

Rated as a "District of Distinction" by the Kentucky Department of Education

# Traditions

District Publication of  
Fort Thomas Independent Schools



SPECIAL FOCUS:

**The Arts**

**SPRING 2017**

# From the Superintendent The Art of Education

The arts play an essential role in a comprehensive educational experience. Although the core curriculum will always be foundational to education, the arts expand that foundation, providing students with skills and experiences indispensable for their development as well-rounded members of the global community.

At Fort Thomas Independent Schools (FTIS), the arts:

1. Develop intangible but vital characteristics in students, enhancing their growth as critical and creative problem solvers.
2. Help students discover their passion and build self-confidence.
3. Strengthen students' ability to master other academic disciplines and provide a more engaging school experience.

All students at FTIS are exposed to the arts—including band, orchestra, chorus, drama, the visual arts, video production and much more—fostering a broader worldview and allowing them to express creativity and communicate in new ways. Arts programming is influential in equipping students with 21st-century skills, which are vital in their progression toward college/career readiness and becoming productive members of their communities.

Additionally, when learning experiences include the arts, students often find their niche, a community of people who understand and support them. When students feel accepted, their self-confidence grows. Students often recognize an element of what they love to do, and that awareness impacts their lifelong education and pursuits.

Finally, research shows that the arts improve academic achievement. Students have stronger memories, focus and imaginations. They are better decision-makers, possessing greater self-awareness and self-confidence.

The arts are a valuable and imperative component of a Fort Thomas education, and you'll see just how beneficial the arts are to our students in the coming pages of this edition of *Traditions*. Our elementary students are learning to engage in our community through the arts, our middle-schoolers are realizing and unlocking their potential, and our high school students are discovering the arts' essential role in their future goals and success.

Given that I am retiring as superintendent in June, this is my final edition of *Traditions*. It has been my pleasure for the last five years to share with each of you the incredible things that take place every day in our schools. FTIS students are truly blessed to live in a community that so strongly supports all aspects of their education, including the arts. I am incredibly proud of what we have accomplished together and look forward to hearing about even greater future accomplishments within the Fort Thomas Independent School District.

—Gene Kirchner

Superintendent, Fort Thomas Independent Schools



Moyer 2<sup>nd</sup>-grader **Chanith Abeysinghe** works on his art project.



## Calendar 2017-18

### August

16 First Day for Students

### September

4 Labor Day (no school)

20 Late Arrival Day

### October

12 Teacher Professional Development (no school)

13 NKEA Day (no school)

25 Late Arrival Day

### November

22 Teacher Professional Development (no school)

23-24 Thanksgiving Break

### December

13 Late Arrival Day

20 Last School Day Before Winter Break

## 2016-17 State Champions

### Team Champions

- Dance – JV, Middle School
- We the People
- Mock Trial
- Odyssey of the Mind
- Girls Track 4x4 Relay Team

### Individual Champions

- **Helen Ross** – General Knowledge Exam, Governor's Cup
- **Tessa Woody** – Gold Award National Medalist, Scholastic Art & Writing
- **Donovan Staab** – CAD Architecture, Engineering Technology
- **Josti Sieverding** and **Donovan Staab** – Architecture Design, Engineering Technology
- **Ben Starzec** – Promotion Design, Engineering Technology
- **Jason Paul** – Transportation Modeling, Engineering Technology
- **Trey Bowden** and **Mason Bibb** – Best Documentary, STLP
- **Samantha Lohner**, **Addie Parris** and **Ben Stratton** – Newscast Division, STLP
- **Jack Haggard** and **Liam Reed** – Bench Challenge, STLP Elementary Division



Woodfill 3<sup>rd</sup>-graders (L-R) **Parker Greene** and **Gabriel McDermott** are having fun as they learn mallet technique, rhythm, melody, and instrument exploration during **David Rockel's** "Mallet Madness" music class unit.

*Traditions* is published two times a year (fall and spring) by the Fort Thomas Independent Schools. *Traditions* is sent to all homes in the 41075 ZIP code, teachers and tuition students who do not live in the District, alumni and all Fort Thomas Education Foundation donors.



