



Nicole Gets Her Wish

February 14: The first indication that this would be no ordinary Valentine's Day party was when you had to enter by parting the flowery curtain hanging across the doorway. Next, you couldn't miss parent **Marcie Cashen** swaying in a grass skirt and straw hat, nor could one miss the

She had Nicole read a couple of the valentines to herself. Nicole froze as she read one of the valentines. She quickly read it again and a beautiful smile spread across her face as her eyes began to dance. She lunged for Cashen and gave her the kind of hug that can only come from a very

Nicole Kieda reads a special Valentine granting her wish to swim with dolphins and then hugs **Marcie Cashen**, Wish Granter for the Illinois Make A Wish Foundation.



beautiful leis sitting on the desk of each student in teacher Michelle Pisauro's second grade classroom at May Whitney Elementary School.

Within minutes, an eager bunch of second graders came streaming back from the library wide-eyed and eager for the party to begin. Leading them was a brown-eyed, eight-year-old girl in a beautiful pink outfit, complete with a matching beret chosen just for the occasion. Her name is **Nicole Kieda** and she was about to receive the ultimate Valentine gift.

Cashen introduced herself as both a parent of a May Whitney School student and told the class that Nicole had received nearly 100 pink paper valentines that were sold for \$1 a piece as a school-wide fund raiser for tsunami relief victims.

happy child. Her classmates cheered and the adults in the room smiled and quickly wiped away tears as they were told that Nicole's wish had been granted. She would soon swim with dolphins.

Thanks to the Make-A-Wish Foundation of Illinois, Nicole—who suffers from a rare cancerous tumor of her brain's pituitary gland known as Germinoma—and her entire family will soon be traveling to Hawaii so that Nicole can fulfill her dream of swimming with the dolphins. The week-long trip is a welcome relief to a family dealing with the devastating diagnosis they received a year ago

Once a date for the trip has been identified, the whole family will be picked up by limousine

Cont. on pg. 3--See Nicole's Wish

Next Week...

Did you know that District 95 has its own think tank? Learn about this group that plans for tomorrow today.

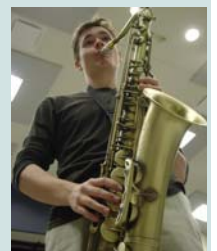
Lake Zurich Musicians *Jazzed* About State Honors



Tony Rosenberg

Lake Zurich High School was fortunate to have nine all-state musicians participate in the state festival January 27-29. Out of all of the top student musicians from throughout the state, junior **Tony Rosenberg** was selected as first chair in the state on Alto Sax, while fellow junior **Jim Schram** was selected as the top Jazz Saxophonist in the state and participated with the All-State Jazz combo, the select group of the overall top seven students.

According to Band Director **Josh Thompson**, only once before has a Lake Zurich student been selected as first chair overall in the state. This year, both Rosenberg and Schram received that honor.



Jim Schram

Linnea Mason

Pom Squad On the Move



Lake Zurich High School senior **Linnea Mason** was chosen by the Universal Dance Association (UDA) as a member of the national all-star dance team in London's New Year's Day parade.

In addition to Mason's recent sojourn, the Pom squad is in the height of its competition season and is performing extremely well. The squad competed at the Glenbrook South UDA competition, placed second in both high kick and pom and qualified for UDA State competition. The squad also traveled to Disney World in early February to compete at the UDA National competition, where they represented the high school and community very well.

On February 19, the squad is off again to



compete in two categories at the UDA State competition. The following three weekends will be occupied with competitions

at Prairie Ridge High School, the Illinois Dance Team Association (IDTA) super sectionals at Harlem High in Loves Park, IL, then the IDTA State Competition in Champaign.

Despite this grueling schedule the squad still performs at every LZHS home basketball game and is busy planning their biggest fundraiser of the year, the Mr. Lake Zurich Contest. This event has become a tradition at the high school and will take place on February 23, beginning at 7:30 p.m. The squad is coached by **Katie Nerroth**.

