



# THE BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE BLOOMINGDALE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION SINCE 1980

**VOL. XLIII**



**ISSUE 1**



**JANUARY 2023**



**WWW.BLOOMINGDALE.LIFE**

**THIS MONTH**

*Cheers to  
2023  
Bloomingtondale*

**YEAR IN REVIEW**  
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COMPETITION**  
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**PLEASE RECYCLE**

**WINNER**

2013, 2014, 2016,  
2018 & 2019

Hillsborough County  
Neighborhood  
Recognition Award

Best Communications  
Newsletter Category

*"Be at war with your vices, at peace with your neighbors, and let every new year find you a better man." Benjamin Franklin*



THE AWARD-WINNING

# BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE

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**Editor - The Bloomingdale Gazette**  
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**Tampa Bay  
Times**

## BLOOMINGDALE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION, INC.

3509 Bell Shoals Road - Valrico, Florida 33596 - (813) 681-2051

Email: [Bl.Neighbor1@gmail.com](mailto:Bl.Neighbor1@gmail.com) Website: [www.Bloomingdale.Life](http://www.Bloomingdale.Life)

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BNA Board meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month at the Bloomingdale Community Office.

**President:**  
Suzy Watts

**Vice President:**  
Sean Donahue

**Treasurer:**  
Grace Lewis

**Directors at Large:**  
Laney Balis

Kalyn Dukes

Bobbi Ferraro

# BNA BRIEFS

## BNA CALENDAR

Tuesday, January 10, 7:00 p.m. / BNA Board Meeting, 3509 Bell Shoals Road / Community is welcome to attend. Call 813-252-0252 or email [bl.neighbor1@gmail.com](mailto:bl.neighbor1@gmail.com) for information.

Saturday, February 4 / Community Clean-up Day

Sunday, April 2 / Bunny Visit

Thursday, August 3 / Bingo Night at Bullfrog Creek Brewery to benefit Seeds of Hope Food Bank

Saturday, September 9 / Community Garage Sale

Sunday, December 3 / Santa Visit



## JOIN THE BNA!

Just \$35 annually helps keep our community programs going. Please send your membership in today and be part of making Bloomingdale a great place to live! Membership can be paid through PayPal!

Scan this QR Code or visit <https://bloomingdale.life> →  
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**Yard of the Month nominations  
can be made by emailing  
[bl.neighbor1@gmail.com](mailto:bl.neighbor1@gmail.com) or  
calling 813-681-2051.**



# YARD OF THE MONTH

**ROBERT & DARLENE KOMINSKY**  
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The Yard of the Month is sponsored by  
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3





# One-of-a-kind Cocktail Bar Opens on Lithia Pinecrest

By Jane Owen

## Lucid Zero Proof Lounge is the Perfect Place to Relax

A one-of-a-kind cocktail bar is opening on January 5th on Lithia Pinecrest Road in Valrico. Lucid Zero Proof Lounge, 3102 Lithia Pinecrest Road, is Tampa Bay's first zero proof lounge. What's the allure? It's Lucid and yet, an explanation makes sense. Lucid's zero proof means you can enjoy crafted beverages: spirits, beers, and wines without the effects of alcohol. Lucid's lounge provides a clear place to relax, enjoy music and be present with friends.

Lucid's owner, Debra Reich, says Lucid is everything you would expect if you want to go out for a nice evening with friends in an alcohol free environment.

Lucid offers a small plate menu, classic and newly crafted cocktails, and a place to enjoy live music. They will showcase up and coming performers in the community with an emphasis on Jazz and Blues. Their current featured artist is Cellist, Emma Urbanski.

Crafted cocktails include an Apple Pie Old Fashioned, a Cocoa Espresso Martini, a Peachy Keen Bellini, and a Versaille Lavender Lemonade. Patrons can select to have adaptogens added to their cocktails. An adaptogen is a natural substance considered to help the body adapt to stress and to exert a normalizing effect upon bodily processes. They are mood enhancing options that are healthy for your body.

Debra is excited about opening the lounge in Valrico. "We really focusing on the talent that we have locally and trying to elevate our community when it comes to food and music, setting a tone as opposed to following it. We are going to be Tampa Bay's first zero proof lounge and we're in Valrico," Debra said.

Debra said that the Lucid's tagline is, "Know Your Options."

"Non-alcoholic beverages are an option and they're a great option," Debra said. "One of the champagnes we serve is the best champagne I have ever had in my life. I tried it and I love it. You don't miss anything."

