

# The Ramblings

*Paid for by McBain Rural Agricultural School*

MCBAIN RURAL AGRICULTURAL SCHOOL

WINTER 2024

## HighLiters Go Christmas Caroling

At the end of December, students in HighLiters traveled to area nursing and assisted living homes to sing Christmas carols and visit with the residents. The HighLiters choir has caroled like this for years, and the students really look forward to it. This year because of the exam schedule, students gave their own Christmas vacation time to travel to sing. Caroling is a good way for all of us to remember the importance of giving to others, especially at Christmastime. The residents were very thankful we could come to sing and they shared how they look forward to it every year.

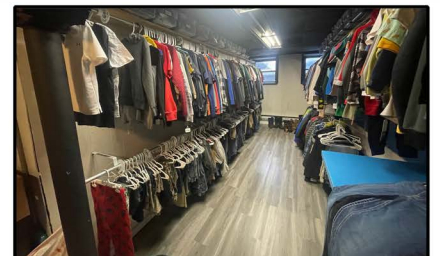
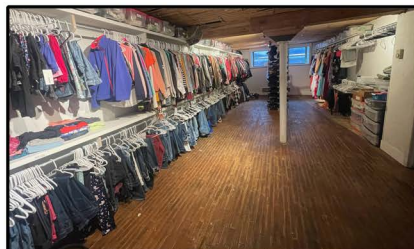


## Hope's Closet Update and a BIG Thank You!

McBain School students and staff would like to say **THANK YOU** to all that have reached out, donated and provided items for Hope's Closet. This is such an amazing resource that our school has to offer for our families and students. Over the years, we have provided clothing, hygiene products, backpacks, and more to a large amount of people.

Over the past few months staff have spent many hours hanging, labeling, organizing, cleaning up the closet. While not completed yet, it looks great! When it comes to donations, we are not in need of any more clothes at this time, but we do need feminine hygiene products, regular hygiene products and different sizes of tennis shoes.

Again, thank you for your continued support to the closet and our students!



**STAY CONNECTED**  
**STAY INVOLVED** [WWW.MCBAIN.ORG](http://WWW.MCBAIN.ORG)

McBain Schools  
107 E. Maple St.  
McBain, MI 49657

Superintendent .. 231.825.2165  
Elementary ..... 231.825.2021  
Middle School .... 231.825.8041  
High School ..... 231.825.2412

## A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT



Dear McBain Community,

I hope this letter finds you all in good spirits.

I am sure many of you have heard that Mr. Biller has resigned as McBain's High School Principal. He has accepted a Superintendent position with Tri-County Area Schools. We are very excited for Mr. Biller as this has been his career goal. I thank him for his hard work and dedication to McBain Schools. I wish him the best of luck at Tri-County Area Schools.

This move leaves McBain Schools in a unique position. As we move forward with this time of transition, we will be filling the high school principal role as follows. The principal position will become an interim (temporary) position for the rest of the school year, and Mrs. Becky Rodenbaugh will be stepping in to fill this role. Mrs. Rodenbaugh has her administrator certificate and is highly invested in the McBain Schools and Community. I know she will continue to have high expectations for the students and staff at McBain Schools.

The Board of Education has approved our track project, and our secure office entries. The pricing came in quite a bit higher than we were anticipating, but we can still complete our projects by using additional funds from the district. We are also hoping to approve the middle school gym floor, but depending on pricing that may have to wait until the following summer. It will be at the top of our list. We are very excited about these projects and improvements for our students. We would not be able to complete these projects without your support. I want to again, thank you, and express my gratitude and appreciation for your support for our kids.

Another project that we will be working on this summer is the expansion of our weight room. We are able to complete this project through grant funding from the State of Michigan. We were very limited on the use of this money and the expansion of the weight room qualified as allowable. This is a project that the district had actually started working on in 2014. We are excited about this expansion as the use of the weight room has grown exponentially. Currently we have four classes in the weight room throughout the day with a high demand of students wanting these classes. We also have it open and supervised everyday after school for our students. Physical exercise greatly improves mental health, makes you feel better and will help our students perform better in the classroom.

