

Flying Arrow

Fall 2021



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all-in**

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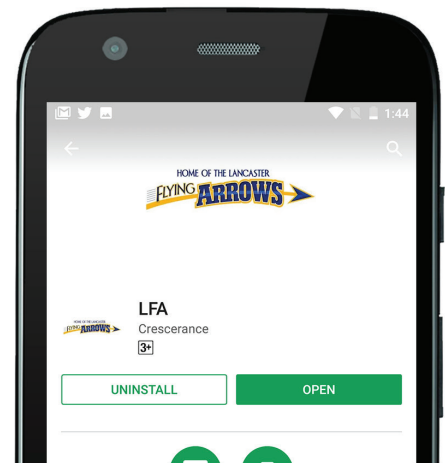
Lancaster Middle/High School students make the most of a creative partnership

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SEARCH AND DOWNLOAD

LANCASTER FLYING ARROWS



Great things can happen when we work together

Mr. Chambers told me if I didn't tell this story, he would.

CESA 3 and Lancaster Community Schools received a Spectrum Award during last month's Wisconsin School Public Relations Association fall conference.

An Award of Merit was presented for a submission in a new category in 2021: Story. The story, "Unstop-

pable", appeared in the Fall 2020 edition of this publication and chronicled the girls cross country team's run to a state title.

I share the award with coach Taylor Reynolds and each member of the team who took time out of their busy days to share their thoughts with me more than a year ago. Without them, the honor would not have

been possible.

When we work together, great things can happen. Marginally talented writers like myself can win awards, or beautiful goats can roam the City. Learn more about that on the next page.

Robert Callahan | Editor

LANCASTER COMMUNITY SCHOOLS



FLYING ARROW

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Cover photo by Robert Callahan.

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Bit by bit



With many helping hands,
LMS/LHS sculpted
a memorable collaboration

BY ROBERT CALLAHAN

The “City of the Dome” became home to a herd of goats this summer thanks to a partnership between Lancaster Community Schools, the City of Lancaster and Saputo.

Lancaster Middle/High School art teacher Mari Schneider led her talented students, who created more than a dozen clay goats. Lancaster High School’s Advanced Welding students offered an assist in the form of a metal goat as well.

“When looking to add placemaking art downtown, I believed that showcasing our students’ creative talents would increase community pride,” said Lancaster Deputy Clerk/Treasurer Aja Taylor. “The students and Mari really exceeded expectations and everyone fell in love with the goats.

“I hope to continue partnerships with the school in the future because you can see the positive impact it has for everyone.”

As one can imagine, creating a herd of goats was no small feat.

“It was fun to see the kids experience a large-scale art operation, essentially from the start, like, how are you going to make a 50-pound goat,” Schneider said. “They got to see that a little bit by little bit by a little bit, how we put it together.”

The project began in April. Students spared no creativity.

“Each sixth grade class came up with ideas,” Schneider explained. “We had a list on the board, and we narrowed down the characteristics of the goats.”

Not to be outdone, seventh graders created Billy the Swaggy Santa,

as well as Papa Jim.

“Their ideas all stemmed from pretty much what their life was like during quarantine, which was YouTube and TikToks,” Schneider shared. “It is kind of cool how they came out, because if you look at Billy’s story—Billy, the Swaggy Santa—he was always interested in being a Santa Claus, but over quarantine he was watching so many TikToks he wanted to upgrade his image.

“Papa Jim—I think he’s a YouTube guy—and was a little old goat. It is



Robert Callahan photo

Meet ClaraBelle. Lancaster Middle/High School students created several clay goats earlier this year in partnership with the City of Lancaster and Saputo.

kind of cool how you can see how much COVID-19 and quarantine played a role in their ideas.”

Lancaster High School seniors Abigail Martin and Cayden Nielsen weren’t afraid to get their hands dirty.

“I thought it was such a fun experience,” Martin said. “I had never really taken on a project so large before, so it was a great challenge.

“One thing I enjoyed most was watching the slab of clay look more and more like a realistic goat ev-

ery day, and even making him look however we wanted him to.”

The task was far from a walk in the pasture, however.

“It was a bit challenging, though, because my group mates and I didn’t really know much about goats or their structure, but Mrs. Schneider loved helping us shape the clay to make our goat look more realistic,” Martin said.

Many of the goats weighed between 35 to 40 pounds.

“On day one, they would shave a 50-pound ball and we just slowly kept adding to it,” Schneider said. “Handful by handful.”

Envisioning a goat when staring at a 50-pound ball of clay is a skill not all young artists yet have.

“It was the hardest part, looking at that ball of clay and realizing what it could turn into,” Schneider said. “They look at it and they were like, it looks like a big baked potato.”

“Through the process of moving the clay, adding clay or subtracting clay, they began to see what we could possibly do. Then they were like, oh, it does look like a goat. It just takes time.”

Nielsen enjoyed the process.

“It was cool to watch them all come together, especially on the high school side, because we didn’t have the categories on the board,” he said. “It started from nothing, just a square of clay.”

The creation of the goats was just the beginning.