Valrico now has a place where residents can go for a night out to enjoy jazz music, great food, delightful beverages with zero worries.

For more information, visit: [www.lucidzeroproof.com](http://www.lucidzeroproof.com)

Location: 3102 Lithia Pinecrest Road, Valrico

Hours: Thursday – Saturday: 7 p.m. to 11 p.m.

Reservations Suggested, 813-743-7380



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# Meet Mario Gallegos, the New Executive Director at Campo YMCA

By Michelle Colesanti

Staff and YMCA members welcomed Mario Gallegos to the Campo family in early November, and you can sense upon meeting him that he is truly happy in his new position as Executive Director.

He said, "I have oversight of the facility to ensure it is safe and clean, and I'm fiscally responsible to maintain a balanced budget through operations and programs."

Gallegos has the responsibility of leading and developing the staff. He has a BA in Health and Wellness, and prior to his assignment at Campo Y, he was the Branch Director at the Schertz Family YMCA in San Antonio Texas.

He works closely with Campo Y's Advisory Board helping to raise funds for its Annual Giving Campaign. Gallegos also plans to be an engaged partner in the community and within life at Campo.

There are some current plans in the works for updates at the Y. According to Gallegos, "We will be replacing our pool lining in January, repainting the interior walls of our facility, and maintaining a clean and safe environment."

Only here a short time, he and his wife are already enjoying all the amenities of living here.

"The people are very friendly, the weather is great, and the surrounding community boasts of beautiful oak trees that line the neighborhood streets, he noted.

Gallegos has been married 28 years to his wife Christina. Together they have raised four sons ages 19-27 and now get to enjoy their two grandsons ages 7 and 1 years. He wistfully notes, though, that he and his wife are now officially 'empty nesters.'

When not on the job, Gallegos enjoys Spin classes, swimming and resistance training at the Y. He also spends time playing golf with his wife.

"I also enjoy running, bike riding, and a good cup of coffee. Can't wait to make 'beach life' a part of my weekly activity.

Campo Y is located at 3414 Culbreath Rd. in Valrico. For more information, call 813-6841 or visit [www.tampaymca.org/locations/campo-family-ymca](http://www.tampaymca.org/locations/campo-family-ymca).



Photo by: Michelle Colesanti

Mario Gallegos is the new Executive Director at the Campo YMCA.

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# Bloomingtondale Grad Creates Replica of the Capitol Building

By Jane Owen

The nation's Capitol building was made more festive this holiday season by a Bloomingtondale Senior High School graduate. Molly Donahue, a 2021 Bloomingtondale graduate, was on the team that created the 6th annual Gingerbread Capitol.

Molly grew up baking with her mom. In high school, she joined Bloomingtondale high school's culinary program. She credits Chef Jordan Hoeffner at Bloomingtondale for encouraging her to pursue culinary school.

"She just really helped and encouraged me to pursue culinary school and I am so glad she did. I love it," Molly explained.

In October, Molly and her college friend Faith Weber, received an invitation from Fred Johnson III, Sodexo District Manager at the House of Representatives, to complete the gingerbread house Capitol replica. They were given creative design and decided to make the design elegant and traditional. Molly and Faith spent 3 days completing the house. Those three days were spent listening to Christmas music in the Rayburn house, which is adjacent to the Capitol building, baking, piping icing, and putting the house together. They went back at the end of November to do the final touches before the 2022 Capitol Gingerbread House was presented.

Pulling the house together in a short amount of time was impressive. Every step of creating the house was intricate. Beneath the house is a wooden frame. The pieces were cut out by hand. To make them fit together, some pieces had to be sanded. Piping of the icing was done when the pieces were flat. This year's house is 100 percent plant-based, using chickpea water instead of egg whites and plant-based butter. The construction took about 55 hours from start to finish and consisted of 73 pounds of various sugars, 65 pounds of flour, and five pounds of cinnamon, among other ingredients. The dome was kept separate until the building was moved from the Rayburn house to the Capitol.

"I have never worked on a project of that large scale. Seeing it come together was really incredible," Molly said.

Molly will graduate in May from The Disney School of Culinary Arts at Valencia College in Orlando. She aspires to work at a Disney hotel.

The 2022 Gingerbread Capitol building was on display on the first floor of the Capitol building from November 29 to January 2. To see a video showing how the house was put together and to view pictures of the Capitol gingerbread houses since 2017, visit @capitolgingerbread on Facebook.