I want to reiterate how thankful I am to be a part of this community. It's encouraging to witness the collaborative efforts that go into making McBain a place we proudly call home. From community events that bring us together to the small acts of kindness that happen every day, these moments create bonds that strengthen our community. McBain is not just a place on the map; it's a living, breathing community with a spirit that thrives on the care and involvement of its residents.

Thank you for being an integral part of McBain.

Blessed to be a Rambler,  
Scott Akom  
scott.akom@mcbain.org



**Little  
Wheels  
Love  
Water**

At Little Wheels Preschool the three year olds are doing a water study. They are talking about where we find water: lakes, rivers and oceans. They have used their scientific skills to explore the different forms of water (liquid, solid, gas). The children had fun breaking ice chunks to rescue toys that were frozen inside. They tried to melt ice with salt, sand and sugar to see which worked best. As they wrap up their water study they are excited to start their next study on pets.



Easton Rodenbaugh & James Winkel



# MRASF

McBain Rural Agricultural School Foundation

*Building a Future for the Next Generation*

The Board of Directors of the McBain Rural Agricultural School Foundation (MRASF) is reaching out to ask you to consider supporting our annual auction in the Spring. All funds generated from the auction are used solely to provide scholarships to McBain graduating seniors who are planning to pursue higher education. For more information on the Foundation's scholarship program, see our website at [MRASF.org](http://MRASF.org). or ask any Board Director.

The auction date this year is April 20, 2024.

The MRASF auction is a local community event and we need your help to make it successful to support McBain students. Currently, we are asking for donations.

Examples of some auction items may include sporting goods, fishing gear, hunting gear, camping gear, golf clubs, golf certificates, hand tools, power tools, cookware, books, baked goods, other food items, gift certificates, entertainment certificates, artwork, antiques, firewood, boats, canoes, motors, professional services, personal care items or services and similar items. Of course, cash donations are always welcome as well.

If you have anything that you are willing to donate, please contact any Board Director, call the school at 231 825-2412 and a Board Director will contact you or email us at [foundation@mcbain.org](mailto:foundation@mcbain.org). The MRASF is a 501(c) (3) organization so all donations are tax deductible.

The MRASF Board Directors appreciate your consideration and efforts to donate in order to make our auction successful to benefit McBain students and we also hope to see you at the auction at the school gymnasium on April 20.

Respectfully yours,

MRASF Board of Directors

## Board Directors

Don Schepers, President

(Class of 1971)

Mary Buning, Vice President

(Class of 1959)

Carolyn Flore, Secretary

(Class of 1975)

Trent Mulder, Treasurer

(Class of 2002)

Linda Smith, Assistant Treasurer

Daniella Bell

Scott Akom, Superintendent

Jim Bosscher (Class of 1974)

Lori Bronkema (Class of 1978)

Arlene Eisenga (Class of 1966)

Kevin Eisenga, School Board President

(Class of 1987)

Jerry Hoekwater (Class of 1965)

Jack Klunder

Harvey Lucas (Class of 1963)



(231) 825-2165



107 E. Maple Street  
McBain, MI 49657



(231) 825-2119

## A MESSAGE FROM THE ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL



Hello parents and community members,

It's hard to believe that it's February and the school year is half over! It has been a great first half of the year, and I'm excited to see how the rest of our year turns out.

PBIS continues to be an important part of our school culture. We spent time after Thanksgiving break and after Christmas break to review the expectations for all areas of the school. Students know how to "Feel the **WHEEL**" by being **W**elcoming, **H**onest, **E**ngaged, **E**mpathetic, and **L**eaders. We see students being kind, considerate, helpful, and good citizens in many areas of our school, and we're seeing positive changes in student behavior and interactions between staff and students.

We are currently in the process of assessing students to track their progress through the school year. Students will complete DIBELS to tracking their knowledge of letters, letter sounds, and their reading fluency. These are important components to reading comprehension, so we want to make sure students are making gains in these areas. Students will also complete the NWEA assessments on reading and math to track their progress on those standards of learning. We will use the data to meet as grade level teams at the end of January to look at our progress and create academic plans for our next instructional cycle.

I wanted to take a moment to thank Mrs. Wiggins for another successful holiday concert season. Our 5th grade band and K-2 students put on wonderful programs for the community, and we're so thankful to have such an outstanding music program. Thank you all for attending and for your support!