“When it was time to put the goats in the kiln, you prayed they didn’t blow up,” Schneider said. “I

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'all-in'



**With her sights set high,
LHS senior Rianna Straka has made the most
of opportunities afforded her**

BY ROBERT CALLAHAN

If there were ever a story befitting the Rolling Stone interview treatment, it is Rianna Straka's.

Rianna has been singing for as long as she can remember. She turned old enough to vote this year, but already has two singles to her credit. A Lancaster High School senior, she has her sights set on the commercial music industry someday.

"Rianna has a true love, and that love is music," shares Brandi Dreher, owner of Gotta Dance Studio and mentor to Rianna. "To be able to find time in her busy schedule to make music, dancing, singing and songwriting a priority has not been easy, but she is a great example of how it can be done."

Rianna took part in the Wisconsin School Music Association's State Honors Project for the third time earlier this year—a rare feat—but she remains grounded.

"Rianna hasn't wanted to stick out of the group ever, really," says Lancaster Middle/High School choir director David Murphy. "She leads with her voice and with her attitude. There has never been a hint of 'I'm better than you' or 'I should be doing this separately from everyone else.' Never.

"She looks for opportunities to do things with other students and other musicians, and I think that is a sign of somebody who has an interest in exploring all the angles of what music is or can be."

Rianna also plays the trumpet and has been a member of the color guard in Lancaster High School's band.

"It is always fun to watch people grow in every aspect of music, whether it be vocally or instrumentally, and then to work with them on composition or things like color guard," says Lancaster High School band director Rebekah Vogelsberg. "Probably the most growth I've seen out of Rianna was in my [Music] Theory class last year when we worked on compositions. It was really fun to watch the process of her composing what ended up to be a really special choral piece."

All can agree at talent like Rianna does not come around often.

"That is what makes it kind of extra-special," Vogelsberg said. "To see somebody who is all-in to all aspects of music and to be so interested in all of the different kinds and forms of what we do here at school."

Rianna took time from her schedule—which included a role in "13 Past Midnight"—to sit down for a Flying

Arrow interview last month.

How long have you been singing? As long as you can remember?

Yeah, I started voice lessons at my dance studio when I was little, a kid. I'm not sure exactly how old. I started dancing when I was three, so probably a few years—probably like six or something—I started singing, taking voice lessons. I started learning guitar when I was in fifth grade. That started me singing places and stuff like that. And then obviously in middle school and high school, choir started.

Even before high school, you were performing places?

Yeah, I think I started doing that in middle school.

You released a single, right?

Yeah.

When was that?

I have two out. Let me check the dates. I'm not positive. I'm guessing the first one was two years ago. The most recent one was in August or September.

How did that come about? That's like uncharted waters.

Yeah. So I was, well, I am dating a guy whose cousin is a musician and he lives in Wausau. He has a home recording studio with a friend of his, and they have a little business. So, it was through meeting him.

I actually had made a joke because they do this

family Christmas present exchange, you can get one person and you all exchange or whatever. They had me and he asked me what I wanted, and I said, how about a song in your studio? And I was like, kidding. He's said, no, I'll actually do that. So then it just happened.

We went up there one weekend and I had sent him the song like a month or so before. He had made some tracks already for guitar and bass and stuff that I don't play. I got there and we recorded guitar and vocals and harmonies. Then he mixed it all, and that was basically that. To put songs out on platforms, you can use distributing companies—just like websites online—and you pay \$10 or \$15 to put the song out and just wait for it to get distributed.

Is your first single still out there?

Yeah, they're on Spotify. Spotify and Apple. Any streaming platform.

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Megan Hammond photo

Winskill Elementary School's classroom libraries are growing with the help of the Arrow Books initiative that began earlier this year. Megan Hammond's kindergarten students look forward to a new bag of books each month.

'A wonderful gift'

**Gracious community support
is expanding
Winskill's classroom libraries**

BY ROBERT CALLAHAN

W inskill Elementary School's classroom libraries are growing thanks to the school's Arrow Books initiative.

Fundraising began in earnest earlier this year and was well-received. A GoFundMe was formed, and the Friends of Winskill matched the first \$1,000 in donations. Lancaster's Royal Bank donated \$250 and multiple businesses made

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Thank you to the following individuals and businesses for their support of Arrow Books:

Anonymous, Anonymous, Brandi Taylor, Brianna Klaas, Courtney Watters, Curt and Rosa Broihahn, Foremost Farms, Friends of Winskill, Gina Rollins, Jessica Bober, Julie McLimans, Lancaster Dental, Marcia Chambers, Marie Vincent, Nancy Ralph, Peggy Sturmer, Royal Bank, Shannon Vondrum, Steve "Spider" Fromader, Sweet Corn Sales, West End Salvage.

donations of their own. A portion of proceeds of Mark Schwab's sweet corn sales benefited Arrow Books as well.

"When you add up all that, we were right around \$5,000, which is about what it costs to operate Arrow Books for a year," explained Winskill Elementary fourth grade teacher Jim Addison. "Every teacher is getting about \$30 a month, grades 4K through fifth grade, and any reading

teacher, I suppose, as it gets into the older grades.

“Every teacher has the ability to order any books they feel like their students would be interested in. It is nice to have ongoing, new literature coming into the classrooms every month.”

While Arrow Books was created to benefit Winskill’s students, but is helpful for teachers as well, Addison said, citing the cost and ongoing expense of maintaining a classroom library.

