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Students find ways to give back during the holidays

BY ABIGAIL KIFER
OPS IN-HOUSE EDITOR

Lincoln students are finding ways to give back and help others this holiday season.

"People don't realize how blessed they are until you see people who are less fortunate," said junior Lindsey Sparks. Sparks and junior Brandon Turner are the co-presidents of the Random Acts of Kindness club sponsored by community service class teacher, Tanya Stoll.

A few weeks ago, senior Lauren Hipsher had the idea to have a fundraiser to help Dana Ring, a math teacher at Lincoln who is battling triple negative breast cancer. The community service class teamed up with RAK to sell puppy chow for the fundraiser. In just one week, the club made \$1,500 in selling puppy chow to Lincoln students.

"We didn't expect this much," said Sparks. "We were hoping to be successful but this much money is crazy."

The money raised went towards "The Ring of Hope"

created by the RAK club in honor of Ring to help her with medical expenses. The club created a GoFundMe page for Ring last year but didn't get much of a response. The puppy chow fundraiser obviously was a hit.

The club presented \$1,000 to Ring on the morning of Dec. 5 and surprised her. She was overwhelmed with tears and gratitude.

Ring says she is feeling well and is almost fully recovered.

"Last year was tough," Ring said. "I was exhausted most of the time, but I was happy to be able to still be at school, even if I wasn't at 100 percent."

The RAK club plans on helping other cancer patients and survivors with the remaining \$500 and continuing with the puppy chow fundraiser.

The RAK club made "build-a-baskets" for elderly, shut-in residents with Generations, a Vincennes University outreach program. The baskets include items such as toiletries, blankets, and Christmas ornaments.

RAK also helped watch children at Helping His Hands' toy store Dec. 11. The toy store is where parents can shop for affordable toys for their children for the holiday season.

"RAK wants to make sure everyone has a good holiday. There's always some way to help someone," Turner said to the club at a meeting.

RAK and the community service class aren't the only organizations helping out this holiday season. The Interact club, sponsored by guidance counselor Erika Shepard and VCSC superintendent Greg Parsley, rang bells Dec. 3 with Rotary. Students rang bells for the Salvation Army at Walmart, 650 Kimmell Rd.

Officer Evan Combs enjoyed ringing bells and helping a worthy cause.

"I like doing charity work because I like helping the community," he said.

The student council also sold candy grams to students. The candy grams were 50 cents and the money is being donated to Good Samaritan Hospital.



Lena Stephens helps a young boy from the Head Start program pick out a new bicycle during the annual Shop with a Cop event at Walmart on Tuesday. Students from the county high schools join area law enforcement officials in helping local children pick out toys and clothes for the holidays. Lincoln Log contributed photo.

Due to Lincoln High School's winter break, the OPS will return January 28. Happy holidays!

NAHS brings in puppies to reduce stress

BY EMMA MARTIN
OPS COPY EDITOR

Barking, kisses, and hot chocolate filled the commons area as the Lincoln High School's National Art Honor Society put on their first ever Pet-A-Puppy Day on Monday.

Students and teachers at Lincoln could pay \$1 for access to the many different puppies the Vincennes Animal Shelter had to offer.

NAHS put on the event for

students to relax and lower their stress during the nerve-racking finals week. Many students loved the opportunities and weaved their way through all the dogs multiple times.

"I really love dogs and this made me a lot happier for the week," said junior Brandon Turner.

The students are not the only ones benefitting from the puppies. With this one fundraiser, the NAHS was able to raise over \$160 for

the shelter.

"I just loved that so many people showed up to support the NAHS and animal shelter," said NAHS secretary Alexis Carie.

When asked about how it was being with the animals, Carie joked, "The dogs were pretty cute."

NAHS member Paris Fithian said, "The turnout was great and I hope we will be able to do it again."

While all the dogs were sweet and loving, there were two dogs many people favored.

The two siblings, Sedric and Constance, were the youngest animals there and a crowd favorite. Even when the two tangled themselves around senior Andres Ayala's feet, the people found them irresistible.

Ayala said, "This is the best thing that Lincoln has ever done."

Junior Chance Carie also got a lot of love from the dogs as he made his way around. One particularly sweet dachshund mix, held by senior Hannah Williams, crawled into his lap as soon as he sat down.

Also, among all the sweet dogs, was art teacher and NAHS sponsor Amy Lane's own.

Wrapped in a small red and black flannel shirt, Lane brought her dog Piper, a local animal shelter rescue to be part of the day.