Looking at the coming weeks, we're excited about Homecoming in February and the opportunity to celebrate our school. The elementary will participate in Spirit Week, and our 2nd-5th graders will get to sing the fight song between the basketball games on that Friday. I hope to see many of you there!

As always, thank you for your continued support for the district and the elementary school. Great things are on the horizon, and we're grateful for all that you do to partner with us on these adventures. Go Ramblers!

Mr. David Wissner  
david.wissner@mcbain.org

## Ski & Snowboard Club

McBain Middle and High School Ski Club is up and running! Our first trip was a success and fun was had by all. Stop into the middle school office for more information if interested.



# McBain Cheerleading Program

Head Coach *Brianne Sikkema*  
Assistant Coach *Megan England*



McBain has cheerleading opportunities for girls who are interested in cheering. In this article our goal is to describe what our program does as well as give a huge shout out to the cheerleaders who cheer for the two types of teams that we have in McBain. Our cheer programs mission is to provide opportunities for girls to be involved in something bigger than themselves. McBain Cheer provides an outlet for cheerleaders to learn many things like:

**Teamwork**  
**Self-care**  
**Athleticism**  
**Skilled movements**

**Stunt safety**  
**Tumbling safety**  
**Responsibility**  
**Dedication**

**Leadership**  
**Commitment**  
**Time management**  
**Sisterhood**

Every year our cheer teams provide opportunities for our youth by putting on a cheer clinic. This clinic helps to build our program and allows kids to see if cheerleading would interest them. It is also a way that we raise money to support our program. We have been doing cheer clinics since 2016 when the program started. We have continued to see growth each year with the clinics. This is a fun way for kids to see what cheerleading is all about and build strong athletic leaders!

Sideline Cheer is a sport during the fall that girls are able to join and cheer on our football team at home football games. We have cheerleaders from 2nd through 12th grade. Grades of course are always a priority to be eligible to cheer. The girls stunt and do skills that implement crowd involvement to create a fun filled atmosphere. It is our goal to teach safety first, teach stunts, teach tumbling skills, promote school spirit, and help to improve school atmosphere. It is so fun to watch the girls cheer and see the students interacting with their peers! Building each other up and encouraging school spirit while doing cool stunts!!

Competitive Cheer is a sport that girls compete during the winter against other teams. We currently have cheerleaders from 6th through 12th grade. Girls create routines that judges score by certain criteria. While competing the girls learn so much about putting their grades first, working as a team to complete stunts, learning how to do skills, adjusting the routine to score higher and doing whatever it takes to do the job! This year each new competition our teams have earned a higher score than the competition before. They are doing an amazing job at working hard to make themselves, their parents, their community and their coaches very proud!

We are proud to be a part of this great community in McBain and look forward to providing a program that not only gives an outlet for kids to learn the things listed above but we know it helps kids to be successful in all areas by boosting self-esteem and confidence.



**MS/HS Sideline Cheer**



**ELM Sideline Cheer**



**HS Competitive Cheer**



**MS Competitive Cheer**

# Mystery Readers

Mrs. Quist's first grade class was able to have parents and grandparents join them throughout the month of December as Mystery Readers. Each day that a Mystery Reader would come in, they would join the students next to the Christmas tree and 'fireplace' and snuggle up for a Christmas story! They were able to listen to a family favorite Christmas/Winter themed story from six different classroom moms, one dad and two grandmas! They also participated in a country wide Gingerbread Man Exchange. The class decorated gingerbread men and sent them (along with a letter about our class, school, and state) to a kindergarten or first grade class in each of the other states across the country. We then received a gingerbread man and letter back from each of those schools. We were able to learn so much about schools across the country. A class favorite was receiving gingerbread men all the way from Alaska and Hawaii!



# Building Away in Shop Class

*High School Shop Teacher Mr. Bruce Koopman*

Advance Shop and General Shop students are working well and building some very nice projects again this year. I'm excited to see all the finished projects when the school year starts to wind down. First, I just want to say it is a privilege to work at McBain School and to work with the great high school students here. All the General Shop students are building the required nightstand project and are doing a fine job. Almost all the students have completed the building process and are now working on attaching hardware, finish sanding and staining. In Advance Shop, students are encouraged to build projects that they can use in the future when they move out on their own. (Dressers, tables, gun cabinets etc.) Please see below pictures of a few students with their projects.



