

## L'Anse Creuse News January 2026

"No matter our backgrounds, we all have one common thread; our students and their success."

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### **Celebrating the Holidays**

This holiday season was filled with joy! Check out some of the fun ways students and staff spread the holiday cheer!

Holiday events took place throughout the month of December, with schools across the district hosting parties, making decorations, organizing donations, and even meeting Santa. From elementary parties to high school pep assemblies, there was no shortage of holiday cheer in L'Anse Creuse.

Santa Claus made his annual stop at the Anna Mae Burdi Early Childhood Center to read and visit with preschool students. During his visit, he told students the story of how he decided which animal he would have lead his sleigh on Christmas Eve.

Middle School - Central's Snowflake Day event gave 6th grade students an exciting last day before break, with students spending their morning making paper snowflakes, drinking hot chocolate, and enjoying festive music from a DJ. The dozens of snowflakes they made were hung throughout the hallways, giving students a winter wonderland to walk back into after they got back from break.

L'Anse Creuse High School - North celebrated the last day before break with a winter pep assembly! Their theme for this year focused on the school's 50th anniversary, and many of the games revolved around the different eras at the high school. Students had to solve Rubik's cubes, sing songs from past decades, and match old senior pictures to the current LCN staff members.

Students from the DiAnne M. Pellerin Center stopped by the Parkdale Senior Center to spread some holiday cheer. Students went door to door delivering handmade cards, candy canes, and warm wishes to all the residents.

### **The Season of Giving**

Students and staff gave back this holiday season.

Since the beginning of November, L'Anse Creuse students and staff have been putting in work behind the scenes to ensure that community members are able to enjoy the holiday season. From drives to fundraisers, hundreds of dollars worth of toys, food and winter clothing have been collected and donated to local non-profits to benefit those in need.

Mrs. McDonald from L'Anse Creuse High School - North has had her students put together holiday gift bags benefitting Incarcerated Youth Ministries (IYM) for over 20 years. She continued this annual tradition this fall with her Life Management classes, who made cookies, filled gift bags with toiletries, and worked on ornaments to donate to IYM. This wonderful project allows students to earn community service hours, spread holiday cheer, and provide some warmth and support for others during the holiday season.

The Food and Nutrition Department held a "Warm Hands Warm Hearts" Drive, collecting hats, gloves, and other winter clothing. The drive ran for a month and collected over 170 items of clothing, with all items being donated to help L'Anse Creuse students and families.

Atwood Elementary held their 3rd annual Pulsera Project in November and raised \$11,079 to support people, programs, and communities across Central America. This exciting initiative empowers Central American artists through fair trade employment and the sale of colorful, handmade pulseras, or bracelets in Spanish.

The funding that Atwood students raised will go towards scholarships for students, women's empowerment groups, workers rights and social enterprises, free press initiatives and programs advocating for people with disabilities.

Middle School - East held a food drive during the month of November benefitting the non-profit Goodfellows and local families. After the drive concluded, the students, staff, and MSE community collected over 600 food items to help families during the holiday season.

### **From the Superintendent**

Dear L'Anse Creuse Community,

As I reflect upon my first year serving L'Anse Creuse Public Schools, I want to thank our students, staff, families, and community members for the partnership, honesty, and collaboration you have shown. This year has been centered on listening, learning, and building relationships across every building and department. Those conversations have shaped a deeper understanding of both our strengths and the areas where we can continue to grow.

Over the past year, we have made steady progress. We launched important bond-funded upgrades to improve safety, infrastructure, and modernize our facilities. We strengthened our focus on curriculum and instruction, including clearer use of student data to guide classroom support. We also worked to improve communication with more consistent updates to families and staff. I have valued the chance to meet with staff in every building, hear from families, and learn directly from students about what matters most to them.

L'Anse Creuse Public Schools is dedicated to the process of continuous improvement. Our schools are strengthening how we support students by developing and implementing multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) for both academics and behavior. This approach ensures that every K-12 student receives the right level of support at the right time. It begins in the classroom with strong, research-based instruction and positive behavior practices for all students and expands to small-group or individualized supports when needed. By using data to understand student needs and adjusting support accordingly, our schools can proactively address challenges, reduce barriers to learning, and help every student grow academically and socially.

As we step into the year ahead, our work continues with a clear set of priorities. We will remain focused on long-term financial stability and responsible resource management so that we can protect strong learning experiences for all students. Through the district's continuous improvement process, we will continue strengthening literacy and math outcomes by aligning interventions and closely monitoring student progress. We will also expand our work around safety and well-being, including ongoing training, updates to emergency response systems, and continued support for character education, PBIS, and bully-prevention programs. These efforts reflect our commitment to safe, supportive, and modern learning environments where students feel connected and ready to learn.