## Highlands High School

# The Arts Advantage

Every student at Highlands High School (HHS) has opportunities to participate in the arts—whether 2D and 3D art, digital photography, design, choir, strings, drama or film. In these classes they can discover and develop their talents and experience success in areas they are passionate about.

“Students can design, collaborate, perform and experience the thrill of creating something as part of their arts experience,” says HHS Principal **Brian Robinson**. “They learn more about themselves by having to create. They experience trial and error and the joy of seeking constant

*“I’ve developed valuable collaboration and problem-solving skills that are applicable both within and beyond the classroom.”*

age and has since served as assistant stage manager and production stage manager for several HHS shows. She is now considering stage management as a career.

“I’ve learned to be a leader in everyday life, and that has influenced my personality as a whole,” says Maggie. “One thing I’ve discovered about myself through theatre is that I do relatively well under an immense amount of pressure. I’ve also learned that I’m a good problem solver in a bad situation, which is a very valuable life skill. Being in theatre means you have to be ready for everything and anything that could happen.”

**Donnie Adams**, a senior and double bassist in the chamber orchestra also has gleaned critical life skills. “My participation in the Highlands orchestra over the past eight years has given me a strong appreciation for the benefits of hard work and perseverance,” says Donnie. “Playing music with a group

allows creative and artistic expression, which is a very fulfilling complement to academics. As part of the orchestra, I’ve developed valuable collaboration and problem solving skills that are applicable both within and beyond the classroom.”

**Jason Burgess** has directed 40 productions since coming to HHS as its theatre teacher and director 10 years ago. His most recent production, *Godspell*, demonstrated the value

of arts integration. *Godspell* required instrumental and vocal musicians to work hand in hand; dance instructors worked with students on choreography; film students added digital elements to the show and the set; and the program for and marketing of the performance were created by the Visual Arts Department.

“The end product was the result of many small groups coming together to create, teach, practice and rehearse,” says Burgess.

Senior **Noah Moore**, president of the Drama Club, played the comedic character in the show. He’s been in 14 productions since middle school and plans to attend Western Kentucky University in the fall to study international business and Spanish.

“Being part of theatre made me realize what it means to be part of a group and a community that supports

you,” Noah says. He sums up well the value of the arts in his education: “I learned to value being myself and being unafraid, which goes a long way when facing things like college interviews. If I can go on a stage and sing a song, then I can handle an interview.”

## Tri-M Music Honor Society

The Tri-M Music Honor Society, a program established by the National Association for Music Education, focuses on creating future leaders in music education and music advocacy. Tri-M is the only national honor society for student musicians in grades 6–12. There are more than 1,800 chapters across all 50 states, involving more than 75,000 students.

**Lori Duncan**, band director at HMS and HHS, encourages students to join Tri-M. “The arts truly challenge students in various ways. A great deal of discipline is needed to perform in our ensembles, a quality that carries over to other subjects. Students come to appreciate and possess a passion for performing,” says Duncan.

Each year, Tri-M students contribute more than 750,000 service hours to their schools and local communities, and raise nearly one million dollars for causes they care about. To join the society, students must fill out an application and submit a teacher recommendation. Acceptance is based on GPA, leadership within the school and community, music honors and musical involvement with the school band, strings or choir. At the end of the school year, applicants are inducted after performing in a recital for parents, peers and community members.

Sophomore **Colin Seith**, a member of Tri-M, values the role music has played in his education. “Music has provided me opportunities during and after school. I’ve made a lot of friends through music. Music helps me relax and concentrate on my other studies.”



Freshman **Nate Gibbs** experiments with watercolors in art class.



HHS theatre students (L-R) **Victoria Forbes**, **Lydia Wira**, **Maggie Seibert**, **Noah Moore**, **Grant Sower** and **Carter Bechtol** rehearse a scene from *Godspell*.

improvement through continuous feedback and analysis.”

Further, because HHS programs are student driven, students take ownership of their work and develop independence and responsibility, unlike the results in many traditional fields of study.