### **Molly's advice to bakers:**

"Don't be afraid to try new things with baking. Even if it seems scary, just try it and see how it turns out. You never know. Maybe it will be your new favorite recipe."







# Bloomingtondale Assistant Principal and Newsome Chorus Director Take the Stage in The Nutcracker

By Amanda Ragan

If you recently attended TADA's, The Nutcracker, held at Riverview High School on December 17th and 18th then as expected you watched the Sugarplum Fairy dance gracefully across the stage. You may have even moved to the edge of your seat during the battle of the Mouse King, but hopefully you did not miss the party scene when real life husband and wife, Sara and Jeff Bogue took the stage.

Sara is the Assistant Principal for Administration at Bloomingtondale High School and Jeff is the Chorus Director at Newsome High School, and both live right here in Bloomingtondale. Working with children obviously comes natural to these lifelong educators, but the inspiration to be part of this production originally derived from wanting to give back and help the owners of TADA, the Kraak family, who have been wonderful in supporting Jeff and the arts at Newsome High School. However, four years later what started as a want to help and give back, has now become a family affair for Jeff and Sara.

"My favorite thing about the production this year, was that my daughter joined The Nutcracker for the first time," explained Sara. The Bogue's daughter was a mouse in the performance making this year's experience even more heartwarming. "Another wonderful element of the production has been watching the children grow and develop as performers over the years, many of the ensemble members four years ago are now taking on lead roles in the company and it has been a joy to see them progress each year. We just really love being a part of it," continued Sara, "it is now one of our favorite Christmas traditions."

If you missed TADA's, The Nutcracker, this year, make sure to check it out next year, and don't worry the Bloomingtondale Gazette will be sure to publish all the dates and times! For more information on other TADA productions or if you too want a chance to participate you can call (813) 571- 0901 or visit <http://www.tadance.com/>.



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(Located across from Lithia Springs Elementary)





## 2023 Bloomingdale Neighborhood Association Membership Drive Underway!

The Bloomingdale Neighborhood Association will make 2023 a year filled with improved services and programs for our community! The \$35 annual membership fee supports community events and programs such as the community clean-up day, scholarship for seniors, the annual Bunny and Santa visit, and community garage sale. Check your mailboxes in January for the BNA's annual membership drive letter and scholarship donation request. Your mailer will contain a letter, front and back, with details about the association's role, events, programs, and a scholarship donation request. A membership card and a return envelope is also included. Go to [www.bloomingdale.life](http://www.bloomingdale.life) for more information.

Join the BNA today! Make checks payable to the BNA and mail them to 3509 Bell Shoals Road, Valrico, FL 33596. Another option is to use PayPal. Scan this QR code to pay with PayPal



### Mark your 2023 Calendar for these BNA sponsored events!

Saturday, February 4 / Community Clean-up Day

Sunday, April 2 / Bunny Visit

Thursday, August 3 / Bingo Night at Bullfrog Creek Brewery to benefit Seeds of Hope Food Bank

Saturday, September 9 / Community Garage Sale

Sunday, December 3 / Santa Visit

## Bloomingdale Community Donates to Seeds of Hope

The neighborhood association collected nonperishable food items for the Seeds of Hope food bank in December. The BNA is excited to share that they will be partnering with and supporting Seeds of Hope in 2023!

Seeds of Hope provides weekly a food distribution to the community at 710 E. Bloomingdale Ave. For more information, visit: [sohopefl.org](http://sohopefl.org)



Pictured are Donna Jankowitz, BNA Office Manager, and Kristie Phelps, Seeds of Hope Food Pantry Coordinator.

## Attention Bloomingdale Seniors!

### IMPORTANT DATES

**JANUARY 15 – APRIL 3**  
Applications Accepted  
**APRIL 3**  
Application Deadline  
**MAY 9**  
Winner Announced



Bloomingdale Neighborhood Association

## Bloomingdale \$2,000 Community Education Scholarship

### REQUIREMENTS:

#### Candidate

- **Must be a resident** of the Bloomingdale community.
- Must be a graduating senior accepted at a 2 or 4-year college or university. Proof of acceptance is required.
- Weighted 3.2 GPA

#### Candidate's Parent/Guardian

- **Must be a resident** of the Bloomingdale community.
- Bloomingdale Neighborhood Association 2022 membership **dues must be paid prior** to the scholarship application deadline. Membership drive begins January 2023. **Deadline is April 3, 2023.**
- Proof of residency is required.

