

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Thanksgiving Recess

Wednesday, November 22 -  
Friday, November 24

### PTO Holiday Hoopla (RVH)

Friday, December 1

### 2nd/3rd Grade Music Program

Monday, December 11

### 1/2 Day of School

Wednesday, December 20

### Christmas Break

Thursday, December 21 -

Wednesday, January 3

### Teacher Inservice

Wednesday, January 3

### School Reconvenes

Thursday, January 4



Girard Unified School District  
No. 248  
415 N. Summit

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## Friends of U.S.D. #248



Craig Crespino Weight Room

Fall • 2023

## Meet Carlee Mahnken - School Based Therapist

In August of 2023, Carlee Mahnken joined the USD #248 faculty and staff as a school based therapist. As a school based therapist, Mrs. Mahnken ensures that staff, parents, and students of all ages have a safe, secure, and confidential setting to process life adjustments and/or chronic concerns.

“We are excited to have Mrs. Mahnken join our USD 248 team,” Superintendent Todd Ferguson said. “With her experience and positive, caring demeanor, she has been a valuable asset for our students and staff.”

Before joining the USD #248 staff, Mrs. Mahnken worked for Community Health Center as a school based therapist in the Labette County grade schools. Before gaining experience in school based services, she was a medical social worker at Ascension Via Christi. She began her career in the mental health field at Crawford County Mental Health in the early 2000’s.

Mrs. Mahnken has a Masters Degree in social work and is also a Licensed

Specialist Clinical Social Worker, is EMDR trained, and is a Certified Clinical Trauma Professional. She also has a Bachelor’s Degree in Psychology and a Bachelor’s Degree in Justice Studies with an emphasis in Legal Issues.

“Helping others is my passion, and I am thankful to be allowed this honor to do so within Girard School Buildings.” Mahnken said. “It is my hope that I can build trusting relationships and rapport



**Carlee Mahnken**  
School Based Therapist

within our school district so that every person feels they have a safe space for whatever life presents them with. Being able to give others a voice, a sense of hope, a nonjudgmental listening ear, or advocate for those who are unable to do so themselves is what I enjoy most about my job.”

Mrs. Mahnken is married to Girard alumni Nathan Mahnken. She has a six year old daughter named Kennedy and a three year old daughter named Maisey. She and Nathan are expecting identical twin girls in December.

On a final note, Mahnken said, “Most importantly, I want everyone to have the opportunity if they haven’t already to feel like they are valued, they matter, and are important everyday but especially when in my presence. Life is always going to have moments that are challenging, but my goal is to create an atmosphere where we don’t have to feel alone in facing those times. Everyday is a new day, so strive to make it better than it was the day before!”

### SUPERINTENDENT

Todd Ferguson  
415 N. Summit  
Girard, KS 66743  
(620) 724-4325

www.girard248.org

### USD 248 SCHOOL BOARD

Kelly Peak, President  
Henry Ashbacher  
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USD 248

GIRARD  
SCHOOLS

## Craig Crespino Weight Room Remodel

Over the summer, the Craig Crespino weight room was remodeled with the help of USD 248 staff, CDL, Audio Acoustics and Mammoth Turf.

The idea to remodel the weight room was one of the district’s final initiatives included in the previous strategic plan. After USD 248 received a generous donation, they kicked off the project on May 29th.

“We wanted to use the existing 7,000 square feet in the basement in an efficient manner,” USD 248 Superintendent Todd Ferguson said. “By capturing that existing space, we felt we could commit the majority of the funds towards the weight equipment, flooring, and lighting instead of building another structure.”

Article Information provided by Trojan Tribune Staff Members Connor Hudson and Ainsley Norton.

The decision making process was a team effort between the USD 248 Board of Education, administration, and staff.

New equipment includes ten multipurpose Powerlift racks with 5-8 different attachments on each rack, two treadmills, two ellipticals, two cardio bikes, weights, bars, dumbbells, rubber mats, and lighting.

A 50 yard runway of turf was also installed. The turf area provides a low-impact, non-slip surface that allows students to sprint and agility train indoors while reducing impact injuries.

The Girard Recreation Commission also donated new stereo equipment.

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Message

Todd Ferguson

I hope this message finds you well as we are off to a promising start to the academic year. It brings me great joy to share that the efforts of our dedicated staff, exceptional students, and supportive community have helped USD 248's continued success.

I am excited to announce the completion of the upgraded weight room at GHS/GMS, a testament to our commitment to physical fitness and well-being among our students. This state-of-the-art facility stands as a symbol of our dedication to nurturing not only academic excellence but physical wellness and personal development.

Furthermore, our journey towards creating the best education possible at USD 248 continues to move forward, and we are in the process of developing a comprehensive educational strategic plan. This plan, built on collaboration and communication, will help shape the future of learning at USD 248, ensuring that each student is equipped with the tools and resources needed to thrive in an ever-changing world.