Claydon Ingleright - Senior  
Dresser/Gun Cabinet



Nathan Koetje- Senior  
Coffee Table



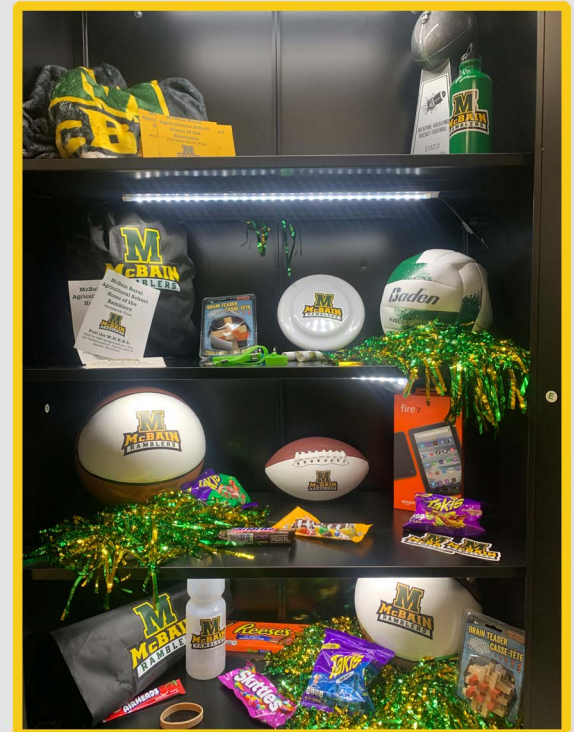
Logan Mattison- Senior  
Dining Room Table

## A MESSAGE FROM THE MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL



Middle School has been feeling the WHEEL!! Middle School students have been knocking it out of the park with positive behavior. Students are given tickets when they are caught following our expected behaviors. Each week we are drawing names for prizes that include homework passes, athletic passes, water bottles, food and more. Each marking period we have a bigger celebration to draw student names where they can earn technology, sports equipment and other Rambler gear. The tickets get combined to earn school wide and grade level rewards as well. We have already enjoyed Donuts and Dodgeball, Cookie Decorating and a Christmas movie, and we are in the process of having fun with our Snow-cial celebration where the kids will have snow cones, yard and board games and time to socialize with their friends. We are excited to see the kids continue to excel here at the Middle School!

Mr. Troy Finstrom  
[troy.finstrom@mcbain.org](mailto:troy.finstrom@mcbain.org)



Middle School PBIS Prize Cabinet



## McBain Middle School Receives Grant

Did Santa make a stop at Mrs. Bronkema's STEM class to bring us these awesome Ozobot robots??! Nope, it was a \$2000 grant from Great Lakes Energy!! We were one of 18 recipients chosen from 47 applicants and we're super excited to use the robots to learn more about coding!

## Rocketry Class Takes Flight

Mr. VanderVelde's 7th/8th grade Rocketry class wrapped up a fun semester of experiments and explorations in launching aircraft. The culminating activity included rocket fuel and student created rocket device designs. The students attempted to launch their rockets at the end of the semester. There were some very impressive flights and a few small challenges!



Andrew Moomey showing his rocket device.

## A MESSAGE FROM THE HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL



Hello Everyone,

My name is Becky Rodenbaugh and I am honored to have stepped into the high school principal position upon Mr. Biller leaving. I am so excited to be serving the district in this capacity. I have been with McBain Schools for 23 years and I care deeply about the students, staff, and community! I'm looking forward to a wonderful 2nd semester in the high school!

We strive to provide many options for students to be involved in various activities at school and I am so proud of all we have to offer. We have student athletes participating in Basketball, Competitive Cheerleading, Skiing, and Wrestling. We have 88 high school students participating in the HERO program. Every Friday, the high school students meet up with their "little" and spend time getting to know them, hang out with them, and invest in a relationship with them. A big thank you to Mr. Murphy and Mrs. Huttenga for coordinating this! Also, our music programs are preparing for upcoming festival competitions and we are looking to offer an e-sports club as well.

We continue to implement PBIS and focus on our WHEEL expectations and core values. Our students work hard and we enjoy recognizing their hard work and their effort to go "above and beyond" in the classroom and throughout our school.

