

BlueJay News

December
2023



Hello December

Winter Solstice

The month of December brings the winter solstice in the Northern Hemisphere. This is the shortest day of the year (the day with the least amount of daylight). In 2023, the solstice occurs on Thursday, December 21.

Full Cold Moon

December's full Moon, the full Cold Moon, appears on Tuesday, December 26, reaching peak illumination at 7:33 A.M. EST.

Geminid Meteor Shower

Look skyward on the night of December 13 after 9 P.M. for a chance to catch a glimpse of the Geminid meteors. The Geminid meteor shower is the most active shower of the year. If the sky is clear and temperatures aren't too chilly, it's still worth venturing outside to try to see the Geminids.

Folklore for the Season

Know the weather before you head off to that Christmas event or travel to grandmother's house.

- December changeable and mild, the whole winter will remain a child.
- Thunder in December presages fine weather.
- Frost on the shortest day is said to indicate a severe winter.

Shepherd Middle/High School Media Center

would like to thank Mr. and Mrs.

Howard Parkhurst for their generous donation of books to our school. Well over 100 books totaling over \$1,000 were added to our collection as well as many others that teachers and students will be allowed to choose from. Mr. Parkhurst is a retired teacher and college professor who focused on Young Adult literature. As a teacher he saw the need for good reading material for teen boys and many of the books fill this much needed area of interest. Our school will benefit greatly from their gift and we are thankful that they thought of us!

Holiday Break is Dec. 22nd - Jan. 2nd, see ya on January 3, 2024!!!!

Jokes Below

What do you call a snowman temper tantrum? A meltdown.

What did the icy road ask the truck?
Want to go for a spin?

Why did the bear keep getting fired?
He always disappeared in the winter.

UNSCRAMBLE THE LETTERS

- MIHNYCE
- VEELS
- NCRGIH
- LLYOH
- TIMTSNE
- EONL
- THORN EOPL
- GIELSH
- LSDE



chimney, elves, grinch, holly, mittens,
noel, north pole, sleigh, sled

Superintendent's Corner

BOND INVESTIGATION- Due to the investigations and foresight of some key BlueJays, the District has begun looking into the potential for an August 2024 “no tax rate increase” Bond ask to our voters. The finer details of this possibility continue to be unveiled to District key stakeholders. As more is known and definitive decisions are made, information will be passed along. Two agencies helping to promote and package a potential Bond initiative are Kingscott Associates and Wolgast Construction. Please stay tuned for more information on this subject.

INCLEMENT WEATHER- Some would say, “So far - so good...” Our fortune with inclement weather days this school year has been pretty good so far. Let’s hope this continues. None of us enjoys white-knuckle driving when wintry conditions make road travel unsafe. Please know the district - and especially Facilities/Transportation Director Steve Sura does not take risky travel for granted. Mr. Sura will continue to closely monitor roadways early mornings and make the best and safest determination possible. Check out this document link if you would like more information on our procedures. [Inclement Weather Letter, Fall, 2023](#)

WINTER SPORTS- As outdoor sports are finished for now, we head indoors to the hardwood, soft mats, ice rinks, bowling alleys and other areas where winter activities take place. Athletic director Garth Cornwell continuously strives for improvements in programming, practices and purposes for our student athletes. We love that our BlueJays can be active! Thank you to all our winter coaches, assistants, volunteers and game activity helpers/managers as well.

THANKFUL- This portion of our school year - between Thanksgiving and Christmas, is the perfect time to express gratitude for the wonders of our lives. Please know how grateful I am to be the Superintendent of Shepherd Public Schools. The team of staff, students and “unified community” assembled here is truly unique, wonderful and special! The heart this community has for its children is something to be celebrated on a regular basis. Our students continue to aspire to “be” and achieve at their very best levels; both inside and outside of our classrooms. Through the inspiration, direction and encouragement of our staff and their families they strive for greater efforts and higher platforms each and every day. Again, this is possible because of the incredible support of our amazing staff, our supportive families, and our unified community. Our staff members find new, innovative practices and ways to build strong and meaningful relationships with our students every day. Their professional development and growth to improve their classroom craft - comes through the lens of building stronger relationships with their students. What a GREAT way to look at self-improvement; by improving who they interact with on a daily basis!! Our students’ families strive to grow in their partnership with our staff and schools, making every effort at home and by attending school activities to support their children. With the help of our key connection point - our Strategic Plan - our community appreciates and understands the importance of educating our children. They continue to invest in our schools any way they can recognizing they are “paying it forward” believing our children are our future! For all of these reasons, your Superintendent is so very thankful to be a part of this amazing community! Now, more than ever before, ALL of you are a true testament of what “BLUEJAY STRONG” represents! Go BlueJays!! That’s it for this edition of our Jay News. I look forward to seeing you at upcoming Winter events and deeply appreciate your continued support to Shepherd Public Schools!