**Maggie Seibert**, a sophomore in the Drama Club, has experienced these benefits. She joined theatre at a young



Junior **Lucy Knapke** and senior **Donnie Adams** play bass in the strings program



# SCHOOL UPDATES

## Highlands Middle School

# The Arts: Essential, Not Extra

One primary goal of Highlands Middle School (HMS) is to expose students to the arts. “These are the years when students are discovering what they like, what they are interested in and where they may have unrealized talent,” says **Beth Rowland**, chair of the Arts and Humanities Department.

HMS students can take music, art, choir, strings, drama and participate in a theatre production. “We are one of the only middle schools in the area to offer choir, band and strings performance classes at all three grade levels, and all of these programs are thriving,” says Rowland.

Not the least of the arts offerings at HMS are visual art

**“Critical thinking and learning isn’t a task—it’s an adventure. We want our spaces to support that philosophy.”**

classes. Learning creative skills in a classroom is great, but applying them in real-world ways is even better. For example, every year students create the T-shirt designs for the 8<sup>th</sup>-grade trip to Washington, D.C. Recently, students designed the new patch for the Fort Thomas Fire Department as well.

Drama classes for 8<sup>th</sup>-graders produce a middle school musical, open to all grade levels. One of the leads in the musical *Seussical*, 8<sup>th</sup>-grader **Zoe Zoller**, has found an outlet for self-expression and creativity through theatre. She says, “I’ve discovered a wonderful community of people who share the same



HMS students (L-R) **Hank Slaby**, **Thomas Gray-Torsell**, **Caroline Slaby**, **Jessica Ossege**, **John Laskey** and **Katie Buschle** perform in *Seussical*.

love for the arts that I do! Through shows, you meet new people with drastically different personalities from your own and learn to celebrate those differences to form new friendships and excellent productions.”

Creativity, confidence and collaboration—these are qualities students can improve when involved in the arts. “I see students in visual arts or drama being creators as they develop artwork or deliver spontaneous dialogue,” says HMS Principal **Michael Howton**. “Students build tremendous confidence by challenging themselves to get up on stage in front of a crowd and subject themselves to the scrutiny of others.”

How do the arts impact student success in the future? “Being part of a play, band, choir or orchestra teaches students about individual accountability to the whole group when it comes to performance standards,” says Howton. The creativity, persistence and focus that come from participating in the arts are necessary and prized qualities desired in many career fields. Good arts students become better collaborative and excellence-driven employees!

**Derek Carter**, an 8<sup>th</sup>-grade violist, says being part of the orchestra has benefited him a lot, both socially and academically. “It’s given me friends I never would have met, and the musical stimulation puts a light in my day that helps me focus on the other work when it’s time. I’ve learned how to interact with others and how to teach. I’ve discovered that not everything is about being the best. It’s about

helping those around you and being helped,” says Derek.

The arts clearly provide HMS students with more than a knowledge base. They create skill sets and develop qualities that will serve them their entire lifetime. Plus, says Rowland, “We get such a thrill from watching students enjoy their contributions to the arts and seeing them develop a passion for something that surpasses all expectations!”

That’s what makes art essential, not just extra.

## Arts Opportunities at HMS

- ▶ **Art** – 6, 8
- ▶ **Band** – 6, 7, 8
- ▶ **Broadcasting** – 8
- ▶ **Chorus** – 6, 7, 8
- ▶ **Digital Design** – 7
- ▶ **Drama** – 8
- ▶ **Exploratory Writing** – 7
- ▶ **Media Presentations** – 7
- ▶ **Strings** – 6, 7, 8



HMS 8<sup>th</sup>-grader **Nick Calwell** plays trumpet in the marching band.



# Community Arts Engagement

Art education opens doors to positive relationships—at school, at home and in the community. “In a sense, the community gets to become the classroom,” explains Johnson music teacher Alyssa Vanderpool. “Students get to see what’s happening beyond the walls of the school, and the community is invited to participate and contribute to education.

The ideas and possibilities for growth become endless.”

Let’s look at a few examples of how community arts are flourishing in Fort Thomas schools.