NAHS plans to repeat the event during spring finals week with kittens.



From left, Jaden Field, Natalie Leonard and Payton Sievers enjoy Constance the puppy at the National Art Honor Society's Pet-a-Puppy event on Monday. NAHS sold passes to the event for \$1 to raise money for the Vincennes Animal Shelter and to help students relieve stress before finals. OPS staff photo.

Family traditions celebrated by Lincoln's student body

BY MYA ANDERSON
OPS STAFF WRITER

It's the most wonderful time of the year and what better way is there to celebrate than performing holiday traditions? From staying home and making everything in the cookbooks to going outside and caroling, the students at Lincoln High School have a diverse way of celebrating the holidays.

Most students recount stories of going to their loved one's houses every year while enjoying the company of those around them. Some believe in the Christmas holiday out of religion, but overall the majority of the student body can agree with freshman Fatima Ayala when thinking about the true meaning of the holidays.

"The most important thing about holidays for me is to be surrounded by family and enjoying those precious moments in life," Ayala said.

Other holiday traditions celebrated by students include the "Elf on a Shelf" doll, which reports back to Santa each night telling whether the children are being naughty or nice, and the "Christmas Pickle."

The legend of the Christmas Pickle starts on Christmas Eve, when a soldier begged a guard for a pickle while starving. The guard

gave him the pickle, which the soldier later credited for saving his life. After returning to his family, he began a tradition of hiding a pickle on their Christmas tree each year.

Senior Alexx Blair described the game as whichever child finds the pickle first will get an extra present.

"Sometimes it's a blanket or a fuzzy pillow," said Blair.

However, not everyone at Lincoln only celebrates Christmas. Others, such as freshman Katherine Tran, celebrate both the Chinese New Year and Vietnamese New Year.

"The tradition for my family is that the adults and the kids have their own separate parties. We open gifts at exactly midnight and celebrate with a variety of Asian food," said Tran.

She said the rice was her favorite holiday dish.

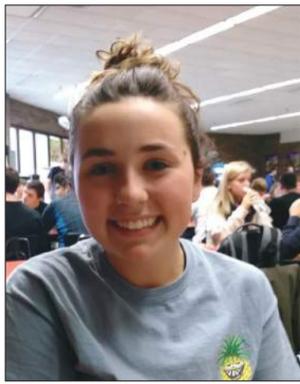
Junior Daniel Colvin looks forward to festive treats such as chocolate chip cookies and pumpkin pie.

"Most families bake their desserts, but my family actually goes out and buys them from the store," Colvin commented with a laugh.

Lincoln students will enjoy their winter break beginning Dec. 19 and return to classes on Jan. 4.

Opinions

Question of the Week: What is your Christmas wish?



"[I wish] Harambe was still alive."

Madi Goodwin
senior



"It will snow this Christmas."

Jaden Pfoff
junior



"To get my license."

Josh Banks
junior



"World peace."

Bri Pinkstaff
junior

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Underage gambling is risky behavior

By ANASTASIA KELLER
OPS COPY EDITOR

Underage gambling is a serious issue that is often overlooked. According to Felicia Grondin, associate director of the Lloyd D. Levenson Institute of Gaming, Hospitality and Tourism at Stockton University, 11.8 percent of adolescents gamble.

Underage gambling comes with a lot of consequences. Not only can underage gambling influence your study habits, it can affect your future. If an adolescent starts gambling at a young age it can turn into a life long addiction. Wasting time on gambling means less time to focus on school and maintaining good grades. It also means you are less active in your community. Colleges look at grades as well as extracurricular activities. If you are not involved and have low grades, you may be overlooked for college acceptances. Missing out on amazing college opportunities can impact your future.

Another consequence to underage gambling is hurt-

ing the ones you love. Once an adolescent is addicted, nothing seems to matter as much. The person is so fixated on gambling that their family, slowly but surely becomes invisible. Underage gambling causes adolescents to miss out on important events and situations their family needs them at.

You always see posters or websites saying to say no to drugs and alcohol, but you rarely see them about underage gambling. Gambling is just as addicting and destroying as drugs or alcohol. In schools, students attend seminars and conferences about drug and alcohol usage but the topic of underage gambling rarely occurs. It's detrimental to educate about gambling at a young age because that's when the temptation begins.

Underage gambling is a matter that should not be overlooked. If we don't educate adolescents about the consequences and dangers of underage gambling now the opportunity to change a life will be missed.