“The Arrow Books initiative has been a wonderful addition to our classroom,” said Winskill Elementary second grade teacher Kennedy Adams. “We have celebrated our monthly books each time they have been delivered. My students are so excited to see what I have picked each month, and cannot wait for the books to make their debut in our classroom library.

“Arrow Books has also given me the opportunity to purchase books



Robert Callahan photo

Kennedy Adams’ second grade classroom library at Winskill Elementary has grown thanks to Arrow Books.

that will enrich our whole group lessons. These books will be well-loved for years to come. I can’t thank our community enough for giving our students more opportunities to love reading!”

Winskill Elementary kindergarten teacher Megan Hammond shared Adams’ sentiment.

“Arrow Books has been a wonderful gift for the classroom library. The

students are very excited each month to open up the bag of books to find out what new reads we will add to our collection,” she said. “We do a Fun-Friday Read aloud in our classroom each Friday afternoon, before the students leave for the weekend, and it has become our classroom tradition to read the Arrow Books, then place them in our library after.

For Hammond, the gift of Arrow Books is twofold.

“Giving the students an opportunity to be excited about reading is such a wonderful gift,” she said. “There is so much appreciation for those who were able to donate and for those who organized the initiative. The Lancaster community gives back in the most special ways and we are so lucky to have such phenomenal support.

Anyone wishing to support Arrow Books can make a donation via the GoFundMe page (<https://www.gofundme.com/f/arrow-books>) or contact Addison.

“The end goal is to find ways to make it kind of sustainable, where we are not having to rely so much on parent donations and such,” Addison said. “It would be nice to see, whether it is a fundraiser, just ways that we can make it so we know Arrow Books can continue on a year-to-year basis.”

Bit by bit

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usually had about a month dry time on some of them because I just did not want them to blow up.”

Schneider explained each goat was made hollow, to allow the clay enough time to dry. If the goats were not hollow, each would have weighed well more than 100 pounds.

“We need that dry time, but the

drier the clay is, the more breakable it is,” Schneider said. “On the plus side, the drier the clay is, the less likely it is that an air pocket is going to blow it up.”

Due to the sheer size of some of the goats, Schneider described using her hips as a fulcrum to lower the clay creations into the kiln.

Although it was her first year as Middle/High School art teacher, Schneider did not hesitate when presented the opportunity.

“It was game on,” she said. “My

only hesitation was if we had a long enough timeline to get done what we needed to.”

Schneider was humbled by Taylor’s request.

“It just kind of felt like a little bit of vindication—like all my hard work and working in the schools for as long as I have—and I was really honored someone would think of us,” she said.

Schneider joined Lancaster

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Rebekah Vogelsberg photo

Lancaster High School students who were chosen to be part of the Wisconsin School Music Association (WSMA) State Honors project were, from left: Polaris Buttles, euphonium, Middle Level Honors Band; Mackenzie Morgan, trumpet, High School Honors Band; Anna Murphy, Soprano, High School Treble Choir; Rianna Straka, Alto, High School Mixed Choir; Ariana Hauck, Alto, High School Treble Choir; and Michael Murphy, Baritone, Middle Level Honors Choir.

Six chosen for WSMA State Honors Project

Anna Murphy, Rianna Straka earn prestigious accolade for third time

BY ROBERT CALLAHAN

In what is becoming a yearly tradition, Lancaster Middle/High School was well represented in the Wisconsin School Music Association's State Honors Project.

Lancaster High School freshman Polaris Buttles was chosen to play the euphonium in the Middle-Level Honors Band and senior Mackenzie Morgan was chosen to play trumpet in the High School Honors Band.

"Mackenzie's goal since her freshman year has been to make it into the State Honors program and she has worked really

hard to achieve this," Lancaster High School band director Rebekah Vogelsberg said. "It has been fun to see the joy that radiates from her when she does accomplish her goals.

"As a teacher, these are some of the best moments I can have. I'm really proud of her!"

Lancaster Middle School band director Ashley Miller could tell Buttles was destined for success.

"When Polaris first walked into my room as a sixth grader, excited to start band, I could tell they were ready to be amazing," she said. "They

always asked for more challenging assignments, always came prepared, and always wanted the best and craziest parts.

"It was no surprise when they made Honors in eighth grade. They've worked hard. They deserve it."

Miller shared the Middle-Level Honors Band played one of her favorite pieces, "Rippling Watercolors."

"I may or may not have shed a tear, out of joy and out of pride," she said. "I'm so happy Polaris got this experience and look forward to all the amazing things they accomplish in

high school!"

The High School Honors Band performed at the Overture Center in Madison on Oct. 28. The Middle-Level Honors Band performed at Verona Area High School on Oct. 30.

Lancaster High School freshman Michael Murphy was chosen to sing baritone in the Middle-Level Honors Choir.

Lancaster High School sophomore Ariana Hauck (alto) and senior Anna Murphy (soprano) were chosen to sing in the High School Treble Choir.

Lancaster High School

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Did you realize when that was happening that it was pretty awesome?

Yeah, I was really excited about that. Yes, because the older I have gotten, the more I want to do commercial music and that kind of music, instead of theater. I mean, I love theater, but I plan on going to college for commercial music.