## Collage Cooperation

**Jennifer Flynn**, Johnson’s visual arts teacher, had her 1<sup>st</sup>-graders work with Fort Thomas police officers to create a collaborative community collage. **Sergeant Chris Carpenter** assigned his “collage experts” to assist, and students and officers worked side by side, building rapport as well as respect for their community’s law enforcement.

Through this type of community project, Flynn hopes students are gaining understanding and appreciation of the world around them. “Art communicates ideas,” says Flynn. “Through the arts we can go beyond cultural or societal barriers to connect people of all ages and ways of life.”

## Rainbows and Museums

When Moyer Elementary students learned they were going to collaborate with international contemporary artist, **Ugo Rondinone**, they were ecstatic. **Shawnee Turner** from the Contemporary Arts Center (CAC) in downtown Cincinnati commissioned the students to create rainbow artwork for display with Rondinone’s work at the CAC in May.

**Nikki Everett**, Moyer’s visual arts teacher, says this project has given students a chance to visit the CAC, learn about contemporary art and interact with a renowned artist. “Connecting with museums and galleries shows students a real-world application of the arts outside the classroom,” says Everett. She hopes many of the students will visit the CAC to see the exhibit and enjoy the UNMUSEUM on the fifth floor, designed specifically for youth and families.

“Displaying students’ art lets them know that they are important and valued. It boosts confidence and validates the ideas and feelings they’ve expressed on paper,” says Everett.

Moyer 5<sup>th</sup>-grader **Jillian Kendall** is thrilled to have her art displayed in a public museum. “This makes me excited to go to the Contemporary Art Center to see our work,” says Jillian.



Johnson 1<sup>st</sup>-grader **Sophia Ofori Attah** adds detail to her drawing for the Design a Bug project.

## Butterflies Are ‘Cool’

Moyer Spanish teacher **Silvia McClamrock** has joined Johnson and Woodfill elementaries in their Journey North Butterfly Project. FTIS elementary students create and send paper butterflies and a class letter to students in Mexico to symbolize the migration of monarch butterflies to and from Canada, the United States and Mexico.

“Our classes receive pictures of the students in Mexico who receive the butterflies we made. The students in Mexico, in turn, make paper butterflies and write a letter back to our classes,” explains McClamrock.

Students are amazed when they see something they made on display in Mexico. The project encourages them to explore communities and cultures other than their own and increases their curiosity about the world around them.

“My favorite part of the butterfly project is when I see the people in Mexico hold our butterfly,” says Moyer 2<sup>nd</sup>-grader **Mia Marshall**.

**Olivia Raaker**, a Woodfill 2<sup>nd</sup>-grader, says, “I think it’s really cool we get to send butterflies to Mexico.”

## It’s a Community Venture

**David Rockel**, Woodfill Elementary’s music teacher, is always looking for ways to involve the community in arts education. He knows how valuable Woodfill’s community is to making this happen. Woodfill hosts the Northern Kentucky Strings, the Schoolhouse Symphony, Cincinnati Symphony musicians and FTIS parents who are professional musicians. “Students learn that the arts are truly in their backyard, and they discover how they can support local arts,” Rockel says.

To summarize all these great arts activities in the elementary schools, Woodfill Principal **Keith Faust** says he believes that partnering with the community to showcase the arts demonstrates FTIS’s commitment to its community. “I want families, businesses and local artists to feel welcome and part of our school, and I want students to see the many real-world applications that connect to what they do in the classroom.”



Top: Moyer 2<sup>nd</sup>-grader **Mia Marshall** proudly displays the butterfly she drew for the Journey North project.

Middle: Moyer 3<sup>rd</sup>-grader **Macy Hargis** creates her drawing for the Rainbow project.

Bottom: Woodfill 2<sup>nd</sup>-grade students sing during music class.



# Full STEAM Ahead

As educators work to equip students with the skills they need to be successful in a 21<sup>st</sup>-century economy, the STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) disciplines are getting special attention. Data show there's a shortage of STEM-skilled workers in the United States, and analysts worry about how we will continue to compete in an increasingly global economy. The need for increased emphasis on the STEM subjects is indisputable, and the urgent push to integrate STEM subjects into K-12 curricula is both welcome and necessary.