The award-winning Lake Zurich High School Pom Squad (left to right):

Front Row: **Lindsey Boetsch, Jamie Tovella**
Second Row: **Danielle Leopardo, Jenna Smith, Angella Falato, Krista Aistars, Audrey Ishikawa**

Third Row: **Marcy Sklar, Laura Dravins, Lauren Napalitano, Linnea Mason**

Fourth Row: **Jenna Poulter, Kim Stanislawski, Erin Littell, Mallory Schmitt, Christine Doczi, Beth Littell**

Not Pictured: **Caroline Pardikes**

Book Worm Angels

The May Whitney Elementary School PTO will hold a Book Worm Angels Book Drive during March and April to collect new and used books for children in inner-city schools. Thanks to the efforts of its many business partners, there will be numerous drop-off locations throughout the area.

The donated books will go to the Book Worm Angels, a not-for-profit organization founded to help children in underachieving public elementary schools in Chicago strengthen their reading skills. The organization works with schools to develop free lending libraries in classrooms so that the students can take the books home to read and enjoy.

According to book drive coordinator Gail Heraty, new or used books can be brought to any of the following locations:

March 1-7

- Discovery Learning Institute, Hawthorn Woods
- Kits Sports Center, Lake Zurich
- Long Grove County School, Long Grove
- U.S. Gymnastics Training Center, Lake Zurich
- Village Bank & Trust – Ela Road branch
- The Exercise Coach, Lake Zurich

March 7-14

- Village Bank & Trust, Ela Road branch
- The Exercise Coach, Lake Zurich
- Good Shepherd Pediatric Therapy Center, Lake Zurich
- Foglia YMCA
- SCORE!, Lake Zurich

April 4-15

- May Whitney Elementary School, Lake Zurich

PTO's to Sponsor Board Candidate Forums

The combined Community Unit School District 95 PTO's will be hosting three school board candidate forums prior to the April 5 election. These forums are open to the entire community.

The format of the forums will be question and answer. Community members will write questions to the candidates on cards, which will be read by a facilitator. Candidates will have an allotted amount of time to answer the questions directed to them. These forums will offer you a great opportunity to learn more about the candidates who are seeking to be a member of the Board of Education. The dates and locations of the forums are:

- **Monday, February 28**
7:30 p.m.
Lake Zurich Middle School South – Cafeteria
435 West Cuba Rd., Lake Zurich
- **Tuesday, March 22**
7:30 p.m.
May Whitney Elementary School – Library
120 Church St., Lake Zurich
- **Wednesday, March 9**
7:30 p.m.
Seth Paine Elementary School – Library
50 Miller Rd., Lake Zurich

Nicole's Wish (cont.)

and whisked away to the airport for their week-long vacation in Hawaii. The entire cost of the trip is picked up by the foundation.

"We don't discuss money when it comes to granting wishes," explained Cashen, who serves as a volunteer with the world's greatest job title: 'Wish Granter'. "A wish could be as simple as a new puppy or something really big. It doesn't matter, we want the family to focus on sharing the time they have with each other. That is what is most important."

According to **Anna Kieda**, Nicole's mother, her daughter's wish is not just a whim.

"Nicole has always been drawn to the water and animals," explained Anna. "She tells me she wants to be a marine biologist when she grows up. For Nicole, this is another step in achieving her dream."

The odyssey for the Kieda family began when Nicole started showing signs of dehydration and other problems. After a biopsy and the identification of the tumor, Nicole began her radiation and chemotherapy last fall. The



chemotherapy caused her hair to begin falling out, thus the beginning of her growing hat collection.

Pisauro learned of Nicole's condition within the first few days of school. However, if Nicole herself hadn't shared the information with Pisauro, the teacher wouldn't have known.

"Nicole came into the classroom as a joyful second grade student," said Pisauro. "I would have never have known she was sick. She amazed me because she was so open and willing to talk to me about her condition."

While Nicole is not shy about sharing her experiences with her cancer, Nicole's classmates were informed about it on September 10 by the school nurse and the school's social worker while Nicole was out of school. A letter was sent home to the parents of her classmates the night before so that they could be prepared for the inevitable questions that come from curious second graders.

While Nicole's treatment required much of her time and that of her parents, very little school time was missed. School work and the normalcy it brings are very important to both Nicole and her parents.