LCPS has a strong foundation, and we will keep moving forward with care, transparency, and purpose. I invite you to explore our website to learn more about the work happening across the district, including timelines for bond improvements and district goals. You will also find a wide range of Community Education programs for youth and adults, from recreation and enrichment classes to fitness opportunities and senior programs.

Thank you for your continued support of L'Anse Creuse Public Schools. It is an honor to serve this community, and I look forward to all we will accomplish together.

Keith Howell  
Superintendent

### **Shining a Light: The L'Anse Creuse Foundation**

Learn more about the Foundation and the work they do for students and staff across the district.

In October of 1989, dedicated members of the L'Anse Creuse community recognized a need for increased funding to enhance the educational experience for students and provide additional support for teachers and staff. The L'Anse Creuse Foundation was created with the intention of filling the gaps in public school funding and giving the community a way to directly invest in local education.

Foundation President Nécole Cichowlas began volunteering with the nonprofit in 2014 and said she quickly became passionate about the Foundation's mission and dedication to the students and staff. She said her experience in leading the organization has been both humbling and inspiring.

"As a parent and community member, I saw firsthand how much our teachers and students give every day, often with limited resources," Cichowlas said. "My favorite part has been working alongside such a dedicated board and seeing the direct impact of our work, especially when we're able to fund creative ideas, support staff, and continue traditions that have strengthened our community for decades."

Since their founding over 35 years ago, the Foundation has kept their promise to the community by providing thousands of dollars in funding for innovative programs, student opportunities, and staff support. In mid-December 2025, the Foundation delivered over \$16,000 in grants to teachers and staff across the district, directly impacting the students and their experience in school.

Colleen Aubrey is a teacher at Green Elementary School and was one of the recipients of the 2025-2026 grants. Her team was awarded \$1,400 to build a sensory room for the school's two emotional impairment (EI) classrooms and create a safe, calming space where students can decompress and self-regulate. The grant money will be used to purchase the necessary items to create this space for students.

“By having a sensory room at Green Elementary, we want to empower our students to be able to find ways to use their senses to self-regulate their emotions and find an inner peace that will allow them to return to their classroom and be more engaged learners,” Aubrey said. “We will be purchasing items that will help us create a space with various sensory tools and activities, such as soft lighting, tactile toys, and weighted blankets.”

Aubrey said the team was surprised and excited to receive the funding and are grateful to the Foundation and community for making their dream a reality. The generosity of this grant, she said, will have an everlasting impact on the students at Green Elementary.

In addition to grants and scholarships, the Foundation also provides special funding for various events around the district. Each year, the Foundation pays for the t-shirts given to incoming students at Kindergarten Round Up, as well as the cardboard used for the Cardboard Boat Regatta at both high schools. This past fall, the organization also fully funded the Lionheart Experience—a positive and motivational school assembly—for both high schools.

The funding for everything the Foundation provides is raised through community participation in events and the generosity of local sponsors. Cichowlas said the organization is intentional about creating events that reflect their mission and bring the community together in a meaningful and fun way to raise funds.

Foundation events take place throughout the year and include fun dances like the “Back to the 80’s” Throwback Prom and Daddy-Daughter Dance, and well as outings like the Pauline Pavlick Memorial Sunset Creuse and the Annual L’Anse Creuse Classic 5k. Each Foundation event is the result of months of planning, collaboration, and hard work taking place behind the scenes.

Dr. Major Mickens, the Director for Student Services and Community Education, has attended and enjoyed several Foundation events, including the Daddy Daughter Dance and the L’Anse Creuse Classic 5k. He said the best part about attending these events, especially as a parent with a child in the district, is that people can participate and enjoy the events and know the money raised goes right back to students.

“I am a runner and the 5K allowed me to do what I love to do for a great cause,” Mickens said. “This is just a great way to support our students. The more participants we get, the more the Foundation can continue to bless our students.”

The Foundation will continue to host events throughout the school year that community members can attend, with their next event being the Daddy Daughter Dance at the end of January. Community members are encouraged to follow the organization’s Facebook page to keep up with future events.

“I want the community to know that every dollar raised by the Foundation goes directly back into our schools. None of this would be possible without the continued support of donors, sponsors, volunteers, and community members,” Cichowlas said. “As we celebrate 35 years, we’re proud of our history and excited to continue making a lasting impact for years to come.”