Yet research also shows that to elevate STEM without the inclusion of the arts will produce workers who lack the ability to apply their skills in real-world scenarios. Proponents of STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and math) point to the growing body of research that indicates how critical arts education is to student success.

Not only do students who participate in the arts score significantly higher on the SATs, but even more important, the arts help students build confidence, develop motor skills, and hone their decision-making and problem-solving skills. The arts foster out-of-the-box thinking, and artistic skills—like intuition, playing, imagination and analogies—help students solve complex problems.

Students who have broad learning experiences during K-12 are better equipped for postsecondary success. Exposing students to a wide spectrum of disciplines and co-curricular and extracurricular activities gives them greater understanding of the world around them.

"It makes sense that students who have already dabbled in world languages, art, music and theatre, and who are well versed in the core academic subjects, will do well in college," says Superintendent **Gene Kirchner**. And FTIS graduates certainly do.

But Kirchner says there's a more important end goal than success at college. He emphasizes that the ultimate question is: How will our students do in the world

**"The arts foster out-of-the-box thinking, and artistic skills—like intuition, playing, imagination and analogies—help students solve complex problems."**

once they leave college? FTIS views college as an important component to future success, but the greater goal is to see students be successful in a global community. To do that, the arts must be as present in a student's academic career as STEM.

"The arts help students find their passions and develop confidence," says Kirchner. "If students graduate with those two things, they have the building blocks necessary to make a difference for their families, their communities and the world."



JES kindergarteners (L-R) **Trey Horner**, **Emma Hisey** and **Landon Easter** work on their art creations.



Senior **Alysha Kittle** designs lighting for Godspell.



Junior **Ashtyn Heiert** creates a charcoal drawing.



Senior **Adrian Mester** plays piano at the HHS fall band concert.



HMS 8<sup>th</sup>-grader **ShaDimon Clark** experiments with visual perspective in photography class.



# Learning Through the Arts

By **Emeline Kuether** and **Kayla Wilson**, freshmen, HHS journalism

“I watched all the other little girls reading their little books, but I could never be like them. I was always drawn to a pen and paper,” remembers local artist **Beverly Erschell**. She always knew she was an artist deep down. There was never a time when she wasn’t drawing or creating with her hands. The rare times when she did pick up a book, it was always one with pictures. Erschell is a Highlands alumna, and she was willing to share her personal journey and explain the significance of art in education.

People learn two ways: verbally or through pictures. For Erschell, schoolwork didn’t come easy, but art always did. The only way she could learn was through pictures; she was never the best with words. She never understood history or western civilization until she attended the University of Cincinnati. She took an art history class while in college and finally was able to understand history through the arts. Erschell believes that art has an importance in education for those who learn through pictures the way she does, and that everyone needs an opportunity to experience art in school.

Erschell was an average student at best. The one class she was interested in and excelled at was art, which she took throughout her schooling. Through it, she learned techniques and styles she still uses today. Her first introduction to an art class was in middle school, at Miss Darts, an all-girls school.

According to her, it was very strict (no jeans were allowed) and confining. After graduating from Miss Darts, Erschell attended Highlands High School. Her art class was taught by

**Ann Deering**, who encouraged her to stop focusing all of her artwork on horses and expand her horizons. Like most young girls, horses were a fascination for Erschell. Several of her paintings still feature equestrian themes, as she never grew out of her love for horses.

After high school, Erschell went to Stevens College, another all-girls school, where she earned an Associates of Art. She also went to the Cincinnati Art Academy where she earned a bachelor’s and master’s degree in fine arts.

She was the first female to earn a master’s in fine arts at UC, and she was the first woman to teach at UC in the Fine Arts Department. Currently, more than 50 percent of students in the master’s in fine arts program at UC are female.

When she graduated from college, she taught art appreciation at Northern Kentucky University with another teacher. After 13 years, the school offered her a chance to run the art program. She declined, saying, “I didn’t have the patience to teach. I constantly wanted to hit the students over the head, take their paintbrush from them and do everything myself.” During all of this, she was experimenting with her art, playing around with sculpting, sketching and painting.

