculum, cory.johnson@bcstds.org

For Employment: Laci Johnson, Director of Human Resources, laci.johnson@bcstds.org