



# The Guardian

August 2024

Newsletter of the Alton Educational Foundation

### Meet the AEF Board

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### Bricks, Blocks, & Benches

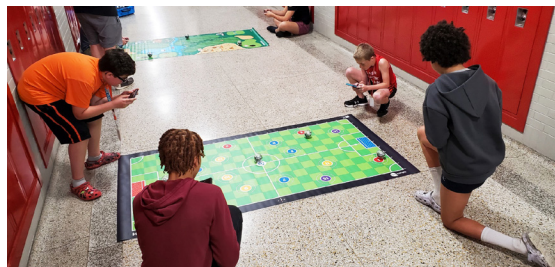
Bricks, blocks, and benches are available for purchase and will be placed at Alton High School. Proceeds from the sales are combined with the Guardians of Education funds. Click on the Donations tab at [altoned.org](http://altoned.org) for more information.



## Sphero Robots Encourage Creativity in Social Studies Education at AMS

In a bold step towards modernizing her ancient civilization course, AMS 6th grade teacher Bridget Lyles, with the help of the AEF, has embarked on an intriguing journey, integrating Sphero robots into her Social Studies curriculum. This innovative approach is reshaping traditional teaching methods and captivating students' imaginations as they explore history, geography, and culture in an entirely new light.

Gone are the days of passive learning in her Social Studies class. With the introduction of Spheros, students are actively engaged in hands-on activities that bring historical events and geographical concepts to life.



From programming the Sphero to help reenact pivotal moments in history to navigating maps to understand trade routes, students are empowered to take ownership of their learning journey.

Imagine blazing a new trail along the silk road trading route or outfitting a caravan through the Egyptian desert or even creating a new mode of transportation to discover new lands all coming to life through carefully choreographed reenactments. These immersive experiences not only deepen students' understanding of historical events but also foster empathy and connection to the past in ways that textbooks simply cannot achieve.

Social Studies is not just about memorizing facts and dates; it's about understanding



the interconnectedness of our world. With Sphero robots, students embark on virtual journeys, tracing the footsteps of ancient civilizations, exploring cultural traditions, and understanding the impact of global events on diverse communities. The robots serve as ambassadors, bridging the gap between different cultures and fostering a sense of global citizenship.

Programming Sphero robots requires more than just technical skills; it demands critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity. Students are challenged to design, code, and collaborate with peers to achieve their goals. These skills extend beyond the classroom, preparing students for the



Continued to pg 2.



demands of the 21st-century workforce where adaptability and innovation are valued.

One of the greatest strengths of Sphero robots is their accessibility. Regardless of background or ability, all students can participate and thrive in Sphero-based activities. The robots level the playing field, allowing every student to contribute their unique perspectives and talents to the learning process.



As we consider the coming year, the future looks brighter than ever. With each lesson, students develop a deeper appreciation for the complexities of the world around them and emerge as

informed, empathetic global citizens ready to tackle the challenges of tomorrow.

The integration of Sphero robots into the Social Studies curriculum at AMS is not just a technological advancement; it's a paradigm shift in the way we approach education. By harnessing the power of technology to ignite curiosity and inspire learning, we are paving the way for a brighter, more inclusive future. With the help of the Alton Educational Foundation, we are well on our way.



# CONGRATULATIONS!

## 2024 Orville & Kathleen Brunjes Memorial Scholarship Fund Winners



The Orville and Kathleen Brunjes Memorial Scholarship was established by Kathleen Brunjes in 1987. Kathleen began the scholarship program by awarding scholarships to outstanding students in the communities in which she and Orville lived and worked. Funds to continue her legacy of giving were provided from her estate, and the Alton Educational Foundation began overseeing the disbursement of these scholarship funds in 2018. Applicants are evaluated on effort, GPA, community involvement, awards, essay, and recommendations. Two \$1000 scholarships are awarded each year.

**The Alton Educational Foundation Board is pleased to announce Emily Schrupf and Juliana Stevenson as this year's Brunjes Scholarship winners.**



Emily is the daughter of Keri Sue and Patrick Schrupf. She graduated with high academic honors and was involved in sports, music, and academic clubs while attending Alton High School. Emily also served as a Student Representative on the Young Adults Committee of the Riverbend Growth Association. She will be attending Bradley University in the Fall of 2024 to study nursing with plans to become a nurse practitioner.

Juliana is the daughter of Andrew and Katherine Stevenson. She graduated with high academic honors and was involved in music, theater, and academic clubs at Alton High School. Juliana is very active at her church with volunteering her time to help teach elementary students and also her musical talents during services. Juliana will be attending Indiana State University with plans to major in biology and minor in music. She hopes to pursue a career in genetics or genetics research.