Her art has been featured in many shows and museums all across the United States. Erschell enjoys traveling to (and in some cases, lived in) many of the places her art has been displayed, such as Texas, Washington, D.C., and New York. She decided to settle down in Fort Thomas with her husband and dog to work on her art full time. She enjoys the culture of the Cincinnati area and tries to incorporate some of that Cincy feel into some of her paintings. You can see bridges and buildings from Cincinnati in the backgrounds of several widely known pieces, like *Cincinnati with Love* or *Mt. Adams Cincinnati*. Erschell says, “Why do people travel? So they can see something new. That’s the idea I always keep in mind when I’m painting. I want people to look at what I create and see something they’ve never seen before.”

So what does Erschell have to say to those who are interested in pursuing a career in the arts? “If you’re truly serious about being an artist, you have to work and keep at it. Always. And put yourself out there and try to market your stuff. Art is made to be seen!”



Beverly Erschell

## CAST Regional Summer Theatre

Commonwealth Artists Summer Theatre (CAST) was established in 2012 to give high school students a different avenue to be involved in a theatrical production and potentially master classes when schools are not in session. The ultimate goal is to open the doors of collaboration to students from different high schools in the Greater Cincinnati area to create and produce a show.

With its sixth play, *Les Miserables*, now in production and scheduled to open July 21, CAST has been quite a regional success. Since 2012, students from 25 area high schools have participated in the program, and the current cast and crew of *Les Miserables* comprises students from 15 schools.

“CAST has developed and grown throughout the years, turning into something much more meaningful and powerful through the relationships that are being made and the networking that is taking place,” says **Jason Burgess**, Highlands High School/CAST theatre director. “The overall artistry of the productions is something that has left me truly speechless and amazed at the abilities of the students around the Greater Cincinnati area.”

### Participating High Schools

- Amelia
- Anderson
- Beechwood
- Calvary Christian
- Cincinnati Country Day
- Cooper
- Covington Catholic
- Dixie Heights
- Highlands
- Holy Cross
- Mason
- Newport Central Catholic
- Notre Dame Academy
- Roger Bacon
- School for Creative and Performing Arts
- Scott
- Seven Hills
- Simon Kenton
- St. Ursula Academy
- St. Xavier
- Taylor
- Turpin
- Walnut Hills
- Walton Verona
- Wyoming



The Producers – 2012



Spamalot – 2016



Ragtime – 2015



Parade – 2013



The Addams Family – 2014





Cafeteria

## Moyer Elementary Leaping Forward



New Rear Entrance

3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Hallway

Exterior of New Gymnasium

### FTEF ANNUAL DANCE: "MARCH INTO FORT MADNESS"

This year's event was a SELLOUT. Guests came in basketball-themed and other 'mad' costumes to enjoy lounging areas, games and food. Take a look through the pictures below to see if you spot any friendly faces!



**FTEF**  
Annual  
Dance



**SAVE THE DATE: March 3, 2018**

Many exciting things planned for our 15th annual dance.

**THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS:** **GOLD** Carespring, Cris & Holly Collinsworth, Morel Construction Co., LLC. **SILVER** C-Forward, Executive Transportation, Innovative Energy Solutions, Johnson Investment Counsel, Kohl's, KLH Engineers, Tom & Lauren Meyer, Miter Masonry Construction, Inc., Penderly Insurance, Sound Solutions, Steinhäuser, Inc., Dr. Jeri Stull Orthodontics, Hans & Michelle Tinkler, Trent Montessori – Jan & Eric Haas/Erin & Craig Eckstein. **BRONZE** We love all of our Bronze Sponsors too but there were so many of you we couldn't fit them here. Go to our website to see the entire list.

FTEF Foundation Club ★ FTEF Foundation Club ★ FTEF Foundation Club



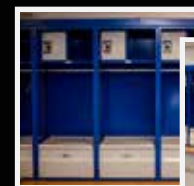
**JOIN THE FOUNDATION CLUB TODAY**  
Enjoy the 2017 football season in style!

.....  
First game is August 11 v. Cincinnati St. Xavier (scrimmage)



FTEF Foundation Club raises over \$40,000 annually for our schools and students.

