

# The Mid-State Messenger

March 2021



## School Social Work Week is March 7

School social workers play a pivotal role in our school districts. They help with district-wide behavior incentive programs, they help Early Intervention students transition to IEPs upon turning 3, they give critical outside counseling resources to families, they provide behavior intervention suggestions, and among so many other supports they provide, the most crucial support they give is their social work services they provide to the students. Their social emotional expertise assists students in life changing ways. Scarlett Vanzo, social worker for Brownstown, St. Elmo, Ramsey, and Mulberry Grove, said this after being complimented on how her interventions with a struggling student helped him find success and allowed him to stay in his home school: "I never think of student success as a compliment to my interventions, I always give the credit to the students."

If you see Karen Bennett, Rick Cina, Lisa Cacciatori, Michelle Dothager, Patricia Redpath, Nancy Roasio, Jessica Ryan, or Scarlett Vanzo during the week of March 7th, please take a minute to wish them a wonderful social work week.

## New Leadership Coming

As the 2020-2021 school year comes to an end, Litchfield School District #12 will be losing a great leader. Mr. Doug Hoster has been the principal of the Litchfield High School for the past six years. At the close of this year, he will be retiring. We are sorry to see him go.



At a special board meeting held on Thursday, February 4th, the board of education for the Litchfield Purple Panthers approved the hire of Mrs. Juletta

Ellis to lead the charge! We are happy to welcome Mrs. Ellis as the new Litchfield High School Principal and look forward to where she will take the school.

## Showing Kindness

Kayla Hingson, Brownstown Pre-K special education/general education teacher, and her students, helped share kindness. Students drew pictures that were sent to residents living in a local nursing home. Since residents in nursing homes and assistive living facilities have had to take many COVID precautions, this did lift a lot of spirits!



## Positive Rapport = Student Success

We all know that having a positive relationship and rapport with our students is going to have a major impact on their academic and life successes. Actually seeing it come to fruition is what keeps us going in this crazy world of education. Lisa Whisler at South Fork High School has focused her energy into creating those lasting relationships this school year as she moved into the high school special education teacher position and has made impacts far beyond what even she realizes. You see the young man tucked into the corner of this picture? This young man has a very colorful past in the school setting, but now having found "his person," he is coming to school regularly, wants to move into general education classes, and is trying to make the honor roll. The fact that he is hanging more decorations in Mrs. Whisler's classroom for her birthday and not completely tearing them down as he might have in previous years is a true testament to the impact that we as educators can have on our students. Always remember--you never know who you might be "the person" for, so keep pressing to create these relationships!



## Panhandle 2016 Graduates Return

2020 is an exciting year for the Panhandle School district. Two of their 2016 graduates, Lexi Emerson and Skylar Krager returned to Panhandle School Districts to join the teaching staff.



Lexi Emerson is a first year teacher at Raymond Jr/Sr high school. She graduated from Panhandle in 2016. She is pictured with her grandparents at the graduation. Lexi shared that her grandma had worked at the school when she was young. Lexi wanted to return to Panhandle because her sister is still a student and she knew the town well. She wanted to be teaching where she felt comfortable. Lexi also stated that it is important for her to be able to give back to the community she was raised in. She selected special education because she loves to help others. Lexi started tutoring in the resource room when she was a freshman at Lincolnwood. She fell in love with working with the students. Lexi expressed that she was surprised at how fast her first year has gone. When asked what she enjoyed most about this year, Lexi said, "The feeling of closeness that the staff have here and all the support I have received from my team members."



Skylar Krager is also a Panhandle graduate. Skylar is teaching at Farmersville Grade School. She was thrilled when she saw the job opening. Ms. Krager shared that she really wanted to teach the age group that she is currently teaching Pre-K through 1<sup>st</sup> grade. She was excited to serve students in her hometown. Skylar decided to go into the field of special education because of the experience she had tutoring students with special needs in high school. Skylar stated, "This profession is extremely rewarding and I love my students!" Skylar said, "The most surprising thing about this year would definitely have to be teaching in the middle of a pandemic with a mask on all day long for my first year of teaching. I would've never thought this would be how my first year of teaching would be!" When asked what she enjoyed most about this year, Skylar said, "My students! They make everything worth it!" The students, staff, and administration are all glad that Lexi and Skylar came back. They have both been a tremendous addition to the staff.