I am grateful for your support and feedback as we move forward together.

**Go Trojans!**

**Weight Room Remodel**

*Continued from page 1*

In addition to new equipment, structural changes were also made. New flooring, lighting, paint, and wall decals were installed. Excess pipes were also removed from the ceiling areas to maximize space.

"The new weight room has been constructed in a first class way," Neal Philpot, weights instructor and head football coach said. "A person would be hard pressed to find another small high school with this type of facility. We are certainly fortunate to have something like this at Girard High School."

Weights and Physical Education instructor Tristan Gegg said, "We are super blessed we received this new, incredible weight room. The students



**Senior Bailey Bradshaw**

and athletes thoroughly enjoy going down there now and learning about different weight room equipment and gaining knowledge they can carry with them after high school. Thank you to all who made it possible!"



**Junior Levi Blair**

**"Thank you to all who made it possible!"**  
**Tristan Gegg, PE Instructor**

**Community Professionals Present to GHS Seniors**

On Thursday, October 26, GHS seniors participated in Community Professionals Presentations to help them develop post high school life skills.

The senior class was divided in to four small groups and rotated through each session.

Larry Davenport from SEK Financial presented over Financial Literacy. In this session, students learned about budgeting, the importance of IRAs, and Health Savings Accounts.

Barb Macken from Watco presented over Soft Skills. In this session, students learned about how important it is to have people skills, communication skills, and

social skills in their work place. They also learned about the importance of having character and integrity in their jobs.

Kylie Smith of Girard Medical Center presented over Lifelong Health. In this session, students learned about health and safety, making good choices after they leave their parents' home, drug and alcohol abuse, and health insurance.

Dan Rank of Millers/Mpix presented over Hiring and Termination. In this session, students learned about the interview process, the importance of dependability in jobs, creating a positive work culture, and interacting with different generations.



**Larry Davenport of SEK Financial Presents to Seniors**

**RVH News**

**SPOTLIGHT**

**Ambassador Program**

The Student Ambassador program at RVH began in 2016 in partnership with Greenbush. Through the years, the program has evolved to meet the needs of RVH staff and students. The Ambassador program is designed to bring more awareness into the discipline of student leadership. All 4th and 5th grade students have the opportunity to become a student ambassador through an application process. Applying to become an ambassador is completely voluntary for each student but is highly encouraged by classroom teachers.

The Ambassador program gives students real-world experiences and allows students to be seen in visible leadership roles throughout the school day. Each ambassador is assigned a weekly leadership task within the school and also has opportunities to demonstrate their leadership within the community as well. New ambassadors are selected each quarter.

Ambassadors meet with the program advisor, RVH counselor Amy Firman, once or twice a month to talk about leadership traits, goal-setting, problem solving/decision making, and communication skills. Students also have the opportunity to work with high school leadership groups where they continue to build leadership skills through training and hands-on activities.

On Tuesday, October 17, RVH ambassadors traveled to GHS to work with FBLA members on nonverbal communication skills.



**RVH Students with GHS FBLA Members**

**GMS News**

In September, Gold Star students earned a reward trip to Joplin to play mini golf, and during homecoming week, students participated in dress up days. Students who received a 3 or 4 on their state assessments last year earned a reward trip to Greenbush.



**GMS Gold Star Students Reward Trip**

We have also hosted two great speakers to address bullying and internet safety.

**SPOTLIGHT**

**Student Council Pink Out**

The GMS Student Council supported cancer awareness month in October. They held a raffle at a volleyball game and a football game, hosted a Pink Out night, and worked booths for Teresa Davenport of the Care to Share organization. Through these activities, they raised \$720 and donated it to Care to Share. Thank you to all who donated, purchased items, or worked an event!



**GHS News**

**SPOTLIGHT**

**Future Farmers of America**

On Monday, September 18, Girard High School hosted the Southeast District Greenhand Conference. Ainsley Norton, GHS senior, is the Southeast District President, and Cody Burns, GHS senior, is also a member of the Southeast District Officer Team.

The day was filled with presenters, the FFA Information Test, Creed Speaking, and a Spelldown Contest. Individual placings in FFA Information consisted of Owen Murphy, 5th place, with Girard placing 3rd overall in this contest. Owen Murphy also placed 1st in the Spelldown Contest. Augi Mooneyham and Kennedy Keller represented the chapter in Creed Speaking LDE.



**GHS FFA Members at the FFA National Convention in Indianapolis**

**From left to right - Hanna Bailey, Graci Murphy, Cody Burns, Ainsley Norton, Madison Cranston, Josie Gronau**

Girard FFA Chapter Officer team this year is Ainsley Norton, President, Lily Gronau, Vice-President, Graci Murphy, Student Advisor, Cody Burns, Treasurer, Hanna Bailey, Secretary, Diamond Amaya-Reyes, Sentinel, and Avery Smith, Reporter.