Homecoming is a time honored tradition here in McBain during the winter months. This year Homecoming week was February 5-9. Our students were able to participate in spirit week, decorate our hallways, watch our parade of athletes and Homecoming representatives, participate in an all school assembly and at the end of the week enjoy our Homecoming games and a dance on Saturday! Thank you to our Student Council for working so hard to coordinate all of this!

Thank you to all of our community members and families for your continued support of McBain Schools!

Sincerely,  
Becky Rodenbaugh  
[becky.rodenbaugh@mcbain.org](mailto:becky.rodenbaugh@mcbain.org)



The 2023 football team won a \$500 grant through the Michigan High School Football Coaches Association which partnered with Adrenaline Fundraising to generate the grant. Our football team re-started our Friday football reader program this past fall. It had been put on hold due to COVID19. Our football team worked with elementary teachers and we read to many classrooms each Friday in the fall. The \$500 will go toward the purchase of more books for elementary readers.

## Project Christmas Campaign

This year, the Freshmen Focus classes organized together in order to raise money to sponsor two families through the OASIS Center in Cadillac for our Project Christmas Campaign. The students collected returnable cans through the month of November and early December. Each week, the classes would count and sort the cans and we were very gracious of McNally's Party Store to allow us to return the cans to their store.

Throughout this time period, the four classes combined raised over \$1,800 to purchase gifts for these two families.

On December 14th, the class that raised the most money was able to take a field trip to Walmart in Cadillac with a shopping list of the families wants and needs. We were able to purchase just about everything that was on their wish lists, as well as provide each family with gift cards to purchase food for the holidays as well.

While we were there, the Students also treated the Wal-Mart patrons to some Christmas caroling, which was very appreciated.



# CO-ED BASKETBALL

## *35 Years and Still Going Strong!*

*Boys Varsity Basketball Coach Bruce Koopman*

Starting in 1990, the McBain Co Ed basketball program was created to provide an opportunity for all elementary boys and girls in grades 3-6 to play basketball in a friendly, supportive environment on the same team! Now 35 years later, it continues to be the backbone of the McBain JV and Varsity basketball programs. The numbers may vary from year to year, ranging from over 130 to 160 plus participants. There is nothing like the excitement that can be found in the gym on a Saturday morning throughout January and February. Besides all the young enthusiastic players, you will find parents, siblings, aunts and uncles and grandparents. Every year I hear stories of young players that slept the night before in their shirt in anticipation for the season to start or cried when we canceled because of weather. Perhaps the greatest moments are when that young player makes their first basket and they practically jump out of the gym! I know from that moment that young Rambler is hooked on the game of basketball as a player or fan. Having been involved for all 35 years I can honestly say beyond any doubt that McBain Co Ed basketball is very important to the future success of McBain basketball. I would like to also recognize all the dedicated people that make Co Ed basketball successful each year. Since she became the athletic secretary Lisa Bronkema has done a tremendous job handling all the paperwork, organization behind the scenes and passing out shirts. All the great current and former JV and varsity basketball players who helped to ref, run clock and sometimes, when needed, coached. I also want to thank all the current and former JV and varsity basketball coaches as well. Also, a big thank you to the custodians and Darla Baird for their work before and after Co Ed is done on Saturday. Thank you to all the parents and players for coaching and participating!!! Last, but not least a big thanks to Mike Heuker, Eric and Kyle Culp for helping to officiate as well. I also want to extend a big thanks to all the parents that take time to organize our young Ramblers and dedicate their time to coaching the all the travel teams.



# Kindergarten Corner



## CommUNITY Connections

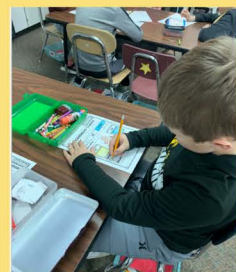
The Kindergartners at McBain Elementary have been learning about their community. This past Fall, they visited the Missaukee County EMS in Lake City and got up-close tours of an ambulance, Sheriff's patrol car, Peterson's tow truck, and a fire truck. They enjoyed connecting with various Community Helpers and learning about their roles in keeping us safe. This January, McBain Kindergartners in Mrs. Brinks' class built a miniature version of McBain and the surrounding communities and invited Major Joey Roberts in to help them tour various businesses with their desk pets. Community is a year-long emphasis in Kindergarten as we learn about important places in our community and think about our important role as we grow into contributing members of this unique rural community.