Where is that happening?

I have been accepted to Belmont in Nashville and Columbia in Chicago. So either of those. I really want to go to Columbia in Chicago. I have a friend that goes there and has really enjoyed it, so we'll see.

That's amazing. When one goes to college for commercial music, is that a four-year program?

Different schools have different options. If I went to Belmont it would be a commercial music degree and I would have a focus on songwriting, because I would rather be a songwriter than like the tech people, because I don't like love technology, really. At Columbia, the degree is a little different. But basically, yeah, it's just a commercial music degree and you can have focuses in songwriting. I also want to take music business classes because that can help you a lot in the industry.

You're going to go to one of two awesome colleges. Is your goal to work in the music industry, whether it be songwriting or performing or production?

Yeah. Yeah. I'd like to do that.

Oddball question: how many times do you think you've performed the National Anthem? Too many to count?

Maybe. A gosh, a lot. A lot of sporting events and some community events.

Do you get nervous anymore? Did you ever get nervous?

No, luckily, I've never had much stage fright. I don't know. I've always just felt very comfortable performing. I'd say I get more nervous for other things. I've just always been very confident performing. I like being on stage. I feel very comfortable on stage.

Is there an aspect of performing you enjoy the most?

I would say performing. Rehearsal time is interesting in some ways, but overall, I love performance time because, I don't know, I've always just really loved the atmosphere of a performance and seeing the audience and I love going out to see my parents and my family afterward. It's always just very special to me and I love it, especially in a venue like a theater.

And I guess for Cabaret to be getting ready for the performance, like backstage, I always, I just really love that part of it. Yeah, it's very fun.

Was last year's Cabaret still fun?

I still enjoyed it because I do enjoy the process of learning music. Like working with Mr. Murphy, even just us two like working on, you know, the nitty gritty of the song. How are we going to say this or do this? I enjoy that. But it was definitely a lot different.

It felt a little bit of a longer process because you didn't have like a final destination you felt like you were reaching for. So that was definitely different.

How far in advance did you begin working on Cabaret? You had two pretty intense numbers.

I'd say I practiced the piano one a lot earlier than the guitar one because I'm a lot less comfortable on piano than guitar.

Really?

Yeah. I took piano when I was younger for like a year and a half, and I never liked it. I didn't like it. Then I went to guitar right after that and really fell in love with guitar.

I've started taking piano again the last two years. I like it more now that I'm older, but I still don't like it as much as guitar. But I need—if I'm going into music—I need to know how to play piano. So yeah, it's kind of like a requirement.

Fascinating.

Yeah. You take a piano placement for most music schools and then you have to take piano classes. You don't have to be like advanced in piano, but you have to be able to play through a tune.

Just seeing you on stage, I would have never known that piano wasn't your favorite thing in the world.

I think I like piano a lot more now. I think if someone who plays piano would listen to it, they would know I was doing like a pretty simple thing. But especially when you're singing over it, it's harder to even notice

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Excellent Eight

Meet Lancaster Community Schools' new teachers

Lancaster Community Schools welcomed eight new staff members as the 2021-2022 school year began.



Maria Bast

Winskill Elementary School kindergarten teacher Maria Bast was previously an intern kindergarten teacher at Highland Elementary School. She graduated from Platteville High School and attended Kirkwood Community College before graduating from the University of Wisconsin-Platteville.



Hannah Digman Fox

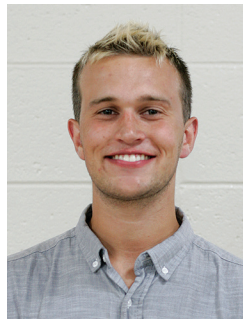
Lancaster Middle School seventh and eighth grade English teacher

Hannah Digman Fox was previously a teacher intern at the Southwestern School District in both the middle and high schools. She graduated from Platteville High School and later UW-Platteville.



Makenna Gabel

Occupational Therapy assistant Makenna Gabel—a recent graduate of Western Technical College—previously worked for MJ Care and Conley Construction. A native of Buffalo City, Wis., she graduated from Cochrane-Fountain City High School.



Nicholas Horner

Winskill Elementary School third grade math teacher Nicholas Horner

previously worked for Potosi Brewery Company for seven years. He graduated from Potosi High School and later UW-Platteville.



Brooke Marcue

Winskill Elementary School second grade teacher Brooke Marcue began her career in education as a babysitter, caring for children with the Lancaster community. She was hired as a paraprofessional at Winskill in 2020 and began student teaching in a first grade classroom in January 2021. Brooke works at Lancaster Country Club in the summer months. She graduated from Lancaster High School before graduating from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater.

Winskill Elementary School fifth grade special education co-teacher Emily Powers previously worked for Darlington and Southwestern school districts during summer school, and also Timmerman's Supper Club in East Dubuque. She graduated



Emily Powers

from East Dubuque High School and later UW-Platteville.



Grant Reynolds

Lancaster Middle School sixth grade math teacher Grant Reynolds previously worked as a teacher at Boscobel Elementary School. He began his teaching career at Lancaster Middle School. He graduated from Boscobel High School before graduating from the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse.