Is 'Merry Holidays' okay?

By LEXI EDGIN
OPS FEATURES EDITOR

"Merry Christmas!" a bell ringer says with a smile before receiving a glare from a passerby. So she changes her approach.

"Happy Holidays!" they then say, to which a middle aged woman sneers, "It's Merry Christmas!"

This isn't some scenario I'm making up; it actually happened to one of my friends.

This is a problem society faces today with our new obsession with political correctness. While making sure we as people work to accommodate and respect everyone is important, at what point does making everyone else happy start putting down others?

I'm not promoting ditching either greeting, but can we just be more respectful?

"Happy Holidays" is an all-encompassing phrase that can satisfy everyone, no matter the religious views or beliefs. It bundles in Thanksgiving, Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, New Year's...but that does not mean that "Merry Christmas" is meant to diminish or ignore other holidays. Both of these season's greetings are meant to promote the holiday cheer, the importance of family and the joy of this time of year.

That is what we all should focus on.

Some argue that "Merry Christmas" is a phrase that we use because of the Christian majority, and how that makes it more exclusive. However, it is noted that many non-religious families still celebrate Christmas and use the phrase, taking no offense to it and cherishing the time with their loved ones.

I'm not promoting ditching either greeting, but can we just be more respectful?

There is no argument that "Merry Christmas" dominates something like "Happy Hanukkah" in a community like ours, but that's not always the case. It depends on the population. Many people have been raised saying "Merry Christmas," but why is that offensive? They're simply acknowledging how they spend the holiday, and are not meaning to take away from anyone who doesn't celebrate it.

If people want to ban or do away with the phrase "Merry Christmas," why not get rid of displays of Christmas lights, trees, roads lined with candy canes, and carols?

The answer: We shouldn't. Holiday decorations and season's greetings are meant, as stated above, to spread the beauty and joy of the season.

So, the next time you receive Christmas cards or holiday cards, hang them together with pride and in harmony.

ways will be there for each other. Holidays are supposed to bring families together and "A Christmas Vacation" demonstrates that in the end. I enjoyed this movie because it really shows what holidays are actually like.

Number 4: "The Christmas Story"

I always sit down and watch this classic movie with family around Christmas time because it is so good. In the movie a young boy is trying to convince his parents that he needs a B.B. gun for Christmas. His parents don't agree and say he will shoot

his eye out. This is a great Christmas movie because kids are always asking for things that probably aren't the best for them.

Number 5: "The Santa Clause"

This is also one that you can't pass up watching during Christmas. It is a very funny movie and I really enjoy watching it. It is about a man and his son that wake up and catch Santa on the roof. Santa falls down and he disappears. The man puts the coat on, and before he knows it over periods of time he begins to turn into Santa.

Writer chooses top five Christmas movies

By MADISON HEIDEN
OPS STAFF WRITER

One of the best Christmas traditions is sitting back drinking hot chocolate and watching Christmas movies. There are a lot of good Christmas movies out there but here are my top five favorites.

Number 1: "Elf"

Everyone loves this one! It is about a boy who was living in an orphanage and on Christmas night when Santa came he crawled into Santa's bag. After arriving at the North Pole one of the elves took him in as his own and he grew up in the North Pole living life as an elf. When he is older he decides to go find his birth father. After finding his father he meets a girl and falls in love with her. In the end he

brings everyone together to believe in Santa again. One reason I like this movie is because in the end it brings everyone together, and that is what Christmas is about.

Number 2: "The Grinch"

This animated film based on Dr. Seuss's classic "How the Grinch Stole Christmas" is awesome. A grumpy creature tries to ruin Christmas, but by the end of the movie he has a change of heart and wants to celebrate Christmas with everyone. This is a great movie because it shows that people can change and become better people.

Number 3: "A Christmas Vacation"

This is definitely one of the best Christmas movies out there. The movie shows that family might not always get along, but in the end they al-

Combs' Corner

By STEVE COMBS
LHS PRINCIPAL

Today is the first day of winter break for VCSC students. But it feels as though the semester just started.

Freshmen aren't freshmen any longer, as they have their routines down, and seniors are chomping at the bit to be finished with high school.

All our students have finished their first semester final examinations and are hopefully looking forward to a few days at home with friends and family.

The VCSC offices will be closed until Jan. 4 at 7:30 a.m. This includes the Lincoln office. School will resume that day at 8 a.m., and we're asking our students to report to their first period, first semester class to pick up their class schedule for second semester.