#### Selection Criteria

- Community service
- Extra-curricular activities
- Well-written essay
- Academic Standing
- Reference letters

Scholarship information will be available January 15, 2023 online at [Bloomingdale.Life](http://Bloomingdale.Life), at Bloomingdale High School and at the Bloomingdale Community Office.



BNA Community Office: 3509 Bell Shoals Road, Valrico, FL 33596 • (813) 681-2051 • [bl.neighbor1@gmail.com](mailto:bl.neighbor1@gmail.com) • [www.bloominadale.life](http://www.bloominadale.life)

### A MESSAGE FROM SUZY WATTS PRESIDENT, BLOOMINGDALE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

As we close out 2022 and I think over the year, I think about what a great neighborhood we have.

I feel my husband Tim and I are very lucky to have found our forever home in Bloomingdale. Our real estate agent directed us here because of the excellent public schools. Later when we had kids, they benefitted from the skilled and caring educators. We can walk to the Campo Y, baseball fields and two parks. We have numerous grocery stores, retail stores and restaurants. Bullfrog Creek Brewery is our local 'Cheers.' The Bloomingdale Special District does a great job maintaining our common areas. While all of this is wonderful, the best part of Bloomingdale is my amazing neighbors.

The BNA board is a group of great neighbors. We come together and have fun with our Bunny Visit, Trunk or Treat and Santa Visit. We serve the community with our clean-up day, community garage sale, reporting codes and interacting with the county to help Bloomingdale. The BNA's office manager coordinates all of our activities and is available to answer neighbor's questions. Our Gazette provides interesting neighborhood news and keeps us informed. We are here serving our neighbors.

I hope 2023 is the best year yet for Bloomingdale! I invite you to visit our monthly BNA meetings at 7pm on the second Tuesday of the month. The meeting only lasts 1 hour and we have chocolate!

*Suzy Watts*





# A Look Back at the 2022 BNA Happenings and Gazette Stories

# Two Thousand and Twenty Two

The Bloomingdale Neighborhood Association (BNA) wishes everyone a Happy New Year!



## JANUARY

Cimino Care Bears Program  
Comforts Families



## FEBRUARY

Congratulations 2021 BSHS  
Football Award Winners!



## MARCH

Bloomington's Neighborhood  
Clean-up Day a Success



## APRIL

BSHS Girls' Basketball Team  
Honored at BNA Sponsored Picnic



## MAY

BNA Hosts the Bunny  
Drive-through Visit



## JUNE

BNA Awards \$2,000 Scholarship to  
BSHS Senior Ryan Marquis



## JULY

HCPS Superintendent  
Speaks at BSD Meeting



## AUGUST

315 Backpacks Collected by Cimino  
Teacher for Students in Need



## SEPTEMBER

Bloomington's Patti Rendon  
Wins District 4 School  
Board Position



## OCTOBER

BNA participates in the Campo  
YMCA Trunk or Treat



## NOVEMBER

Students Give Back by Helping with  
Hurricane Ian Clean Up



## DECEMBER

BNA Hosts the Santa  
Drive-through Visit



# Bloomingdale Neighborhood Association Sponsors Santa's Florida Vacation

By Jane Owen



Santa Claus took an early Florida vacation, visiting Florida in early December. Lured by the opportunity to ride in a red Camaro on a warm winter day, Santa enjoyed visiting Bloomingdale families. The weather on December 4 was perfect for the top-down drive through the neighborhoods. Along the way, Santa had the assistance of Bloomingdale Neighborhood Association (BNA) Volunteers and Bloomingdale High School's National Honor Society. Santa's helpers, the elves, handed out candy canes and the BNA's holiday themed ducks. The BNA was thrilled to be able to bring Santa to Bloomingdale for over 35 years.







# Bloomingtondale Welcomes LA Fitness

By Amanda Ragan

With the New Year, comes new year resolutions, and while taking up a new hobby can be fun, most of us just need to take off the extra pounds from the holidays. While there are several amazing gyms in the Bloomingtondale community, the Bloomingtondale Gazette wanted to formally welcome one of its newest businesses, LA Fitness, located in Bloomingtondale Square, at 855 E Bloomingtondale Ave.

Manager and Bloomingtondale resident, Josh Shakespeare, explained that LA Fitness, "is really targeted for the 30 - 50 year old demographic who don't have the time or desire to wait for equipment and machines, which can sometimes be the case at other crowded gyms." Many of the machines LA Fitness utilizes are belt driven which have proven to be longer lasting and thus result in less breakage and subsequently more working machines.