Lancaster Middle School Social Studies teacher Kristin Rolland was previously a Social Studies teacher at Pectonica High School. She graduated from Lancaster



Kristin Rolland

High School and later UW-Platteville.

Get to know each new member of the Lancaster Community Schools team:

What inspired you to become an educator?

Bast: I am a fourth-generation educator, so I've grown up seeing how impactful—and rewarding—this field is. Children bring me so much joy, and I couldn't dream of a career (for me) any better than this.

Fox: All of the fabulous educators in my life inspired me to become a teacher. And, of course, the daily opportunity to make a positive impact!

Gabel: My passion to learn and desire to make a positive impact.

Horner: I wanted the chance to make a difference in someone's life.

Marcue: For as long as I can remember, I have always wanted to become a teacher. I can thank the inspiration of countless teachers and professors that have helped me succeed. However, one experience stands out. My senior year of high school I tutored in Emily Langkamp's first grade class-

room. It was inspiring watching her teach and work with the students. Having the opportunity to work with her and the students confirmed my dream of becoming an educator.

Powers: What inspired me most to become a teacher is knowing how much teachers make an impact on students for the rest of their lives. I have always wanted to be that person who helps students gain the confidence they need to succeed and thrive in life.

Reynolds: My experiences coaching basketball and cross country in college inspired me to become an educator.

Rolland: Teachers were a huge influence in my life and gave me a love for learning, which I now want to pass onto my students.

What interested you in joining the Lancaster Community Schools team?

Bast: When I decided to become a teacher, I knew I wanted to teach in a smaller district. Here I could give back to a community that did a lot for me, and my education. When I walked in for my interview, everyone felt like family and the school already felt like home. I am so excited to be joining the Winskill team and couldn't be more thankful for this opportunity!

Fox: I spent a lot of time in Lancaster schools growing up, whether it

was for sports, choir, FFA, etc., and I was always impressed by the positive environment and standard of excellence throughout the district. I am now proud to help uphold those standards and continue providing a positive environment for my own students.

Gabel: I have always heard Lancaster was a beautiful area with a welcoming community, and after I met a couple co-workers over Zoom, I knew it was the place for me!

Horner: I was interested in joining Lancaster's school district because of the small-town feeling.

Marcue: I believe in teamwork, growth, dedication and hard work. These are all attributes that the Lancaster Community Schools team possesses. Student teaching in the Lancaster school district has been one of the most impactful experiences in my career. This school district isn't just a group of teachers and their students—it's a family.

Powers: I was originally interested in Lancaster because I wanted to teach in a smaller town, but from the first time I walked into Winskill Elementary, everyone was so kind, positive and inviting. I learned quickly this is a great place to teach.

Reynolds: I have lived in Lancaster for the last five years and I have admired the sense of school

pride in the community.

Rolland: Lancaster is my hometown and the schools provided me with an education that could take me anywhere, and I guess that "anywhere" is here.

What do you like to do outside the classroom (hobbies, interests, etc.)?

Bast: I love to hike, camp, kayak, be with my dog (fiancé too), bike, and anything else outdoors. I spend a lot of time at Pizzeria Unos, where I am the manager. I love to stay busy and be around other people.

Fox: Outside of school, I enjoy spending time outdoors with my husband, Austin, and our two dogs, Oliver and Ella. I can often be found burying my nose in a book or trying to keep my house plants alive. And, most importantly, I'm a self-proclaimed desert connoisseur!

Gabel: I enjoy golf, hiking, playing cards, and spending time with friends and family.

Horner: My hobbies include listening to music, kayaking, and visiting with friends and family.

Marcue: Outside of the classroom I enjoy playing golf, playing with my dog, and spending time with family and friends. I love being outside and finding ways to stay active.

Powers: Outside of the classroom, I enjoy doing anything

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that because you're focused on my singing more than my piano.

When you were singing "Rise Up"—I was there but I don't remember—were you turning pages of music or did you have that memorized?

I had that one memorized.

How long does that take? To me, that doesn't seem like an easy song to play.

I've always been pretty good at memorizing songs. The more you do it, the easier it comes to you, I guess. I'd say dance has helped with me being able to remember things because you learn choreography and you have to remember it. I think that's helped a lot.

If you were to look at a song you'd realize there's a pattern for the verse and the chorus. Once you learn that, it basically just repeats itself. So it's not like the whole song is changing the entire time. It kind of stays in the same few chords. It's easier than you would think that it is, for someone who plays.

We're bouncing all over, but Honors Choir: the best of the best. What was that experience like?

I've always loved Honors Choir. The middle school is different because you only go for a weekend. High school, unfortunately, I only got one year of the real experience of it. I honestly did not enjoy the online one, but my first year, it was pretty amazing. It was a cool experience for me. I would say it made me realize I liked choral music more than I thought.

We were at Green Bay and I just remember, the first time we all started singing as a group, everyone was just looking around like, oh my gosh, is this us making this sound? It's crazy.

And I was just talking to Anna [Murphy] about this: how different I sing when I'm there. It takes you up another level, just being in a room of people, who a lot of them are better than you. It's just a group of really talented kids. It's really cool. And also meeting the kids and hearing all the stuff that they have at their school is just as crazy. Some of the opportunities they all have is nuts.