### **Learning in Action!**

#### **German Visitors at MSS**

In mid-September, students from Middle School - South got to meet special guests from across the pond—10 German professionals interested in learning about American schools. For a few hours, Mr.

Youngblood's students gave the German visitors a tour of their school, invited them into classrooms, and introduced them to their peers. Throughout the day, students became tour guides, answering questions about what it's like being an American middle-schooler and showcasing what a day-in-the-life looks like at MSS.

Students and their new German friends also shared a mini lesson on the U.S Constitution, exchanged pop culture references, and asked each other questions about education and daily life in their home countries.

#### Great Lakes Apple Crunch

Great Lakes Apple Crunch Day is an annual region-wide event during peak apple season that is aimed at encouraging healthy eating habits, supporting local farm-to-school initiatives, and connecting food and agriculture to classroom curriculum. The Food and Nutrition staff set up a wonderful display of apple varieties at each elementary school and provided coloring and activity pages so students could learn while enjoying a healthy snack.

Many teachers celebrated further in their classrooms, with lessons and readings that covered farms, the apple lifecycle, and how food can bring people together.

#### School Store Field Trip

The Lancer and Crusader School Store students went on a joint field trip to visit local vendor My Locker, one of the largest t-shirt distributors in the United States producing over 60,000 shirts a day. During the tour, they got to see the entire operation in action—from the receiving area and transfer stations to pressing designs on shirts, cups, and blankets.

To end the day, students heard from special guest speaker Herman Moore, former NFL player turned entrepreneur, who spoke about marketing, entrepreneurship, and branding yourself to be great.

The school stores at both high schools are run almost entirely by business and marketing students, who apply the lessons and information they learn in class to appropriately manage funds, sell products, and promote the store.

#### Pankow Collaborative Project

Students at the Frederick V. Pankow Center came together for an exciting, hands-on project involving the Mechanical Drafting, Horticulture, and Hospitality programs. The Mechanical Drafting class designed and 3-D printed custom pots, carefully engineering them to include a tray to hold water and sizing them to properly support both plantings and floral arrangements. Once completed, the Horticulture students created beautiful flower and holiday greenery arrangements using the student-designed pots. The final step brought the Hospitality class into the project, as they marketed and sold the finished arrangements in the school store.

This collaboration gave students real-world experience in design, production, and sales while showcasing how multiple career pathways can work together to create a successful product from start to finish.

#### Be the Light, Be the Change

In honor of Suicide Prevention Week back in September, students and staff from L'Anse Creuse High School – North's National Honor Society (NHS) hosted a Suicide Prevention Walk benefiting Kevin's Song, a non-profit organization dedicated to generating public awareness about the causes of suicide, its prevalence in our society, and possible preventive measures.

In the fall of 2024, students and staff from High School – North attended a local high school's "Be Aware" suicide prevention walk. Students felt envisioned by the event and decided they wanted North's NHS Chapter to plan and organize a similar event for the L'Anse Creuse community. Throughout the year, students considered ideas and in May, when they were presenting their goals for this school year, they prioritized wanting to start an LCN Walk that would be part of Suicide Prevention Week.

"What started as just a small vision—a simple idea to bring people together—has grown into this incredible community of support, hope, and connection," said a senior leader involved in the planning of the event. "This walk is about more than just raising awareness. It's about reminding each other that no one has to walk through life alone. Every step we take today represents hope, compassion, and strength,"

The walk started on the high school's track and made its way through the neighborhoods surrounding the school. Several 'mental health' stops were positioned along the route that provided various ways to improve mental health and promote positive thinking. The walk was open to all L'Anse Creuse community members and had a group of over 300 walk, donate, and support the cause.

#### Awards and Recognitions

##### JoJo's 10,000 Pound Challenge

Over the summer, Middle School - South 6th grader Joseph (JoJo) Z. organized a donation drive to benefit the Community Food Bank of Macomb County after learning about the funding cuts affecting his community. JoJo's goal was to collect 10,000 pounds of food donations to benefit the 50 local food pantries and hunger-relief groups in the area.

After collecting donations for 10 days, JoJo's drive collected over 6,000 pounds of non-perishable food items. Though the drive didn't quite reach its goal of 10,000, the Macomb Food Bank said the awareness he brought to the organization and food disparity in the community is just as important as the food itself. JoJo still feels "really good" about the results, and the success has only made him more determined to provide for his community. He and his family have already planned another food drive for March.