Terry J. Starr, Superintendent

Shepherd Elementary



During November, which is Native American Heritage Month, we were thankful to be able to partner with the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe to bring volunteers that participated in learning activities with our classes.

- TK/K Jingle Dress
- 1st: 13 Moons
- 2nd: Traditional Native American Games
- 3rd: Regalia
- 4th: Orange Shirt Day
- 5th: Traditional Drumming



- Shepherd Elementary's student council is collecting hygiene items for holiday outreach in partnership with the Shepherd Fire Dept. We are collecting until December 12th.
- Book Fair: Thank you to all of the volunteers and staff who were able to help with our book fair this year!
- Second Step Update: Our school wide theme is emotion management. In our morning announcements we are prompting students to notice their own feelings by paying attention to clues in their bodies, and we'll be reminding them to use their Second Step skills to calm down:
 - Stop—Use your signal
 - Name your feeling
 - Calm down: Breathe, count, use positive self-talk.

These skills help students calm down strong emotions when faced with learning and social challenges, which helps them succeed academically and get along well with others.

A graphic titled "How to Calm Down" featuring a cartoon boy with a thought bubble saying "I can do it!" and a speech bubble with the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. To the right of the boy are three colored boxes with text: a red box saying "Stop—use your signal", a green box saying "Name your feeling", and a blue box saying "Calm down: breathe count use positive self-talk". At the bottom, the words "SECOND STEP" are written in large, red, stylized letters.

How to Calm Down

Stop—
use your
signal

Name
your
feeling

Calm
down:
breathe
count
use positive self-talk

SECOND STEP

Winn Elementary

Penny Wars at Winn

Basketball Jones Comes to Winn
Basketball Jones is one of our favorite guests to have come to school. This year, his son, Parker, came to our school to talk all about growth mindset and leadership.

This special assembly was our whole school PBIS celebration honoring all the hard work the kids did last month with our goal of “skills for learning.” As a school we focused on how the following skills help us learn at school.

- Focus Attention
- Listen
- Use Self-talk
- Be Assertive



Our Winn Elementary student council during the month of November put on our annual, “Penny Wars.” For two weeks, our K-5 students collected funds to support Winn Treehouse. Winn Treehouse helps our local community of Winn as well as the surrounding areas. Ms. Fox from the Winn Treehouse came to collect our “big check” today! We raised \$2,399.92!! Thank you to our families for helping this wonderful organization. We are all “winn”ers when we help each other!

Looking for something fun to do over the holiday break?? Check this out!

Join us for a **HOLIDAY** STEM Staycation
December 21 - January 2

Use-friendly calendar
GREAT PRIZES!

Winter 2023-24
Join us for a **HOLIDAY STAYCATION**

STEM Staycation
Dec. 21st - Jan. 2nd

Prizes

- 1st: Free Hotel Stay in the GLEB
- 2nd: \$10 to Pizzeria's Pizza
- 3rd: Signature Spirit Tickets (4)

Learn more at www.stemstaycation.com

STEM Staycation
Dec. 21st - Jan. 2nd

FREE EVENT

Chippewa Nature Center
Join us!

December 21: Chippewa Nature Center Winter Solstice Event

For centuries people have gathered with family and friends to celebrate the longest night of the year and to celebrate the return of longer days to come.

Take part in earth-friendly traditions as you fill a beehive, create a wreath, make a snow globe, and make a small terrarium to take home. 11:00-3:00 p.m.

Free for all ages.

STEM Staycation
Dec. 21st - Jan. 2nd

FREE EVENT

BCLS

December 21: Allen and Jack Wirt Public Library Build Play

Build together, family fun! What will you create with open-ended interactive building materials? Blue Blocks, Foam Build, Kites, and more material for you to BUILD with. No registration required.

Open to children and teens accompanied by an adult. 2:00 - 3:00 p.m. in the Kestler Community Room.

STEM Staycation
Dec. 21st - Jan. 2nd

FREE EVENT

December 28: Winter STEM Event

Join us for a winter STEM event at the Castle Museum. 11:00-1:00 p.m. Free for all ages.

Also, celebrating with the traveling exhibit "Tops of the Trees: The Great American Pinball Parade" with 2023, the Castle Museum will have a shop in our main hall called "See How You Run: Design a Personal Pinball Parade" available throughout winter break.

Shepherd High

College & Career Fair!