Have you known for a while that someday you'd like to be in the industry?

Yeah, I would say ever since I was a kid, I have always said I wanted to be a singer. For a lot of probably middle school and my freshman and sophomore year, I really wanted to go into musical theater. I started really getting into theater after sixth grade, I started going to Dubuque and doing shows down there. I still love the-

ater. I want to do theater my whole life. I just don't want to as a career.

It was my sophomore year, it started to be like, oh my gosh, do I really want to do this? Is this a reality? It's a hard career choice, and hard schooling. It's hard to get into music schools.

I started thinking about doing—my mom's in OT—so I thought about doing that and or speech, speech pathology or something. But then I kept talking to my mom and she said, I just don't see you doing that. I don't think you're going to like it. By now, I have the mentality of—I mean—why not try it? You never know what's going to happen. It feels better just being confident about going into it.

To be accepted into a music school do you need to send demos?

Yeah. So right now, I guess I'm accepted to those schools academically, I've gotten accepted in that way. In the next few months, I will start my audition process. That's the hard thing about music schools: it's kind of double. You have to apply and then audition. It's like you're trying to sell yourself two times. Most colleges, you go and you sing an art song. Not a classical piece, basically. So it could be anything, a theatre piece and then a classical piece.

For Columbia, they don't do an in-person audition, they do a portfolio online. It is two art songs, a classical song and then a resume of songs you can sing if they needed you to. For Columbia, since I would be going for commercial music, I can put a link to my own tracks or my own songs, to show songwriting.

Your singles, you're written?

Yeah.

Is that a tough process, writing a song?

It's definitely gotten better over the years. Some of the first songs I've written, you think they're pretty good, and then you look back now and think, oh my gosh, that was not good. It's definitely a skill that takes some honing in on it.

I would say knowing how to play guitar—or just an instrument in general—is crucial for songwriting. You have to have some instrument to play. I personally, I love English. I love writing poetry. I love writing papers. I just I'm very much an English-minded person. I love writing the lyrics of songs. I find that very fun. My songs are more focused on lyrics than, like, really complex musical parts.

That's just my style, I guess.

How many songs do you think you've written, if you just had a ballpark it?

Over 100. I mean, they're not all full songs, but there'll be times I'll just write little snippets, or if I showed you

the voice memos of my phone, it's just full of little ideas. I'll get driving in the car or something and get an idea. I don't do anything with most of them, but it's just you get ideas and sometimes roll with it and then you have a whole song.

You shared with me previously how you made your second single. You went to a camp?

Yeah, I went to a camp.

How did you learn about that?

My dance teacher, Brandi [Dreher], had gone to it and she was in high school she went for, I think, musical theater or something. So it's this arts camp in Shell Lake. It's an old school. You still stay in these little log cabins.

I was there a week that they had a trumpet camp or piano camp and then music production, which is what I was in. Throughout the summer they also do theater and choral and stuff like that.

We stayed there for a week and had our music production room. There were six of us kids and they had Mac laptops, nice desks, and equipment for us to use. The guy who leads the camp and teaches us, he works—I think it was in Milwaukee—at recording studios and that's his job. He does the camp in the summer sometimes.

Basically throughout the week, he teaches you the basics of the program you are using and programs in general, like stuff that applies to everything. Then you basically get free rein to write a song and you just ask for help along the way. A lot of the work was on your own, but it was so beneficial to—when you reach those roadblocks—have him right there to help you.

I had the song written already—I didn't write it at the camp—so I had it in my head. Then I recorded the guitar part, we did vocals and then it just kind of goes from there. We all produced very different styles of songs as kids. It was really cool. You spent all day in there. You were probably in there from—besides lunch breaks—like eight to five or so, doing it, just working on it. It was really beneficial though, I learned a ton.

What was it like to have that experience?

It was very, very cool. Both of those songs were great



Robert Callahan photo

Rianna performed "Bohemian Rhapsody" with the Chamber Singers during Cabaret 2020, "Alive."

experiences also because living here, there's not a ton of music opportunity around here. You know, there's theater and there's choral stuff here, but there's really there's no recording studios around here, anything like that. Both of the opportunities, yes, were drives far away. But I never thought I'd get the opportunity to record a song 'til college. So to have two out by now is really, really, I don't know.

I'm very lucky to have them out and to have those experiences. After having both of those experiences,

I've bought enough equipment myself now that I can record on my own. I'm working on some things and we'll see. I don't know, I'm still learning the program. It's harder to learn it when you don't have someone to help you all the time because you read a lot of forums trying to figure stuff out.

Who are some of the awesome people who have helped you along the way?

Brandi Dreher's a top one. She's taught me a ton. Obviously, Mr. Murphy has taught me a lot and Mrs. Vogelsberg too. They both showed me a lot.

What's it like to learn from Mr. Murphy?

He's kind of like a fountain of knowledge. He could just tell you stuff all day long that's interesting. Through the years, it's been very fun working with him, and especially now we're very close at this point. I have always done duets with Anna, so the three of us together has always been super fun.

Patricia [Murphy] has spent so much time playing piano for me. I feel very close to their family. It's been really great learning from him. He's very supportive and he always wants you to do the best that you can, and is very encouraging and motivating. He's one of my favorite people I've learned from for sure.

