



# CHARLES H. WALSH SR. ACADEMY & CAREER TECH HIGH SCHOOL



## Walsh Academy

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## Upcoming Events

1/15 MLK Day – No School  
2/27 Q3 ends  
2/28 Q4 begins  
3/8 Inservice Day &  
Parent/Teacher Conferences

## Greetings, Students, Families & Faculty,

The winter break is over, and spring is on the horizon! We're all adjusting to our new, spacious location. Once again, I want to express my sincere gratitude to everyone for making the transition so smooth.

**More room to grow:** Everyone's enjoying the spacious classrooms with natural light, and no more outdoor treks for the gym or vocational classes! Our fantastic new gym, complete with a stage, is already a favorite, and hearing the energy from classrooms is one of my highlights each day.

**Career pathways:** We have nine dedicated spaces for career and technical education, with technology and culinary arts already up and running. Woodshop and small engines are next! We're also partnering with the Village of Niles Family Services for community worksite opportunities.

The safety of everyone in our building is our top priority. In the coming weeks, we'll be conducting drills and providing training for safe evacuations. We've also partnered with the Niles Police Department to ensure our procedures and policies align with the best practices for keeping everyone safe.

Mark your calendars! We'll be hosting an open house during March Parent-Teacher conferences. This is a wonderful chance to visit our new school, explore the facilities, and see the amazing things our students and staff are achieving.

As always, please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions.

Thank you, and be safe,

Ann M. Craig  
Principal /Director of Educational Services



# Health Beat:

## Pet Therapy

By: Kristina Seidelman Nickels – Social Worker

Pet therapy is described as a guided interaction between a person and a trained animal that can help someone recover from or cope with a health problem or mental disorder. The most common animals that are used in pet therapy are dogs and cats but other animals, such as guinea pigs or horses, that have met screening criteria can also be used. Some goals and benefits of pet therapy include increasing self-esteem, increasing verbal communication, developing social skills, increasing willingness to join in activities, improving symptoms of depression, decreasing isolation, reducing anxiety, and helping to learn empathic and nurturing skills.

At the Walsh Academy, pet therapy is a support that students can voluntarily engage in during the school day. Our current therapy dog is named Mags and comes to the school every Wednesday to visit with students. Mags, who's owner is Walsh Academy's Assistant Principal Ms. Heather Lischett, has been a certified therapy dog since June 2018. Ms. Heather thought that Mags would be a good candidate for pet therapy after several successful visits to the school, prompting her to seek out the certification to have Mags become a pet therapy dog. Ms. Heather describes that generally to be a good candidate for pet therapy, a dog needs to be able to be calm around both people and other dogs, follow commands on the leash, be able to sit/lay/stay, and not become aggressive when someone touches their ears or paws.



Mags went through basic obedience training as a puppy and then did the therapy dog assessment later when she was four years old. In order to be a certified therapy dog, a dog must be at least two years old and go through an initial assessment that consists of three separate visits to public places. Mags completed hers at a Lowe's, a dog friendly store, and at two retirement homes where she visited with the elderly. Additionally, Ms. Heather had to pass a written test showing an understanding of the pet therapy handbook, a test that needs to be retaken annually to renew licensure. The school must also maintain the appropriate insurance to have a therapy dog in the building. Many students enjoy having access to seeing Mags every week!

## Talking Tech: Old School Style with Simple Machines

By: Stavros Kouriabalis – CTE Teacher

Happy Holidays to everyone, we hope it was a long and relaxing time for all. Walsh Academy is happy to say that even though our campus is not in Des Plaines anymore, we still want to try and give back to the community for supporting us and helping us for so many years by continuing to build wheelchair ramps for residents in need. This simple machine, the incline plane, gives mobility and independence to individuals confined to a



wheelchair, and Mr. Paul and a few staff and students from Walsh were able to construct one of the longest ramps we've had in a while. The master himself, Mr. Paul, is always great with the students and showing them a few tricks of the trade. This was a three-day project, but it got done and we hope the homeowners are happy with the result. We know this will make their life a bit easier, and we are always happy to help! We hope we see you in the next issue of the Walsh Academy newsletter.

## Classroom Corner

By: Mark Trerotola – Teacher & Maysaloon Alkhafaji – Paraprofessional/Job Coach

As part of our CTE programming, Walsh Academy is currently outfitting a screen-printing classroom. Walsh Academy now has a 4 station, 6 screen Sabre Workhorse silk screen printer, drying station, and image printer. This new equipment and job site will be a great start for students to learn a new skill for their future and to potentially create a professional and profitable clothing screen printing business of their own.