Another unique feature of LA fitness is their heated, indoor, lap pool. This pool is open for adult fitness classes, adult exercise, and children's swim classes. The children's swim classes are hosted by Main Street Swim and you can reach them at (813) 421-4866.

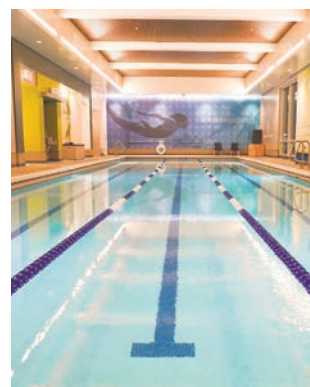
In addition to a smaller crowd and an indoor pool, LA Fitness also has indoor cycling classes, group fitness classes, free-weights, a TRX Training Zone, locker rooms, showers, and a lounge if you need to wait for your gym partner or charge up your device before starting your first set. LA fitness is open Monday - Thursday 5AM - 10PM, Friday 5AM - 9PM, and Saturday - Sunday 8AM - 6PM.

Josh stated that the membership specials are constantly changing so make sure to check out the prices at the start of the year when everyone is eager to get back in shape. But regardless of what the special running at the time is, if you mention the Bloomingtondale Gazette or bring in a copy of the article, you will get a one week free trial to experience everything LA fitness has to offer!

For more information about LA fitness in Bloomingtondale give Josh a call at (813) 294-0837 or to see a schedule of the group fitness classes and specials visit <https://www.lafitness.com>.

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# BLOW OUT SALE

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## BSHS Football Player Signs to Play in College

On December 22nd, Bloomingdale football player Christian Bodnar, signed to play football in college at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia.

As a senior at Bloomingdale, Bodnar emerged as a two-way player. He got snaps primarily at safety, wide receiver, and wildcat quarterback. In 19 games, he totaled 27 tackles. He also carried the ball 22 times for 332 yards and 4 touchdowns on offense while catching 10 passes for 188 yards and 5 more scores.

Only a little over 7% of high school athletes (about 1 in 13) get the opportunity to play a varsity sport in college. This is a tremendous accomplishment.

*Congratulations, Christian!*



## BSHS Football Player Awarded Tampa Community Service Award

Charlie O'Brien, a senior tight end on Bloomingdale's football team, was awarded Tampa Chapter's National Football Foundation Vernon Korhn Community Service Award.

Bloomingdale Head Football Coach Jake Coulson cannot be prouder of Charlie. He said that Charlie had over 340 hours of community service.

"I'm extremely proud of Charlie. It's hard enough to be a high school athlete but to give so much time to making the community and everyone else around him better and says so much about a person. He is such a selfless person, and it has been an honor to coach him for 4 years!" Coulson said.



Photo: Charlie O'Brien



**Get a Good Start on Your New Year's Goals by Lacing Up for a Cause!**

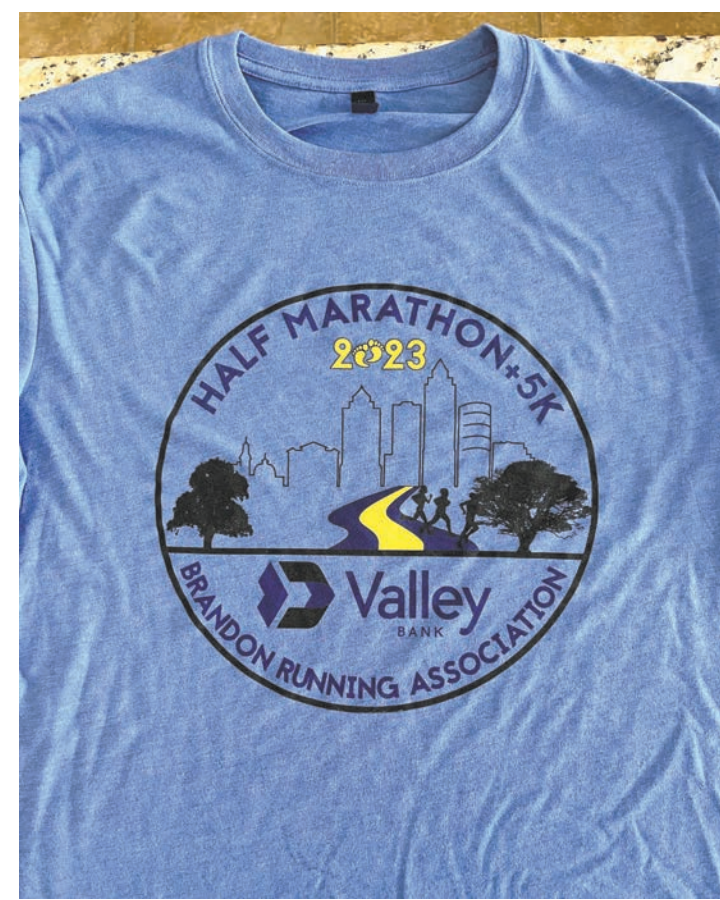
The **Brandon Half Marathon and 5k** is this Sunday, January 8, 2023! Both the half marathon and 5k course run along the Brandon Parkway, with the half marathon extending on the Selmon Expressway. The races start and finish in the Oakfield Business Center located at 1341 Oakfield Drive Brandon, Florida.