Congratulations to Emily and Juliana!

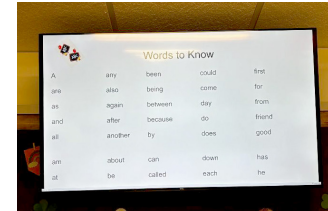
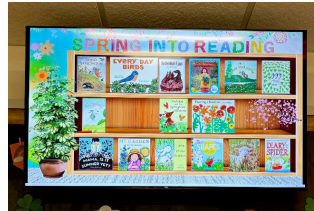
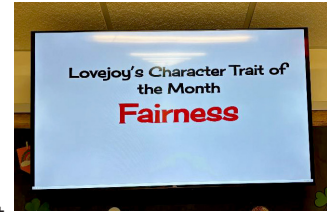




## Extra! Extra! Read All About It!

A grant submitted by Penny Salvato, Title I Instructor at Lovejoy Elementary, and funded by the Alton Educational Foundation, allowed the addition of three Televisions to broadcast information to students throughout the school. The screens make use of "down time" while passing in the halls by providing information of interest to students, skill building topics, and practicing reading skills. There is a screen in the two main school hallways and one in the cafeteria. Some of the information presented to

students includes; the daily lunch menu, the "character trait" of the month, seasonal information such as appropriate outside attire, sight words, and reading recommendations. It is hoped that in the future, students will also have opportunities to be televised, learn how to make videos, edit and caption videos, and upload videos to YouTube.



## Alton Middle School Sewing Club Students Learn Valuable Skills to Help Themselves and Others

I am sending this thank you letter to Alton Educational Foundation for their generous donation to the Alton Middle School Sewing Club.

Last year you funded "Ms. Weber's Sewing Club 2.0" which allowed me to continue to provide our middle school students the opportunity to learn a valuable life skill that would be useful for their entire lives and act as a stepping stone to future careers. We meet after school twice a week for most of the school year.

Because of your support, hundreds of students now have the skill to sew by hand and machine. They know how to make pillows and clothing. There were over 45 students in the club this year and a dozen have been with me for the 3rd year. Students and their families enjoy the sewing club and what it stands for. It stands for learning and learning to create and give.

There is a long list of things the students make for themselves as well as for others who are suffering from some critical illnesses. We provide the families with hand sewn pillows, and made robes, sleep wear and quilts with matching bags to show our care for their loved ones. This year we gave to two families and are currently working on one more.

Again, thank you for funding us. We will keep up the good work and will always be grateful for your kindness and generosity.

Sincerely,  
**Angel Weber,**  
 AMS Art Teacher; and Director of the AMS Sewing Club



### AWARDS

- Kailyn Alexander
- Yahira Delgado
- Camdyn Elrod
- Lucas Frye
- Tucker Gehrig
- Alyssa Herbst

**Original Three Scholarship**  
 Paris Thomas

**Elijah P Lovejoy Memorial Scholarship**  
 Keion Lacey

**Elijah P. Lovejoy Memorial Achievement Award**  
 Michael Fellion • Abrielle Golley  
 Stella McClaine • Aniya Morrow • Amirah Perry  
 Isabella Russell • Jillian Smith

### Alton High School 2024 Illinois State Scholars

- Mia Lavite
- Spencer Leonard
- Marissa Lewis
- Augustus Livingstone
- Jacob Lowe
- Isaiah Ouechani

- Morgan Plummer
- Owen Robien
- Sophie Rose
- Emily Schrupf
- Hilary Schrupf
- Alexander Siatos

- Jillian Smith
- Khalilia Spitz
- Bel Springman
- Madison Stephens
- Juliana Stevenson
- Kian Summers

- Rachel Ware
- William Weirich
- Colton Wendle
- Christine Zheng

## 2023-2024 Guardians of Education

### Emeritus (\$1,000 or more)

Melody Favazza  
Piasa Charitable Foundation  
(HWRT Oil Company)  
Charles & Joan Sheppard  
Karen Wilson (State Farm)

### Valedictorian (\$500-\$999)

Steve & Kristie Baumgartner  
Mark & Cathy Droste  
Madison Co. 1 Retired  
Teachers Association Unit  
73  
Randy & Debbie Sheary  
Phil & Teri Trapani  
United Community Bank  
(Liberty Bank)

### Salutatorian (\$250-\$499)

David & Paula Fritz  
Missy & Rick Gibson  
Edmond & Cathy Gray  
Patrick & Laura Shansey  
Julie Spurgeon  
Thomas & Nita Whitten