### What is Silk Screen Printing?

Screen printing, also referred to as silk screening, is a method of printing designs or graphics on a T-shirt or other fabric item. Screen printing uses thick inks that lay on top of the shirt rather than having the shirt soak them in.

### How Does a Silk Screen-Printing Machine Work?

Screen printing is the process that involves transferring a stenciled design on a flat surface with ink, a mesh screen, and a squeegee. Screen printing allows for students to apply designs onto various items other than just t-shirts. Although paper and fabric are the most typical surfaces that are used in screen printing, it is also possible to print onto metal, plastic, glass, and wood. This latest class will be a cost-effective method for production runs, as the setup costs are relatively low compared to other printing techniques. One of the most significant advantages of traditional screen printing is its durability. The ink used in screen printing is thicker and more substantial than the ink used in DTG printing. This results in designs that stand up well to repeated washing and wear, making screen printed garments ideal for items like team jerseys, work uniforms, and promotional merchandise.



# Getting to Know Us!

This month we are featuring Walsh Academy junior, Joshua Hodge, and School Psychologist, Ms. Donna. Josh joined Walsh Academy when we were still in the Des Plaines campus building in May of 2023. He has earned honor roll since his time here and has joined the CTE Extension program where he is earning credit, money, and job skills. Ms. Donna has been with Jen/Walsh Academy pretty much since the very beginning, coming on board one week into the school's first year. She is in charge of all things testing, including overseeing MAP testing and state standardized tests. Ms. Donna also coordinates and schedules all our students' IEP meetings. Here is a little bit more information about both Josh and Ms. Donna!



## CAAEL

By: Dan Baffin - PE Teacher/Coach

As 2023 comes to a close, I'd like to highlight a few of the things that our student athletes have accomplished this year. During our flag football season students learned what it's like to be a part of the team and to be selfless individuals who help others. It's not always about wins and losses but to have fun, do your best, and pick someone else up when they are down. This is a theme that we carried from game to game, and they were awarded the sportsmanship award which is voted on by all the other teams in the league. Students also put their collective minds together to come in second place in the academic bowl this year, which we are all very proud of. As a new year begins so does our next sports season, basketball. I would like to remind all students about our eligibility requirements for CAAEL. These requirements include: no unexcused absences, no missing assignments for the week, no behavior incidents, and of course dressing and participating in PE. See you on the court!

<b>What is your favorite color?</b>	
JH - Black	DH - Green
<b>What is/was your favorite subject in school?</b>	
JH - Math	DH - Social Science & P.E.
<b>Have you ever had a nickname?</b>	
JH - White Chocolate	DH - D
<b>What is your favorite holiday?</b>	
JH - Halloween	DH - Christmas
<b>What is something you've done that you are proud of?</b>	
JH - Honor Roll last semester	DH - Raised wonderful children
<b>What is your favorite movie, show, and/or book?</b>	
JH - Rick & Morty (show)	DH - Sound of Music (movie), Ted Lasso (show), The Nightengale (book)
<b>If you were a superhero, what powers would you have?</b>	
JH - Ability to fly	DH - Teleporting so I can see all my family quickly
<b>What is the best part about being a student/staff at Walsh Academy?</b>	
JH - CTE	DH - The feeling of belonging to a family

# Ribbon Cutting

By: Donna Hoffman – School Psychologist

We celebrated the move to Niles with an official ribbon cutting ceremony for our “new” school, Charles H. Walsh Sr. Academy and Career Tech High School, on Monday, December 18<sup>th</sup>. The school was decorated with huge yellow and blue balloon arches complete with silver mylar letters spelling out WALSH.



Over 200 supporters attended the program including Maryville employees, Board members, School District representatives, Niles dignitaries including Mayor George Alpogianis, Niles business



owners, State Senator Ram Villivalam, State Representative Michael Kelly, Walsh family members, previous Jen School family/volunteers, and Bishop Mark Bartosic who blessed classrooms and offices throughout the building. After speeches and the formal ribbon cutting, guests were given tours of the vocational classrooms and some common areas while students continued their academics in the classrooms on the second

floor. Guests were also treated to a delicious luncheon in our new cafeteria and lounge area downstairs compliments of Catering by Design, and received a commemorative Walsh tumbler celebrating the new school filled with treats and quotes from students describing what they are most excited for in the new building. Thank you to all who attended and continue to support our students!