**HIGHLANDS  
LEGACY  
LOCKERS**



### Celebrate Your Graduating Student Athlete

Highlands Legacy Lockers are a unique opportunity to ensure your personal legacy is permanently associated with Highlands' tradition of athletic excellence.

Basketball ★ Football ★ Volleyball

859.815.2004 [www.ftef.org](http://www.ftef.org)

FOLLOW US:  

FROM YOU. FOR THEM!





# FTEF

## THE ARTS: FROM YOU, FOR THEM.

The FTEF is committed to improving our schools and student resources. Since 2001, **thanks to your contributions we have awarded:**

**31 GRANTS SUPPORTING THE ARTS**  
totaling nearly \$130,000.

### HIGHLANDS HIGH SCHOOL

- Glaze-making Station (2014)
- Digital Cameras (2012, 2013)
- Nikon 35MM Cameras & Lighting Kit (2010)
- Art in Residence Ceramics Workshop (2003)



### HIGHLANDS MIDDLE SCHOOL

- 35MM Cameras (2016)
- Digital Cameras (2012)
- Portable Choir Risers (2007)
- Percussion instruments (2002)



### HIGHLANDS HIGH SCHOOL & MIDDLE SCHOOL

- Band Instruments (2015, 2016, 2017)
- Strings Instruments (2009, 2013, 2015, 2016, 2017)
- Percussion Equipment (2011)

### JOHNSON, MOYER, WOODFILL

- StageTech Theatre Equipment (2017)
- Sewing Machines & Looms (2016)
- Musical Instruments (2012)
- Digital Media Arts Program (2011)
- Flip Cameras (2010)
- Digital Storytelling (2004)
- Art in Motion Program (2003)



**YOU DID IT!** Thanks to your generous donations and support, we were able to award 14 TEACHER GRANTS this spring for more than \$75,000 – OUR BIGGEST YEAR EVER!

Audio Engineering Lab [HHS]  
Engineering Technology Equipment (HHS)  
Band Instruments [HHS & HMS]  
3D Printer [HHS]  
Cellos [HMS]  
Alternative Seating [HMS]

Heartrate Monitors [HMS]  
Broadcasting Room [HMS]  
Makerspace Expansion [JES]  
Robots, Game Makers & Circuits [MES, WES]  
StageTech Equipment [WES]  
The Leader in Me Program [WES]



## HOW FTEF GRANTS Are Changing the Classroom



“The addition of the instruments granted by the FTEF have not only broadened what we are able to perform, strengthened students’ performance skills, and improved overall tone quality but has also sparked a broader interest within our musicians.”

**Lori Duncan,**  
HMS & HHS Band Teacher

“The photography and ceramics resources the FTEF has given allow me to expand my teaching to new and innovative areas. I am able to do many new and interesting art projects, beyond the traditional curriculum, giving my students experience with technology and resources that are normally unavailable at the high school or even college levels.”

**Collin Shadwell,**  
HMS Art Teacher



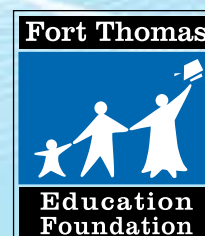
**EMMA SCHUTTE,**  
HHS Class of 2017

“Photography is what I enjoy doing the most. Through it I find personal meaning in my photos and also a larger appreciation for the world and people around me. I will be studying at the University of Cincinnati, in the DAAP Program, to obtain a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Photography. By taking art classes at HHS, I feel more confident about going to an art specific college. Access to DSLR Cameras and other technologies provided in our Photography class has helped me prepare for college.”



Remember to like us on Facebook to stay up-to-date on news and pictures from the projects around the district.

FROM YOU. FOR THEM







Tradition Never Graduates



The HHS Alumni Association and the Fort Thomas Education Foundation recently joined forces in an effort to expand the support and resources offered to our alumni, schools and community. Lots of really exciting alumni activities are coming in the fall. For news and information, go to [alumni.ftef.org](http://alumni.ftef.org).

# ALUMNI & TEACHERS

## HONORED AT ANNUAL DINNER

High School  
Teacher of the Year



**Tonya Eide**

"Each student brings a story and a gift to help me find and focus on their strengths to achieve their full potential."