From now until then, I wish everyone a safe and relaxing holiday break.

See you in January and go Alices!

Sports

DANCE TEAM OPENS COMPETITION SEASON

Girls place in two categories

By JESSICA PFOFF
OPS IN-HOUSE EDITOR

Last weekend the Lincoln High School Dance Team opened up their competition season in Crawfordsville, Indiana.

“I was very proud of all of our performances this weekend, especially since it was such a long competition. Their scores were strong for a first competition” Coach Brett Eaton said.

The team placed first in jazz and fifth in kick.

“In the kick category, we are competing against much larger teams who also have dance classes during their school day. It can be tough to compete against such established programs, but our team definitely made Lincoln proud. We know areas that we can work on and make the changes we need to in order to score higher.” Eaton said.

Kick and jazz styles aren’t new for most of the ladies. In kick, the team is doing a mix from the “Burlesque” movie, and for jazz they are dancing to a Beyonce mix.

“They are both sassy and fun songs that the girls can really make their own, and get into,” Eaton said.

Group dances aren’t the only categories the dance team is competing this season.

Junior Madison Heiden, senior Mattie Franklin and senior Miranda Ryder all competed in solo competition.

The soloists came in twelfth, tenth, and sixth, respectively, at Crawfordsville. Senior Jaelyn Barton had a solo prepared, but did not compete because of an injury that happened at practice the previous Wednesday.

Also Franklin, Barton, and Ryder are doing a senior trio. The three decided to do a trio for their senior year because they have been dancing together for so long.

“This season I am most looking forward to our jazz routine, and our senior trio. It is my first year doing a solo, so I’m also looking forward to that new experience,” senior Mattie Franklin said.

At the first practice of the season, the team set a goal for themselves to make it to state, and place in top three, but they would also like to try and beat their scores from last year.

Senior Victoria DeBrock took a break from dance a few years ago, but decided to try dance again her senior year.

“I decided to do the dance team my senior year because it had been something I wanted to try, and I missed dancing. I’d been a dancer for 12 years, but I hadn’t danced since my dance studio closed down three years ago. I’m really enjoying it so far, and I’m glad I joined!” DeBrock said. The freshmen this year all have dance experience, and even competed on their middle school dance team, so this isn’t something new for them.

“You can check out some of our routines at the Holiday Classic Tournament, and also throughout the basketball season,” Eaton said.

The dance team competes next at the Avon Invitational on January 14.

Athlete feature: Emma Besing



Having only danced three years, Besing stands out

PARKER MCNEELY
OPS STAFF WRITER

For most people, a sport like dance requires many years of practice before it all comes together. But for sophomore Emma Besing, it only took three.

Besing first joined the George Rogers Clark Middle School dance team in eighth grade after much persuasion from other members of the team. Before joining Clark dance, she was a member of the sixth and seventh grade cheer teams.

“My favorite part of dance is being around all the girls and all the fun we have,” she said.

Dance is a very complex sport that requires many different styles of dance to put a routine together, but Besing prefers that new kick routine that the team has been learning.

She is also an important part of the Lady Alices soccer team and often has to juggle both sports practices at once.

“It gets tiring but it’s also a lot of fun,” she said

Her main goal as a member of the dance team is to just enjoy every moment and have fun with her teammates.

LINCOLN TEAMS IN HOLIDAY TOURNEY ACTION

Boys are facing semi-state opponent

By ISSAC RICE
OPS STAFF WRITER

The Annual McDonald's Holiday Hoops Basketball Classic will be under way on Dec 29 and 30. The tournament is held at Lincoln High School and has ten teams participating.

Some of the big teams coming to the tournament are University, North Knox, Indianapolis Bishop Chatard, Eastern Green and Guerin Catholic, all skilled shooting basketball teams that will make this tournament a tough competition.

Lincoln has a lot to prepare for a big opening game against University, a team from Indianapolis that is highly talented.

Junior Guard Sam Corona is excited.

“I’m ready to see us against some highly talented teams and I’m excited to improve and get better for the rest of the season.”

Lincoln is focusing on overall toughness, prevention of scoring, reads on passes that lead to smooth transition scoring.

“We need to work on overall team fundamental ball movement,” said senior guard Grant Oexmann.

The small Lincoln team

will have to work on positioning to get lots of rebounds that lead to scoring. Two things that are key to win the classic.