Did Ms. Brandi kind of get the ball rolling when you were little?

Yeah, she's definitely who I kind of attribute getting into performance arts to.



Robert Callahan photo

Rianna joined an ensemble to tap dance "Shake It Off" during Cabaret 2021, "From A Distance."

I started learning from her. I have learned from her and the rest of her family. When I was little, when I took voice lessons, it was from Vickie, her mom, and then and I've also had voice lessons from her sister. Their whole family has really helped me when I was younger, improve on my skills.

Do your peers come to you for advice, because of your experiences?

Yes and no. I think my peers know that I'm good at music, but there's just not a huge music community here. Sometimes through the years, there's definitely been, you know, the little frustrations of, I mean, you'd probably agree with me, sports get a lot of attention in our school, which is fine. I love sports too. I love the sports that I play and I love watching sports. But yeah, there's certain things that I wish got more recognition. Not for me, just for any kid who does music. There's a lot of kids who have done impressive music things and I wish it all got a little bit of recognition. That's why I'm excited doing this.

I think my friends know that I'm good at music. Sometimes I don't think people realize, I don't know, how much time goes into it, I guess. I think people think I was like a natural at it. And in some ways there's skill, but you put a lot of work into it.

Let's talk about mom and dad quick. How are they helped along the way?

Yeah. That's definitely been a process because they're not like they, they aren't bad at music, but they've never, you know, it's not what they've spent time on or is a hobby of theirs. My dad, I would attribute a lot of my music taste to. He has shown me a lot of good artists over the years, like the old rock and then like James Taylor and the Eagles and stuff like that. I give my music tastes to him.

My mom and my dad have supported me so much

driving me all over God knows where to do stuff and paying for things and always supporting me and even pushing me, even if I didn't want to go sing somewhere. You know, if I wasn't feeling it, they would be like, you got to do this and just, yeah, they've been so, so supportive and even supporting me going into this professionally when I have doubted it and I've said oh, it was too hard, I can't, you know, they've always been there saying, you know, you can, you can do it and we think you're capable of it. So yeah, they've been amazing.

Rianna Straka's favorite artists. Go.

Oh God, it's so difficult. Old artists. I love Elton John, The Beatles, Billy Joel. Yeah.

Years from now, when you're a big name in the industry, whether it be as a performer or songwriter, what will you remember about your time here in LHS?

I was actually talking to my mom of the other day about how it's been frustrating over the years to not have a huge music community where I've grown up. It's been a lot of roadblocks and closed doors, it's felt like, but I've pushed through a lot of stuff and sought out the opportunities, and I've found a lot of opportunities over the years.

And I think I was telling my mom how when I get older and I'm finally at college where it's all around me and there's kids everywhere, just like me and, you know, the rest of my life, wherever I am. I think it'll make me more grateful to have it all and to have all that at the tip of my finger instead of 45 minutes away.

But yeah, I think it'll make me a lot more grateful. And then definitely the people who have always rooted for me, like Mr. Murphy and Brandi, I think of both of them as people who I'll come back and visit and call and tell them how I'm doing and just how they've always pushed me and supported me. I'll remember that.

Bit by bit

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

Community Schools as a paraprofessional in 2011 and following a hiatus as her family grew, she returned to that role in 2018. Thanks to the urging of Director of Special Education Neil Campbell and several colleagues, Schneider pursued a degree in education via CESA 3.

“When our schools were closed in 2020 due to COVID, I was pretty much teaching my children and going to college at the same time with CESA 3’s alternative pathway,” Schneider said. “It was like cramming three years of schooling into one, so it was pretty intense.

“All the stars lined up for me, because CESA 3 hasn’t offered that since. It is thanks to that I am teaching today.”

What did Schneider enjoy most about the project?

“Proving to the kids that they

could create anything they wanted to,” she said. “The kids realized they could create something. It turned out better than I thought. That was the best.”

a permanent art installation in the community would be amazing,” she said. “I’d love for the students to be able to do business murals and have art more prominent in Lancaster.

“We are such a diverse community, I would just love to see more of an art explosion. I’d like to have high school students help frame art to put up in businesses around by all our students: elementary, middle and high school. I would like to do that eventually, but right now, I just don’t have the manpower.

Thanks in part to a herd of goats, Schneider’s first year of teaching will be one she will never forget.

“An art installation was actually a bucket list thing for me,” she said. “It was such an amazing opportunity. I have always wanted to have an art installation.

“Having an art installation. First year teaching with students. I was like, hmm, that’s kind of cool. Not kind of. Very cool.”



Robert Callahan photo

Completed goats found homes throughout Lancaster this summer. Darnell sought shade near the Grantland Theatre.

Schneider hopes to continue to grow the Middle/High School art program.

“I’d love to have an art installation within the school. Maybe even

WSMA Honors

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

senior Rianna Straka was chosen to sing alto in the High School Mixed Choir.

Hauck was chosen to

be part of the Middle Level Honors Choir in 2020. Murphy and Straka have been chosen to perform in the Honors Choir for three straight years.

“It’s all about them,” Lancaster Middle/High

School Choir Director David Murphy said. “It’s their want to be part of it, it’s their work ethic and their skills to be able to do it, and do it over and over again. That is exciting, and it is remarkable.”