### High Honor Roll (\$50-\$249)

Felicia Alexander  
Elizabeth Allen  
Alice Barnard  
Erik & Laura Barton  
Steve & Barb Batchelor  
Norma Bedwell  
Kristin Bemis  
Mike Brey  
Bob & Gail Burjes  
Rebecca Chapman  
Sandy Crawford  
John & Carmen Cunningham

Diane Doerr  
Chamaine Downton  
Paul & Dorothy Droste  
John Ducey  
Gary & Traci Dunn  
Catherine Elliott  
Lennie Goeken  
Sandra Goeken  
Tarah Hampton  
Tawnya Hooper  
David & Annette Jacks  
Elaine Kane  
Mirsad Kapetanovich  
Patricia Kimbro  
Melissa Kng  
Victoria & Michael Lehman  
Jim & Cindy McCormick  
Peter McFarlane  
Ann McLaughlin  
Amanda Marko  
Dennis & Pamela Maxeiner  
Debbie Miller  
Vivian Monckton  
Dale & Carol Neudecker

Christine Petrea  
Stephen & Patsy Saale  
Mary Schell  
James Spain  
Denise & Matthew Stidd  
Dennis Sutton  
Mary Pat Venardos  
Marjorie Wheeler  
Pamela Wickenhauser

### Honor Roll (\$5-\$49)

Wendy Adams  
B.J. Becker  
Jetta Blair  
Cami Giertz  
Scott Harper  
Thomas & Linda Lamb  
Karen & Robert Lowe  
Sherry Mills  
Stacey Noble-Loveland  
Cathy Stolze  
Kara Twichell

## District Awards

Each year, Alton teachers and staff are recognized for excellence by their peers and by prestigious organizations of educators & business leaders.

*The AEF salutes all of our SY 2023 & 2024 recipients!*

### Extraordinary Educator Award- Telegraph

Kim Lawrence (North)  
Kristi Doering (AHS)  
Lisa Lovett (AHS)  
Bridget Kenney (AHS)

### Emerson Excellence in Teaching

David Dresch (AHS)

### National Federation of State High School Association - Outstanding Educator Award

Laura Plummer (AHS)

### M.A.P.O. - Metro Area Professional Organization; Boys & Girls Club - Distinguished Service Award

Kristie Baumgartner (ACUSD#11)

### Illinois Association for Career and Technical Education (IACTE)

#### Carl Perkins Community Service Award

Regina Birch (AHS)

### Those Who Excel - Early Career Educator

Sarah Wheat (AMS)

## 2024 Funded Grants

**\$10,000 in Grants Funded in 2024!**

**Amy Miller, West Elementary: Chicks Here, There, and Everywhere**

**Penny Salvato, Lovejoy Elementary: Smart Buttons = Smart Kids**

**Stephanie Hellemeier, Lovejoy Elementary: RE- Write Max Boards**

**Betsy Prehn, Mark Twain: Coffee with Kindness**

**Dylan Dudley, Alton High School: Athletic PE Weight Equipment**

**Joanne Curvey, Gilson Brown: STEM Bins for Kindergarten**

**Jody Meggos, Eunice Smith: STEM Bins for Kindergarten**

**Staci Lawson, Alton High School: Teachers on the Move**





## Highlights From The AHS Music Department

The Marching 100 had a successful season placing 4th at the Metro-East Marching Classic in O'Fallon, 2nd at the Greater St. Louis Marching Band Festival in Belleville, and 2nd at the Eastern Illinois University Panther Marching Band Festival where they also won Best General Effect, Best Music, Best Percussion. The Marching 100 placed 3rd in the St. Louis Thanksgiving Parade.

In February the Symphonic Orchestra participated in the Illinois State University Orchestra Festival along with 11 other high school orchestras from around the state. We had a great clinic with Dr. Glenn Block, director of orchestras at ISU.

The Alton High School theater and music departments presented Annie to a full house for all four performances. We had a lot of fun performing for families and hearing their reaction to Annie, "Sandy", the orphans, and the other cast of talented actors.

The Alton Middle School orchestra and choir held their very popular annual Coffee Concert May 10. They collected over \$700 in monetary donations along with gift cards and other donations for the school district's McKinney-Vento Fund which supports our families experiencing housing insecurities.

The Symphonic Orchestra will once again perform at The Nature Institute's In Harmony with Nature concert on Friday, September 20 at 6:00 pm. Our theme this fall is Fright Night. Ticket info will be posted at [thenatureinstitute.org](http://thenatureinstitute.org). All proceeds benefit The Nature Institute.