##### High School Marching Bands Break Records and Win Big

The marching bands at both high schools play an integral role in pumping up the student body and spreading school spirit during parades and athletic events. Not only are our two marching bands entertaining to watch, they are also both award winning programs who take part in local and State competitions.

The Marching Crusaders from L'Anse Creuse High School - North competed in four competitions this season and received several awards for their performance "Match." Their final performance at the Chippewa Valley Invitational earned the band first place in music, visual, and guard, and their score of 93 set a school record.

The Marching Lancers from L'Anse Creuse High School competed in the MCBA State Finals at Ford Field this past weekend and their performance of "Wrong Side of the Tracks" earned 2nd place in Flight II. This accomplishment marks the 9th State medal in program history and the 3rd consecutive year that the band has placed in the Top 3 at the State finals.

##### "Once an Eagle, Always an Eagle" – MSE Celebrates 25 Years

L'Anse Creuse Middle School. - East celebrated 25 years since their opening in 2000 by inviting all former MSE staff into the building for a special walk down memory lane.

The anniversary celebration featured a slideshow presentation, pictures and yearbooks from over the years, and guest speakers Jim Hansinger and Mike Van Camp—both former administrators for the middle school.

LCHS Senior Recognized as "Commended Student"

L'Anse Creuse High School student Anya P. was recognized as a 'Commended Student' in the 2026 National Merit Scholarship Program! Out of over a million entrants, Anya was named among the top 50,000 high scorers for her performance on the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT®).

She was recognized for her academic efforts at the Board of Education meeting in October.

Pankow Horticulture Award Winners

In October, Pankow Horticulture students Madison N. and Jackson W. proudly represented the district's Future Farmers of America (FFA) chapter as finalists in the state-level Agriscience, Food and Natural Resources Education (AFNRE) contest. Out of 37 student entries, Madison and Jackson were selected among the top six finalists in Michigan, with Madison earning a 4th Place Silver Award, and Jackson earning a 6th Place Silver Award.

Jackson also proudly represented Michigan as a delegate at the Youth Global Food Prize in Des Moines, Iowa. He shared research on energy conservation with peers and professors and joined global discussions on how to fight hunger and promote sustainability with students from around the world.

### **L'Anse Creuse Fall Athletics**

High School Sports

Cross Country:

The Crusader Boys and Girls Cross Country teams had an incredible season in the MAC White division, with the boys taking 2nd place and the girls taking 3rd. Both teams were represented at the State Finals, with Sophomore Xavier S. for the boys and Sophomore Ava K. competing for the girls. Xavier placed 11th in the State and achieved a personal record time of 15:18.0.

The Lancer Boys and Girls Cross Country teams gave it their all in the MAC Blue this fall. The Girls team had a winning record, going 14-12 against MAC opponents. The Boys team made great improvements over the season and should be proud of the growth they've made.

Soccer

The Crusader Varsity Boys Soccer team had an exciting, undefeated run in the MAC Blue, securing the title as MAC Blue champs with ease after achieving a 10-0 division record. Their hard work brought them to the district semifinal round where they put up a great fight against Dakota.

The Lancer Varsity team showed great cooperation and growth this season, and the young team is primed for success in future years.

Swim

The Crusader Girls Swim team worked incredibly hard this season, not only on personal growth, but also to support each other and grow as a team. Sophomore Addison T. qualified for the D1 State competition in the 50 yard freestyle and competed in the preliminary round at Oakland University.

The Lancer Girls Swim team placed third in the MAC Gold division with a solid showcase against division teams. Senior Miley M. qualified for the D2 State competition in the 100 yard butterfly and competed in the preliminary round at Eastern Michigan University.

#### **Football**

The Crusader Varsity Football team worked hard to face adversity all season long and, though they didn't have the season they hoped, they made great strides in teamwork and perseverance. Four athletes—Landyn S., Isaac G., Hamilton R., and Ryan K.—made the All County Second Team, with Julius W. being an Honorable Mention for All County. Hamilton R. also was selected for the MAC White All Conference.

The Lancer Varsity Football team fought hard to overcome obstacles throughout the fall season and were able to grow as a team. Four players—Brody A., Logan L., Donovan L., and Jaden Z.—were selected to the Macomb All-County teams, with Jaden earning a spot on the All-County First Team for his senior year. Despite missing most of the season due to a summer injury, Lathom D. made a triumphant return for the final two games and dominated on the defensive side of the ball.

#### **Golf**

The Crusader Girls Golf team had a fantastic season this year, with a perfect 12-0 season that helped the team secure the title as MAC White Champions. The team put up fierce competition at the Regional event and, though they fell short of qualifying, their success paints a bright picture for the team's future seasons.