Lincoln had a bumpy start to the season with a 1-4 record. They had tough losses to skilled schools Evansville Reitz and conference opponent Mt. Carmel.

“A big key to our success will be centered on us keeping the ball out of the paint,” said head coach Josh Thompson. Lincoln wants to improve their record by focusing on their defense and passing that leads to open looks to the basket.

The Holiday Hoops Classic is sure to be a thrilling tournament with a lot of talented teams participating. Lincoln plans to improve their record and bring home the trophy for the third time in five years

The tournament will open with Indianapolis Howe vs. Eastern Greene at 3 p.m. Dec. 29, followed by Guerin Catholic against Southridge at 4:30 p.m. and Indianapolis Attucks vs. North Knox at 6:30 p.m. The day will conclude with Lincoln vs. University at 8 p.m.

Girls ready for a ‘sectional taste’

By KAITY MCCOY
OPS ONLINE CONTENT EDITOR

The girls basketball team (5-4) will be playing in the annual holiday tournament held at Lincoln High School on Dec. 22 beginning at 3 p.m.

The girls play in game three beginning at 6 p.m against Sullivan.

Coach Travis Connor hopes that the girls play well and put themselves in a position to repeat as champions.

Some of this years leading scorers are sophomore Alison Hein, leading them with 15.3 points per game.

“Junior Abi Haynes, who is our floor general, averages 10.2 points and 7 assists per game. Another contributor to the team is junior Chasity Trueblood, averaging 8 points and 9.4 rebounds per game,” said Connor.

Freshman Darrian Carmean is a standout freshman this year for the girls. Recently, Carmean made a half court shot with 3.7 seconds left against Boonville to win the game.

There are several quality opponents playing in this tournament. North Knox (9-1) and Northview (8-2) will have the best records in the tournament at this point. Corydon Central and Indianapolis Ritter are also very good teams with difficult schedules.

Sullivan has one of the best shooting freshman that Lincoln has played against.

Connor thinks that it would be fun to meet North Knox in the championship game, because last year’s semi final had a “sectional taste” to it.

“We will prepare one game at a time,” said Connor about his plan for the tournament.

“Even from the injuries that have progressed through the season, we feel good about going into the tournament and I think we will walk away with some hardware,” said Junior Katie Drake.

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Features

OPS 4

SENIOR SPOTLIGHTS: Lamarr Paulk and Katelyn Oexmann



Lamarr Paulk, crowned as 2016 Mr. Alice. Photo by Lincoln High School Sports Pictures.

By **TOBIAS FLORES**
OPS STAFF WRITER

Lamarr Jesse Quentelle Paulk, son of Willie Paulk and Diane Quisenberry, is a senior at Vincennes Lincoln High School. He has five siblings and five pets.

In his pass time, Paulk likes to sleep, read, binge Netflix and daydream.

He also enjoys being part of musicals and plays. He performed in "Back to the 80s" and "The Greek Mythology Olympiaganza."

Paulk is also active in his community through the community service class. His many achievements in high school include winning the Mr. Alice competition, winning an eating contest in 2012, getting his dogs, and eating a box of Swiss Rolls in under three minutes.

Paulk's career goal is to be a social worker or a music

therapist.

After high school, Paulk plans to go to Vincennes University, and "try to be financially stable."

His favorite teachers include Seth Skelton, Kreg Battles, Haley Lancaster, and Jared Blue.

His favorite quote is, "Don't dream it, be it," from the movie-musical "The Rocky Horror Picture Show."

Paulk's most memorable moment is a touching one.

"When I was 15, I was told I was going to an ice show, but I actually got to meet my dad for the first time."

Looking back, Paulk comments on the experience saying that it was nice, adding, "Coming out distanced us, but it showed me even though I'm not the person he thought I was, he still cares."

His most embarrassing moment was in fifth grade when he ripped his pants and didn't have a change of clothes.

His favorite book is "Holding the Man" by Timothy Conigrave. His favorite TV show is "Glee," and he works at Hardee's.

Paulk's favorite part of being at Lincoln is knowing that everyone knows his name and is accepting of him.

His advice to freshmen is very direct.

"Always wear deodorant, and no matter what upper-classmen say, don't listen. You came to play, not obey."

OPS STAFF REPORT

Lincoln's senior spotlight this week is Katelyn Oexmann, who can often be found performing in the school plays and musicals, singing or painting.

While at Lincoln, she has been part of Tri-M Music Honor Society and National Honor Society. She is also currently the President of Student Council and an Interact Officer.