*Symphonic Orchestra performing at TNi last fall.*



*The Marching 100 in the 2023 St. Louis Thanksgiving Parade*



*The Alton High School Band in New York's Central Park last summer*

**Nadja Kapetanovich, 11**, All-State Choir  
**Rachel Ware, 12**, All-State Honors Choir  
**Norah Hardin, 11**, violin I, All-State Orchestra  
**Ethan Fox, 12**, viola, All-State Orchestra  
**Stephen Whiteside, 11**, All-State Orchestra  
**Joseph Hicks, 11**, All-State Honors Orchestra

*AHS had 6 students selected to attend the 2024 Illinois Music Educators Association All-State Festival*



## Athletic Wrap-up 2023-2024

Starting with the Fall of 2023 our Athletic Programs at Alton High School enjoyed many successes along the way and we were very happy to see our Redbird student-athletes competing in the various sports all school year.



Once again lots to be PROUD of in Redbird Nation.

In the fall, **Redbird Boys Golfer, Sam Ottwell** qualified for the 3A IHSA Boys State Tournament and carded a 148 over the weekend to finish in 5th Place overall, 5 shots out of first. Both Sam Ottwell and Alex Siatos helped lead

the Redbirds to a 2nd Place finish in the SWC Boys Golf standings, while both earning 1st Team All-Conference. Alex Siatos was later named Alton's Scholar Athlete of the Year. Junior **Girls Golfer, Addison Kenney** qualified for the IHSA Girls Golf Sectional after shooting a 78 in the Regional. Addison followed that up with an 83 in the Sectional and just missed the cut for State.

**Redbird Lady Tennis** squad finished in 5th place in the conference with a 7-5 record overall and will return a very good nucleus of girls.



The Varsity **Girls Volleyball** team had a very competitive season with 16 wins on the season, the most since the 2015-2016 season and will be under the direction of a new coach in 2024-2025.

The Redbird **Boys Cross**

**Country** team had another very good season winning their own Alton Invite, taking 3rd Place at the BWHS Invite, and having 1 runner finish in the top twenty at the SWC Conference race. The **Girls Cross Country** squad despite limited numbers still had 3 young ladies place in the top 20 runners at the SWC XC Meet.

The **Boys Soccer** team got better all year and went 6-4 in their last 10 matches to finish the season strong.



The **Redbird Football** team had a lot of individual hi-lights and will return numerous players to shoot for more team success in the 2024-2025 school year.

The **Girls Swim team** competed in the Edwardsville Sectional Swim and Dive meet, but did not have any state qualifiers this past year.

The Winter season brought the **Girls Basketball** team to the forefront and they reached levels that had not been seen ever in Alton Basketball History. The Girls Basketball team won 32 games, which included a Southwestern Conference Championship, an IHSA Regional Championship, and an IHSA Sectional Championship. Along the way the Girls won their own Tournament in November, took 1st Place at the Morton College & Fremd Holiday Tournament, and took 1st place in the Highland Tournament and started the year at 17-0.



**Girls Wrestling** was in its 3rd year as an IHSA sport this winter and Alton's own **Elana Hickman** took 3rd Place at state at the 155 lb. weight class. **Redbird Boys Wrestling** had a solid year despite being very young and finished at 9-11 overall.

The **AHS Dance team** had another solid season as they finished in 4th Place in SWC Dance Competition and also qualified as team for the IDTA State Tournament.

The **Boys Swim team** competed in the Edwardsville Sectional Swim and Dive meet, but did not have any state qualifiers this past year.



Redbird **Boys Basketball** bounced back to have a winning record under Head Coach Dylan Dudley and have set themselves up to a big year next winter.

The **Redbird Cheer** also finished in 4th Place in the SWC Cheer Competition and also had their squad qualify for ICCA Cheer State Championship. Head Coach Megan Hodge was named ICCA Coach of the Year for the State of Illinois.

In **Bowling**, the Girls qualified for the Sectional as a team and had an individual in **Jillian Dwiggin** make it to state in Rockford being the 1st Redbird in quite a while to reach this level. On the Boys side the Redbirds had two state qualifiers in **Brayden Buchanan** and **Austin Rathgeb** to send Coach Dave Meyer out to retirement on a high note.



## Athletic Wrap-Up 2023-2024 continued

### Spring Season

With the Spring season Redbird athletics had to deal once again with a very wet spring that caused multiple changes in the various schedules.

**Boys Tennis** had a solid season finishing with a winning record overall and will say good bye to a super senior class.

