

# Statewide charity collaborates with Student Association for fundraiser



Lindsey Ramsdell & Abbey Cadieux  
ASSISTANT EDITOR & INTERN

Starting this year, Student Association will be teaming up with the charity Big Family of Michigan to aid foster children.

“Big Family is an organization that works with foster children and other children that have parent problems,” Student Association president Nicoletta Valenzano said. “They help them get through (the foster care system), and they provide them with a bunch of different resources.”

The non-profit organization based in Macomb County was founded in 2000. It reaches out to foster children throughout Michigan by assisting them while they are in the system.

“They provide items for children when they’re first being put into foster care,” Student Association adviser Jonathan Byrne said. “Items that will make them feel more comfortable, like children who are under 10 (get) a stuffed animal, toothbrushes — things

that get lost a lot in transition — so that when they’re moving from one home to the next, it will feel a little bit more like home.”

Along with these commodities, Big Family equips children with all things from school supplies to birthday parties. They also work with adoption agencies and caseworkers to help the foster kids get adopted.

To recognize foster children and Big Family, Student Association made plans to join forces with South, the chamber of commerce and the *Grosse Pointe News* to get all of Grosse Pointe involved. They planned on holding a challenge at the North-South football game to raise donations for the charity.

The initial plan has been postponed due to the unexpected death of Big Family’s founder, Jeanne Fowler. Fowler founded Big Family after growing up in the foster care system herself.

“To honor her memory, we want the organization to be able to grieve her loss and also figure out where they’re going in the future,” student activities director Pat Gast said.

While Student Association expects to proceed with the unified fundraiser around January, they will still support Big Family throughout the year beginning with a return of penny wars during homecoming week. As each class competes for spirit points, the money raised will be donated to the foundation.

According to [www.AdoptUSKids.org](http://www.AdoptUSKids.org), there are approximately 14,000 foster children in the state of Michigan. Not every child gets a foster family that provides him or her with all the tools needed to prosper.

“Some kids are very lucky and get beautiful foster families, and others are not so lucky,” Gast said.

To help support those foster children and Big Family’s efforts, Gast says Student Association still plans to hold joint fundraisers with South.

“It was our intent to have North and South in a cooperative effort because, as I always say, we’re partners in the community, rivals on the field,” Gast said. “Sometimes we overlook that.”



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ABOVE LEFT: Jeanne Fowler, founder of Big Family of Michigan collects donations for foster children.



WWW.DBUSINESS.COM

ABOVE RIGHT: Fowler speaks at a charity event in Plymouth Township.

## Pinocchio takes the stage

With one show down and two to go, *Pinocchio*, offers new twist to a classic tale. “This play is a simple story. The play is easy to follow, and there’s a whole bunch of entertaining bits. It’s good for all ages,” junior Grace Guthrie said. “The play is about a whole bunch of painters who stumble upon an audience and happen to be on stage. They figure out the audience is there to see *Pinocchio*, so they decide to put on the show for them, and then it’s all about the story of *Pinocchio*.”

Sophomore Alta Daniel is the stage manager and sees a unique quality within the plot.

“We do it differently than you’d expect. It’s kinda like a play within a play. It’s not the traditional story,” Daniel said. “In the original, people think of *Pinocchio* whose nose grows when he lies, but that only happens once in the show.”

“It’s a fun, creative play,” stage manager Jackie Veneri said. “There’s lots of drama but lots of comedy and a lot of audience interaction. There’s a little bit of everything.”

The play’s new set raises the bar for the drama program. “The set is really exciting. There’s a million ladders. There’s about two really high levels, and it’s kinda scary,” senior Jarell Cunningham said.

The show has appeal for adults and students alike. “Kids will really enjoy the magical aspect of the show, and adults will too, it will really bring them back to their childhood,” sophomore Caitlyn Mayernick said.

The next performances are Saturday, Sept. 26 at 1 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$7 for children, students and senior tickets and can be purchased at the door.

By Darcy Graham

## Students utilize technology in Digital Seminar

Technology is an essential part of daily life. Classes are now geared towards teaching students the ins and outs of the newest gadgets. Digital Seminar is one of those upgrades. It is taught by social studies teacher Sean McCarroll, and it gives insight on technology skills needed for college and work environments. Senior Andrew Nurmi is taking the class and believes it will help him in everyday life.

“I think technology can be a great way to learn and get you to complete projects and assignments. Nowadays, lots of teachers and the lessons they give move more toward technology in terms of having homework on the computer or internet based stuff,” Nurmi said. “I think these are valuable skills to learn for the future and the way that society’s going.”

The class offers high-tech devices such as Apple TV’s, Chromebooks, and a new 3D printer. Digital Seminar is offered to all grades, and there are no tests or quizzes given. Instead, McCarroll assigns projects to mimic everyday tasks. He feels the class will encourage students to use technology in ways beyond tweeting and using *Instagram*.

“The main goal of the class is to equip North students with the technology and general work skills that they will need in the 21 century. I don’t teach any particular technology in a ‘you have to memorize this’ sort of way because technology updates so quickly, so instead we focus on learning how to learn technologies and apply them to real-world situations,” McCarroll said via email. “A lot of the course is focused on using technology to create prototypes for solutions to unique and challenging problems in the real world.”

By Erin Kaled

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