Oexmann performs with Lincoln Singers, and is also a National Anthem singer at athletic events.

She has volunteered at Good Samaritan Hospital, visits nursing homes, and has been a Sunday school teacher.

She's also been involved in Knox County Youth Leadership and Teen Court.

She has been recognized for having a 4.0 grade point

undecided where she wants to attend college at.

Her favorite class is peer tutoring, but it's hard for Oexmann to pick one favorite teacher. Her favorites include Shea Duke, Carly Tibbs, Mike Hidde, Kreg Battles, Janis Hert and Gretchen Bruner.

"You will never regret being kind," is Oexmann's favorite quote.

Between cheer block and hosting the French and German students, she has had lots of memories that she will probably never forget, however her most embarrassing moment was calling Janis Hert "mom."

Oexmann couldn't pick a favorite book, but her favorite book series is "Harry Potter."

Her favorite movie is "The Breakfast Club."

She is currently working at Glik's clothing store, 634 Niblack Blvd.

Oexmann has a lot to like about Lincoln.

"I like how willing all the teachers and staff are to help students in any way they can," Oexmann said.

"Always be respectful to your teachers," she advises freshmen. "They all just want you to do your best and succeed."

She's grateful for the help the staff has given her.

"Erika Shepard and Steve Combs have had a big impact on my senior year already. I am so grateful for their advice and guidance," Oexmann said.

She is the daughter of Brad and Cinda Oexmann and she has one brother named Jonathan.

She also has a dog named Biscuit and a cat named Nala.



Senior Katelyn Oexmann, contributed photo.

Artist of the Week: Liam Murphy

By **BRITTON DUDASKO**
OPS OPINIONS EDITOR

This week's artist of the week is Lincoln High School senior Liam Murphy. You won't find him on stage or painting a portrait. You'll find him behind the scenes, because he has done technical theater for three years.

Murphy says he joined tech theater his sophomore year.

"I wanted to be a part of the plays and musicals, but didn't want to act," he said.

He has been a part of eight theatrical productions during his three years in the program. He has been assigned many jobs for shows, including sound board light board operator, props master, lock rail, fly crew and booth assistant. His favorite job, however, is sound board.

"It takes the most skill and attention to operate," he explained. He also is responsible for helping to mic actors before shows.

Murphy has many mentors in the theater program. However, two people in particular stick out to him.

"Parker Newman and Lafe McCracken," said Murphy, "They've taught me a lot, and I have a massive amount

of respect for them."

After graduation, Murphy plans to attend IUPUI in Indianapolis to major in computer science. He would like to continue theater in college as well, should the opportunity arise.

Murphy encourages everyone to join tech.

"It's a great way to meet new people and gain new friends," he said, "as well as learn about some things that so many people never really get to learn about."

His best advice to other young artists is to "stay true to your vision and don't be afraid to ask those around you for help."

Murphy is son to Kent Murphy and Darla Murphy, and older brother to Sean Murphy.



Liam Murphy, OPS photo by Hannah Williams.

average and earning an academic honors diploma.

Oexmann plans to be a pediatrician but is currently

Teachers get into the season's spirit

By **HANNAH WILLIAMS**
OPS NEWS EDITOR

With Christmas just around the corner, elementary classrooms around the Vincennes Community School Corporation have experienced a lot of excitement and teachers are finding ways to get kids into the holiday spirit.

Tecumseh-Harrison Elementary second grade teacher Jennifer Jewel has been keeping the Christmas spirit alive by playing BINGO, making reindeer food and snacks and writing letters to Santa.

Jewel's classroom also has Elf on the Shelf. The kids named her Jingles this year, and she has been bringing them treats and surprises.

Despite all of these things, there is still an issue with kids who don't believe in Santa trying to ruin things for the kids that do.

"Students try telling other kids Santa isn't real every

year. I tell them if they believe, then Santa will come," said Jewel.

One tradition Jewel carries on every year is reading "The Polar Express," making hot chocolate and watching the movie.

James Whitcomb Riley Elementary is also using "The Polar Express" as a way to keep the Christmas spirit alive in the classroom.

Riley's kindergarten through second grade classes took a trip to French Lick for a Polar Express experience. These classes sang with elves, ate cookies and drank hot chocolate.

Second grade teacher Kellee Worland asked businesses for financial assistance and was able to provide each student with a ticket for only \$5.

"I feel like this magical journey adds to their innocence and true believing. [The kids] are still talking about it!" Worland said.