"Nicole loves school and doesn't like to miss," explained Pisauro. "When Nicole was pulled out of school for an appointment you could see the frustration in her. That is why her parents made

as many of her medical appointments as possible for after school."

According to Pisauro, Nicole and her classmates have grown very close through the experience. They look after Nicole and she looks after them. They are there for each other and show each other a tremendous amount of compassion.

However, they do not treat her differently, but treat her the way every second grader wants to be treated; like a classmate and friend.

When a boy from another class snatched her hat off at lunch one day, Nicole was hurt by his meanness. Her classmates were there both to console and protect. They are more than classmates, they are family.

While she wants to be treated just like anyone else, there are limitations for her, at least for now.

Instead of running around on the playground before school like her classmates, Nicole reports to the principal's office each morning. There, Principal Bill Fredrickson greets her and they begin their daily duties. Together, they greet the other students as they come into the building to start another day of learning. Before she goes to class, Fredrickson—who has taken to calling her "the Boss"—asks her what she would like him to do for the day. After detailing her instructions, she is off to class to enjoy another day of learning and being a second grader. At the end of the day she again meets the principal and together they say good-bye to the other children until Nicole's school bus arrives.

"Nicole is such a great child," said Fredrickson. "She is sweet, friendly, smart and very caring about others. In all of the time I have known her, not once have I ever heard her complain or feel sorry for herself. She seems to enjoy every minute of her life and has such a positive outlook. I have learned so much from her."

Even though she loves all of her students, Pisauro and Nicole have also developed a special bond.

"Nicole means the world to me along with the other children in my class," said Pisauro. "I have been taught much about love, strength and courage from this eight-year-old child."



Left: Mother **Anna Kieda** and **Nicole** share a moment together during her class Valentine party.

Far Left: A dolphin waits with a smile for Nicole.

Stakeholder Survey Extended

Recently the Office of Communications & Community Relations for Community Unit School District 95 mailed out nearly 15,000 stakeholder surveys as part of *District Doings*, its community newsletter, to residents and businesses within the boundaries of the school district. The survey is also available on-line on the main page of the district's web site (www.lz95.org).

The district mailed out the 37-question survey in order to gather community information and opinions regarding the district's nine schools. The returned surveys will be helpful as the district and its Board of Education work to align limited resources to best meet the educational needs of its children and the communities served by the school district.

To date, approximately 800 surveys have been returned through both the web site and regular mail. To allow for more input the district has extended the deadline for survey collection from February 14 until late February, hoping more folks will either mail in their surveys or fill out the on-line survey.

"Looking at the responses to date, we have received surveys from all the communities we serve," said **Jim Jennings**, Director of Communications & Community Relations for District 95. "However, given that we mailed out nearly 15,000 surveys all of which had a postage-paid, business reply return envelope and offered it on-line, we expected to receive many more. That is why we will extend the deadline for filling out the on-line surveys until Sunday, February 20, and the paper surveys through Monday, February 28.

According to Jennings, both the on-line and paper versions of the survey should take the average resident less than 10 minutes to complete. The analysis of the data collected from the surveys will be shared with Board and the Community this spring.



A 'Beary' Special Proposal

Above: Lake Zurich High School Spanish teacher **Leah Leino** was surprised when her boyfriend, dressed up as the high school mascot, proposed during the school's Winterfest assembly in the school's field house.

Below: She said "Yes!"



Want Something to Talk About?

Public schools must depend on the support of local citizens if they are to be strong and vital learning environments. In turn, the interest and support of citizens depends on their understanding and engagement in school affairs. That is why Community Unit School District 95 has created its **Key Communicator** program.

Our Key Communicator program is a network of community residents, leaders, opinion shapers and watchdogs whose opinions are well respected by friends, colleagues and neighbors. We are not looking for cheerleaders, but people who care about our schools and want to be kept informed and are then willing to share that information with others.

As a Key Communicator, you will receive timely, factual information via a newsletter e-



mailed to you about the work we're doing and the issues affecting your school district and your schools. Because this is designed to be a two-way communications network, we encourage you to give us your input and share your opinions. Your responsibility will be to share school district news with friends, neighbors and colleagues. To become a Key Communicator, simply call, email or fax:

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