The Middle-Level Honors Choir performed at Verona Area High School on Oct. 30. The High School Honors Choir performed at the Overture Center in Madison on Oct. 28.

Excellent Eight

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

outdoors, especially camping, watching baseball, playing with my two

cats, reading, and spending time with my family and friends.

Reynolds: When I am not teaching, I enjoy spending time with my fiancé, Haley, as well as

golfing and running.

Rolland: I enjoy spending time with my family, traveling to historic places, watching sporting events (Go Arrows, Badgers, and Packers!), read-

ing and watching movies (especially Marvel, Star Wars and Disney), and I am a huge Hamilton fan!

FLYING ARROW SCOREBOARD

The Lancaster High School trap shooting team won the 1A Conference 1 title. The Flying Arrows compete in the Wisconsin State High School Clay Target League. Lancaster junior **Bryce Galle** finished the season ranked atop the conference and third in the state with a 24.3 average. Lancaster senior **Hunter Knotwell** was ranked second in conference and fifth in the state with a 24.0 average.

The Lancaster girls golf team finished second at the Southwest Wisconsin Conference (SWC)/Southwest Wisconsin Activities League (SWAL) conference meet. Wisconsin Dells won the conference crown (388), with Lancaster close behind (393). Lancaster sophomore **Brianna Kirsch** won medalist honors. Kirsch was named to the SWC All-Conference first team, Lancaster senior **Claire Schmidt** earned All-Conference second team accolades and Lancaster sophomore **Kate McWilliams** was named to the All-Conference honorable mention squad. McWilliams was also named to the Golf Coaches Association of Wisconsin All-Academic team. Kirsch won the Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association (WIAA) Division 2 Prairie du Chien regional and

later finished third at the girls golf state tournament.

The Platteville/Lancaster girls swimming team finished seventh at the Southern Lakes Conference Championship (127 points), which combined with a 3-5 record in dual meets, resulted in a seventh place finish in the final conference standings (14 points). Lancaster senior **Grace Schaffer**, junior **Abigail Burr** and junior **Lydia Mack** qualified for the WIAA Division 2 DeForest sectional.

The Platteville/Lancaster boys soccer team finished 6-2 in the SWC. The Hillmen fell to Lake Mills in a WIAA Division 3 regional semifinal. Lancaster freshman midfielder **Michael Murphy** earned All-Conference first team honors. Platteville/Lancaster head coach **Cristian Flores** was named SWC Co-Coach of the Year.

The Lancaster girls cross country team finished second at the SWC championships. Lancaster sophomore **Mallory Olmstead** (fifth) and senior **Bridee Burks** (sixth) earned All-Conference first team honors, while senior **Anna Murphy** (seventh) earned second team honors. The Lancaster boys cross coun-

try team finished fourth at the SWC championships. Lancaster senior **R.J. Hutchcroft** earned All-Conference second team accolades thanks to a 13th place finish. The Lancaster girls finished second at the WIAA Division 3 Albany sectional and sixth at the WIAA championship.

The Lancaster volleyball team won its first SWC match in nearly seven years when it defeated Prairie du Chien on Sept. 2 (25-22, 25-18, 23-25, 25-23). The Flying Arrows finished 1-9 in conference play. Lancaster rallied from a 2-0 deficit and an 8-1 disadvantage in the fifth set to defeat River Ridge in a WIAA Division 3 regional quarterfinal. The Flying Arrows fell to eventual regional champion Cuba City in a regional semifinal. Lancaster seniors **Abigail Martin** and **Hope Williams** were named to the All-Conference second team. Lancaster senior **Tatianna Place** earned All-Conference honorable mention status.

The Lancaster football team played to a 4-3 mark in the SWAL in 2021. Lancaster junior offensive lineman **Ryan McCartney** earned All-Conference first team offense honors, while senior defensive back **Michael Ihm** earned



Robert Callahan photo
Lancaster senior Mekhi Black earned SWAL All-Conference recognition.

a nod on the All-Conference first team defense. Senior running back **Skyler Burkholder** was named to the All-Conference second team offense, while junior defensive end **Bryce Galle**, senior defensive tackle **Mekhi Black**, junior outside linebacker **Wyatt Muench** and sophomore defensive back **Logan Wolf** earned All-Conference second team defense recognition. Junior quarterback **Jacob DiVall**, senior offensive lineman **Braeden Bausch** and Ihm, for his work as a wide receiver, were named to the All-Conference honorable mention squad, while senior defensive back **Carter Vesperman** was picked for the All-Conference honorable mention defense. Lancaster head coach **Jordon Rolland** was honored as SWAL Co-Coach of the Year.

In Focus

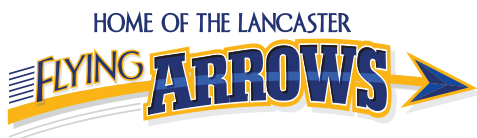
Powder Buff volleyball was a new addition to Homecoming festivities this year. D.J. Kelley and the Class of 2022 defeated the Class of 2023 in the championship match.



Robert Callahan photo

Lancaster Community Schools
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BE BOUND



LANCASTER COMMUNITY SCHOOLS