



To: Board of Education
From: Amy Melinder, Director of Community Engagement
Date: December 15, 2025
Re: District Highlights

Comments: **Sipley students compete in Penny Wars for a good cause**
Sipley students showed both generosity and strategy during this year's Penny Games fundraiser, where pennies add to a class total and silver coins subtract. This year's winning grade was 2nd grade, the only class to finish with a positive total. Thanks to the enthusiastic participation of students and families, the school raised \$536.88 for GiGi's Playhouse, supporting individuals with Down syndrome.

Jefferson celebrates food drive success

Jefferson students and staff recently gathered for an assembly to celebrate this year's food drive, which brought in 915 pounds of food and \$200 for local families, surpassing last year's total. As part of the celebration, Principal Justin Warnke and the Interim Dean of Students Bill Krefft each took a pie to the face. Students nominated by staff also competed in "Minute to Win It"-style games against staff teams. The JJH student council sponsored this event.

Student artwork on display

Throughout December, artwork created by Sipley Elementary School students is featured upstairs at the Woodridge Public Library. Some amazing student talent is on display!

Village Community Recognition Awards

Woodridge 68 was proudly represented at the Village of Woodridge Community Recognition Awards on December 2.

- Karen Lawrence, 6th grade teacher at William F Murphy Elementary School, was named Employee of the Year—a



well-deserved honor for her dedication and impact in the classroom.

- Aiden Cuya and Camille Bastic, both 8th graders at Thomas Jefferson Junior High School, were recognized as Youth Citizens of the Year for their outstanding character and leadership.

Jefferson student recognized for Patriot's Pen

Jefferson Junior High 8th grader Henry McNeice was named the school's Patriot's Pen winner in this year's national essay contest sponsored by the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Fifteen Jefferson students participated, and Henry earned the highest score (98.33%) for his thoughtful response to the theme *"How Are You Showing Patriotism and Support for Our Country?"*

Henry was recognized by Woodridge VFW Post 1578, where he read his essay to Post members and received a standing ovation. His family and Jefferson social studies teacher, Joe Wechman, joined him for the celebration.

Special Ed teacher awarded mini-grant

The Illinois Alliance for Administrators of Special Education annually awards mini-grants to teachers and related service providers who are interested in pursuing innovative practices for students with disabilities through a competitive application process. Betsy Castillo, Learning Behavior Specialist for the K-1 MLP classroom at Meadowview, has been awarded one of these mini-grants for her proposal, The Woodridge School District 68 Toy Lending Library, which will enhance parent collaboration and support for learning through play for our youngest students with complex needs.