All registrants receive a long sleeve event shirt. Finishers of both races receive medals. Awards are given to Half Marathon, 5k Overall winners and Top 3 Age Group winners. There is a great post-race party that includes grilled chicken, hamburgers, hot dogs, pizza, fruit, free beer, soda, and water.

The Brandon Half Marathon and 5K are sponsored by the Brandon Running Association (BRA). BRA is a non-profit organization and member of the Road Runners Club of America (RRCA), whose mission is to promote running, walking, and general fitness in group settings. BRA hosts multiple weekly runs within Bloomingdale, starting at the Campo YMCA or the Bloomingdale East Park.

**Brandon Half and 5k, Sunday, January 8**  
Benefits: Muscular Dystrophy Association

Register here: <https://runsignup.com/Race/FL/Brandon/BrandonHalfMarathonand5K>  
For more information about Brandon Running Association, visit: [www.brandonrunning.com](http://www.brandonrunning.com).



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## BSHS Student Wins the HCPS Energy Program Logo Competition

BSHS Freshman Coltin Schaefer won the district-wide contest for the HCPS Energy Program Logo Competition. Coltin used Canva (a free online design software program) and Adobe Photoshop to complete the design.

All middle and high school students were eligible for the competition and there were hundreds of entries. Chuck Kilborn, Bloomingdale's CTE Department Head, said that all of Bloomingdale's Digital Design 1 class was encouraged to enter the contest. It was a class project but the students submitted their designs individually.

"I was very proud of Coltin as he is a first-year design student and a freshman. Honestly, I thought one of my intermediate or advanced level students would win. So, I'm very proud of Coltin and his accomplishment," said Chuck Kilborn.



Photo: Coltin Schaefer



## Congrats to BSHS's Band, Chorus, and Orchestra All County Students!

Christian Abrigg  
Sean Barry  
Kaela Brooker  
Edward DeFreitas  
Natalie Dixon  
Luciana Granados

Angie Miller  
Valarie Dawe  
Elliott Hall  
Cheyenne Hull  
Katelyn Munro

Evan Ogden  
Anjali Pathania  
Raquel Tucker  
Daylin Alvarez  
Chloe Wilson

Jayden Nguyen  
Chase Copeland  
Kate Lantz  
Ethan Vargas  
Clay Larsen

Elle Loyd  
Anapaula Blanco  
Gabriella Holmes  
Daniel Jimenez  
Miranda Mayaudon

In December, Bloomingdale High School's Chorus performed at Disney's Candlelight processional.



## 2023 BILLS GRADUATION YARD SIGNS

Congratulate a senior you know by purchasing a yard sign to be displayed in their front yard.



**\$20** if ordered by Friday, 12/23 at 11:59pm  
**\$25** if ordered by Friday, 2/10 at 11:59pm

Google Form link  
<https://forms.gle/SUC6dYumcr6ivVSv5>

Payments will be made through PayPal

Signs will be produced and ready in early May 2023. Notifications will periodically go out when the time draws near. If there are any questions, please direct them to CoachBorowski@gmail.com





## BSHS JROTC at Wreaths Across America



## Cimino Elementary School Provides Book Vending Machine

On December 17, the Bloomingdale JROTC participated in Wreaths Across America at the Florida National Cemetery in Bushnell, Florida.

Cimino Elementary has a new incentive book vending machine for students! Students will receive book vending machine tokens when they are caught excelling or achieving a milestone. The students get to use the token in the machine to choose a book of their liking. The vending machine was funding by the Parent Teacher Association (PTA).





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