Middle School  
Teacher of the Year



**Terri D'Ambrosio**

"I can't imagine a better place to teach than Fort Thomas. I'm thankful to my students—ready to learn, and parents who have instilled the value of education."

Elementary School  
Teacher of the Year



**Donna Hicks**

"I'm here because of the people around me. My dad always said, 'If you're going to do something, do it right.'"

Alumnus of the Year



**Eric Haas**  
Class of 1974

"It's all about education. We are truly blessed because of our schools. Teachers gave me the extra boost of confidence."

Keynote Speaker



**Gene Kirchner**

"It is our job to prepare our students for their futures, not our past."

**NOT A MEMBER? JOIN THE HHS ALUMNI ASSOCIATION TODAY!**



- Homecoming Tail Feather Tailgate
- Reunion Planning Resource Kit
- HHS Alumni Association Newsletter
- Connections with other HHS Alumni

**[alumni.ftef.org](http://alumni.ftef.org) or call 859.815.2004**

# ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

**Dr. Ahna Skop, HHS Class of 1990**

## COMBINING SCIENCE AND ART TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Dr. Skop earned a Ph.D. in Cell and Molecular Biology, and is pioneering scientific discoveries that could lead to breakthroughs in treatment for Parkinson's, Lou Gehrig's, and other diseases. Additionally, she is an award-winning artist whose "tiny art" has been shown at the Smithsonian, featured on NPR and PBS and written about in several publications.



Skop, daughter of former HHS art teacher Kathy Skop and the late Michael Skop, a renowned local sculptor and anatomy educator and illustrator, had early exposure to both science and art. "I grew up in a house where both parents were artists, so my passion for art is in my genes," she says. While at Highlands she found the joy and excitement about scientific discovery that sparked her interest in how things work and gave her the confidence to be a scientist. "I always tell people that genetically I'm an artist, but ended up a scientist who does art as well."

**SAVE THE DATE**  
**September 15th**

**HOMECOMING WEEKEND**  
**SHAKE YOUR TAIL FEATHER TAILGATE**

Stay Connected | [ALUMNI.FTEF.org](http://ALUMNI.FTEF.org) | [HHSA1891@gmail.com](mailto:HHSA1891@gmail.com) | 859.815.2004



# FORT THOMAS

## INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

H	H	J	M	W
HIGHLANDS HIGH	HIGHLANDS MIDDLE	JOHNSON elementary	MOYER elementary	WOODFILL elementary



HHS seniors proudly display their choice of college on "College T-Shirt Day."

**Please let us know if you receive duplicate copies.**

**Want to Be Added to Our Mailing List?**

Please call the Central Office at 859.781.3333.

**You're Invited!**

The Board of Education of Fort Thomas Independent Schools meetings take place the second Monday of each month at 6:30pm, usually in the Central Office. Visit our website to confirm the time and place.

**How Are We Doing?**

Write to us in care of *Traditions*, 28 N. Fort Thomas Ave., Fort Thomas, KY 41075, or e-mail [Traditions@fortthomas.kyschools.us](mailto:Traditions@fortthomas.kyschools.us).

**Board of Education**

Brad Fennell, Chairperson  
Jeff Beach, Vice Chairperson  
Karen Allen  
Lisa Duckworth  
John Weyer

**Central Office Administrators**

Gene Kirchner, Superintendent  
Jon Stratton, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services  
Ginger Webb, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning

**Our Phone Numbers**

Central Office..... 781.3333  
Highlands High School .....781.5900  
Highlands Middle School .....441.5222  
Johnson Elementary.....441.2444  
Moyer Elementary .....441.1180  
Woodfill Elementary ..... 441.0506

[www.fortthomas.kyschools.us](http://www.fortthomas.kyschools.us)

Non-Profit Org.  
US Postage  
**PAID**  
Bourbon, IN  
Permit #29

\*\*\*\* ECRWSS  
Postal Customer

**Traditions**

**FORT THOMAS**  
**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS**

28 N. Fort Thomas Ave.  
Fort Thomas, KY 41075