The Lancers Girls Golf team had a great year of growth, with many of the newer golfers finding their stride throughout the season. With the skill they're beginning to show and their commitment to improvement, the team is looking good to take on MAC White competition next season.

#### **Tennis**

The Crusader Boys Tennis team had a winning season this fall, boasting a 7:5:1 overall record and providing tough competition for their competitors in the MAC Red division. Though they came up just short of a State run during Regionals, the team has a lot to be proud of as the season comes to a close.

The Lancer Boys Tennis team fought hard against some tough opponents in the MAC Blue, giving it their all till their last regional match finished at the beginning of October.

#### **Volleyball**

The Crusader Volleyball team had a winning season, providing tough competition against their MAC Red opponents. The team finished with an overall record of 23-10 and made it to the district final round where they gave their all against Dakota.

The Lancer Volleyball team made significant growth this season and gave a solid performance against their competition in the MAC Blue.

#### **Middle School Athletics**

During the fall season, our 7th and 8th grade students from all four L'Anse Creuse middle schools gave their all to play hard and represent their schools with pride. Two sports are available for middle school athletes: volleyball is available for girls and football is available for boys. The Fall 2025 season was

incredibly competitive, and the district is proud of all our Lancers, Crusaders, Eagles, and Sabres for their outstanding work.

#### Fall Highlights

- Taylor Girard Jersey Ceremony
  - o Taylor Girard, a 2016 graduate from L'Anse Creuse High School - North, was honored by the school for her accomplishments as a professional hockey player in the PWHL. Taylor gave an inspiring speech to the student audience, sharing her journey to becoming a pro athlete.
- Rivalry Football Game
  - o The Lancers and Crusaders clashed under the Friday Night Lights in a thrilling game to decide this year's winner of the John Armstrong Jug. The annual rivalry game was exciting from start to finish, with the Lancers eventually winning 27-25. Rival Football Game
- Middle School Volleyball Quad
  - o The annual L'Anse Creuse Volleyball Quad brought all four middle schools together for one exciting day of competition. The event was held at Middle School - North and Middle School - Central, giving the 7th and 8th grades teams from each school the chance to play all of their in-district rivals.

#### **L'Anse Creuse Public Schools presents the Stellar Students – Leading by Example.**

#### October

- Anna Mae Burdi Center: Skylar
- Atwood: Dawson
- Middle School – Central: Shane
- LC High School: Arianna

#### November

- Carkenord: Ryder
- Middle School – East: Joshua
- LC High School – North: Ava

#### December

- Early Childhood Center: Jonathan
- Graham: Cameron
- Middle School – North: Maggie
- Pankow: Denzel

#### **Community Education and Upcoming Events**

The L'Anse Creuse Community Education program offers a wide range of trips, classes, and athletic opportunities for community members of all ages to enjoy. Adult courses include guitar and piano lessons, self defense classes, and a variety of fitness classes. Winter courses in Fitness 20/20/20 and Slow Flow Yoga started at the beginning of January, but are still accepting interested participants at a pro-rated price. For more information, please call (586) 783-6330.

Youth programs are also available to children under the age of 18 and include fun courses for students to build skills, start a hobby, or prepare for the next school year. These classes include, but are not limited to, music lessons, athletic clubs, and Adult/Child Yoga.

For more information on Community Ed. and the programs they offer, scan the QR code or visit [app.smore.com/n/ybk9h](http://app.smore.com/n/ybk9h)

**Enroll Your Student in L'Anse Creuse Today!**

Our district offers high quality education through a variety of programs, ensuring our students are set for success.

Kindergarten enrollment will open on February 3rd and February 5th, offering two pathways for families to choose:

- Traditional Kindergarten
  - o Comprehensive, full day program.
  - o Offered at all elementary schools.
  - o Focus on reading, writing, math, science and social studies.
  - o A child may enroll in kindergarten if the child is at least 5 years of age on September 1, 2026.
- Transitional Kindergarten (TK)
  - o First of a two-year kindergarten sequence.
  - o Designed for students who would benefit from an additional year before entering kindergarten.
  - o Offered at Graham, Higgins, and Yacks

Open enrollment for all other elementary, middle, and high school students opens on February 2. Schools of Choice information will be available on the district website at the end of January.

*The L'Anse Creuse News is published quarterly by Katelyn Hill, Community Relations Coordinator, for the L'Anse Creuse Public Schools Community.*

For more L'Anse Creuse News, follow us on:

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