College and Career Fair was a resounding success, thanks to the efforts of everyone involved, especially Olivia Toth. Organizing such events requires a tremendous amount of coordination and dedication, and it's wonderful that Olivia excelled in her role for her Senior Project. College and Career Fair was a huge success. Huge shout out to all employers who attended, sat on our Employer Panel, held Mock Interviews and Alumni for sitting on the student panel.

Events like these are crucial in connecting students with potential employers and providing valuable insights into various career paths. It's not just about the fair itself but also the collaborative efforts of employers, alumni, and students contributing to its success.



Shepherd Middle

Our Lego Club is off and running. If you know any Shepherd Middle School students interested in joining have them see Mrs. Allingham in the office.



December 2023

12th MS Choir Holiday Concert Auditorium 6:30pm

14th MS/HS Choir Concert Auditorium 6:30pm

19th Holocaust Survivor MS Presentation Auditorium 9:00-10:30am

22nd Christmas Break Begins (Dec.22-Jan. 2)

January 2024

School Board Appreciation Month

3rd School Resumes

9th Law Enforcement Appreciation Day

15th MLK Day

25th Parent Teacher Conf. (6-12) 3:30-6:30pm

31st BJR Rally - Mid-Tri. (7th Gr. Lead)

Shepherd Middle School

BINGO Night

THE EIGHT 2 EIGHT HALL
221 W. WRIGHT AVE.
SHEPHERD, MI 48883

\$30

Seats are limited!
Tickets can be
purchased at the
Middle School Office
989-828-6605

January 12, 2024

Doors Open @ 4pm

Bingo Starts @ 5:30pm

BINGO Prizes:

Soaring Eagle Waterpark Passes/Night Stay . Fire Ring
Corn Hole Boards . 2-Person Canoe Rental . 18 Holes of Golf
Wagon . Oil Change . Yard Card by Rosie Car Care Kit . Tool
Sets . Baking Set . Gift Certificates . And more...

***Meal Provided *Must have ticket for entry**

***Must be 18 or older to enter**

SMS Winter Spirit Days - Put on by our wonderful Student Council

- Mon. 12/11 - Mele Kalikimaka Day - Dress Hawaiian/Beach Day
- Tues. 12/12 - Mad for Plaid - Dress in Plaid
- Wed. 12/13 - Warm Up Wednesday - Wear your coziest clothes
- Thurs. 12/14 - Candy Cane Day - Dress in Red & White
- Fri. 12/15 - Holiday Headgear - Put on your festive holiday headgear (hats allowed)
- Mon. 12/18 - Monday Mornin' be like...Grinch Day - Wear Green
- Tues. 12/19 - Holiday Sock Day - Show off your holiday socks
- Wed. 12/20 - Battle of the Christmas Colors - Wear your Red or Green
- Thurs. 12/21 - Ugly Sweater Day - Rock your ugliest sweater

Odyssey Middle/High

The 3rd Annual Odyssey Holiday Forest Lighted Forest Trail, Cookies & Cocoa, Carolers, Photo Booth, and more!

This event is funded in part by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration



**Thursday,
December 14, 2023
5 pm to 7:30 pm**

**Odyssey MS/HS
3441 S. Wise Rd.
Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858**

[Michigan 2-1-1](#)

2-1-1 is an information and referral service that helps you find resources that may be able to assist you with health and human services (food pantries, baby pantries, rental assistance, etc.)

We are busy visiting college campuses and attending career fairs with our Juniors and Seniors to prepare them for life after high school.

Project Aware Counselors



CHECK THIS OUT

Holiday Forest is coming up quickly! Join us at Odyssey on December 14th from 5-7:30pm for a beautifully lit trail, hot chocolate and some fun family activities! The trail will also be lit on December 15th for those who prefer to enjoy the lights without all the hustle and bustle.

Project AWARE Counselors have been able to connect with 177 students across the school district this month! We are so glad to be able to impact these students!

 **TRAILS**

At the middle school, high school, and at Odyssey MS/HS, our Project AWARE Counselors are hosting TRAILS groups that benefit multiple students. These groups help students learn about skills to manage symptoms of anxiety and depression. We can't wait to see what these students learn!



Connection Days at the middle school level continue! In the month of November, Mrs. Gall hosted 2 connection days. Students enjoyed a few rounds of the icebreaker game "Human Pretzel" on the outdoor connection day. On the indoor connection day, students helped write thank you letters to teachers and to active duty military members. Great job, BlueJays!



We've wrapped up another season at HopeWell in November! We're so thankful to the staff at HopeWell for all the work that they've done with our students this year and we appreciate all the experiences they helped our students have with the different animals on the ranch!