**Girls Track** had one student-athlete in junior, **NeVaeh Bryant**, who qualified for the 3A IHSA State Championships in two events and along with the Lady Redbird 4 x 200 Relay team. NeVaeh ended up in 5th Place in the 300 m Hurdles to take home a medal. On the **Boys track** team, the Redbirds had a nice contingent make the trek to Charleston and the State Boys Track Meet. Two Relay teams and 1 individual (**Samuel Elliott-Barnes**), who qualified in 3 events for the Redbirds.

The **Boys Volleyball** had another solid season finishing with 13 wins on the year and won their first round IHSA post-season match for the 3rd year in a row.

**Boys Baseball** won their own 4A IHSA Regional Championship and reached the 20-win plateau and Regional Championship was the first since 2013. Redbird

Baseball will return 7 starters for the 2024-2025 season.

**Redbird Softball** season struggled to get any consistency going and ended their year at 10-14. Lady Redbird Girls Soccer was in a year of transition and look to bounce back to their winning ways next spring.

*Check out [altonathletics.org](http://altonathletics.org) for any updates, schedules and notifications of Alton High School Athletics. We look forward to seeing all of our Redbirds perform in their athletic endeavors for the 2024-2025 school year.*



## MADISON COUNTY 1 UNIT 73 TAKES UP COLLECTION FOR MEMORIAL DONATION

At the September 7, 2023 meeting of the Madison County 1 Retired Teachers Association Unit 73 (MCRTA), a memorial donation to the Alton Educational Foundation was taken up from the members present to honor the MCRTA members who passed away in the past year.

Cathy Droste, a member of the MCRTA Unit 73, Chairperson of the Alton Educational Foundation, and retired educator from the Alton School District, sees a great benefit these organizations can be to each other. "I appreciate the support the retired teachers have given to teachers in the Alton School District by helping to fund grants. And, at the same time, that donation recognizes those retired and now deceased teachers with a memorial donation. The collection is voluntary and a little over \$600 was collected at last September's meeting. That amount is incredible given an annual collection to support the Illinois Retired Teachers Association Foundation is taken up each December by the Unit 1 MCRTA. All organizations are successful due to its collective members. I encourage everyone to join

or support those organizations who have had an impact in their lives."

The local unit 73 of the Madison County Retired Teachers Association is beneficial in keeping members up to date on legislation that may impact their pensions or the pensions of teachers who are still working. It also provides a chance to connect with other retired teachers with luncheon meetings three times a year.

(MCRTA) Purpose: The Unit shall work to maintain and improve benefits to annuitants of TRS; to promote education and the professional, social, and economic status of all members; and to work in cooperation with IRTA, NRTA, AARP and other organizations to obtain these goals.

(MCRTA) Mission: The unit is a not-for-profit, non-partisan organization of retired educators. The Association serves the needs and interests of its members through advocacy, education, cooperation, and socialization in a flexible organizational structure.



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Alton, IL 62002

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Founded in 2001, the Alton Educational Foundation's mission is to enhance educational opportunities, support academic excellence and encourage student achievement in the Alton School District.

We're on the Web!  
Visit [altoned.org](http://altoned.org)



Alton Educational Foundation

## Guardian of Education Registration Form

(Mail to AEF, P.O. Box 514, Alton, IL 62002 or donate online at [altoned.org](http://altoned.org) and click on the Guardians of Education tab)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

I am paying by (check one)

Check  Credit Card Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Checks payable to Alton Educational Foundation**

(A portion of the dues are tax deductible) Alton school district employees can also use a payroll deduction option.

Corporate gift matching is another opportunity for donations as the AEF is a 501(c)(3) organization with a tax exempt ID.

VISA  MC  DISCOVER Exp. date \_\_\_\_\_

Card # \_\_\_\_\_ 3-digit code \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**You can be a Guardian** – The Guardians of Education program offers a unique chance to aid the educational opportunities of Alton students. An annual membership is available to individuals as well as businesses.

Select membership level

**HONOR ROLL** – \$5 minimum (name in newsletter and AEF website)

**HIGH HONOR ROLL** – \$50 minimum (name in newsletter and AEF website)

**SALUTATORIAN** – \$250 minimum (name in newsletter and AEF website, invitation to annual breakfast, 4 tickets for district event(s) of choice)

**VALEDICTORIAN** – \$500 minimum (name in newsletter and AEF website, invitation to annual breakfast, 16 tickets for district event(s) of choice, name on engraved plaques in each school building)

**EMERITUS** – \$1000 minimum (name in newsletter and AEF website, invitation to annual breakfast, a pass to all district events, name on engraved plaques in each school building, individual engraved plaque)

Name as you want it to appear on website/publications

\_\_\_\_\_