## Finstrom's Firsties!

### Mrs. Stacey Finstrom - 1st Grade

In the month of December the first graders carried out our Gingerbread Unit. The students enjoyed listening to a variety of gingerbread stories. We compared and contrast the different characters, repeated phrases, and the end result of the gingerbread character. One thing all these stories had in common was the gingerbread man needing to get across a body of water. Therefore, we felt the need to help the gingerbread man; so, we carried out a STEM challenge and built the gingerbread man a raft. One thing we learned is first graders LOVE tape. The rafts were held together by an abundant amount of tape. Some rafts met the challenge by keeping the gingerbread man dry; while others needed a little more support/different materials. We definitely have some future engineers on our hands.

Also, we did a science lesson where the students asked questions, made predictions, carried out an experiment and made a conclusion on whether a gingerbread cookie would dissolve faster in oil or water. Overall, the students enjoyed the hands on learning, story elements and working with others throughout this unit.



## Wood Burning in the Middle School

Presenters from MSU Extension came to talk with sixth & seventh graders about tree conservation. Students learned how the rings of a tree can show the age and health of the tree. They also had the opportunity to make an ornament out of a "tree cookie" with a wood burning tool.



## SPECTATOR BUS TO THE VARSITY FOOTBALL PLAYOFF GAME IN MENOMINEE

We would like to thank the students and bus driver, Sandy Quist for taking the long trip to the Varsity football playoff game in the U.P.!



## NHS BLOOD DRIVE GOAL MET!

Our NHS crew and this community are absolutely AMAZING!! We have been trying to reach our goal of 100 blood donations for years. We have come close a few times, but this year's group took up the challenge and ran with it. On January 24<sup>th</sup> they were able to break the mark and obtained 102 total units of blood at the McBain National Honor Society Blood Drive. Kelly Taylor was lucky #100. We are proud of this group of seniors: Trenton Gladu, Makenzie Reed, Makenzie Zuiderveen, Amelia Schihl and Trey Boven for their work and commitment to excellence! NHS would also like to thank our community for their donations, the support to our school and our students. Together we saved over 300 lives.



## MCBAIN'S HERO PROGRAM IS BACK!

The HERO Program is back!! This program originated over 15 years ago as a Big Brother/Big Sister type of format. We have been on a few year pause due to COVID, but we are back in full swing this year. High school students known as "Bigs" or "Heros" volunteer to be matched up with elementary students known as "Littles." High school students request to be part of this program and are vetted by Middle and High School staff before they are accepted into the program. Elementary students are chosen by their teachers based on academic or social needs.

Each Friday the high schoolers give up their lunchtime in order to meet with their Littles. The weeks are separated between academic weeks and fun weeks. During academic weeks the elementary teachers provide some work for the Bigs to work on with their Littles, such as reading practice, math exercises or missing work. On the fun weeks, the Bigs and Littles will participate in whole group activities in the gym, or they can do smaller group activities such as games/crafts in Mr. Murphy's room.

The students meet for 30 minutes on Fridays and we have seen some very positive relationships that have even become lifelong friendships, especially when a HERO and their Little are matched up for multiple years in a row.

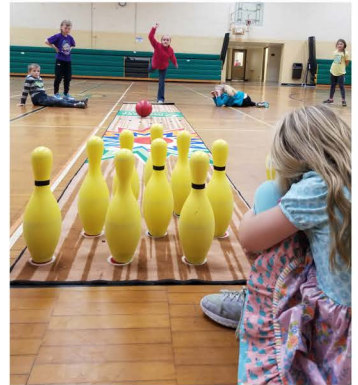
This year the HERO Program has 88 high school volunteers, along with 88 elementary Littles, which means on any given Friday, we will see almost 170 students paired up together hanging out during the high school lunch period.





# We Are McBain!

## *Elementary PE - Speed Stacking & Bowling Units*



*If you would like to be added or removed from this mailing list, please call or text 313- 509-7028.*



McBain Rural Agricultural School  
107 East Maple Street  
McBain, MI 49657