



*Building a Legacy of Greatness!*

For the parents, students, staff, and community of Clay Middle School

# CLAY NATION NEWS

## PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Season's Greetings Clay Nation!

I would like to take a moment as we approach the holiday season to wish you and your family a happy holiday. I would first like to say thank you to all of you as parents for all you do for your child and for our school. As I reflect on this year, in particular the last 10 months since the pandemic started last March I understand fully that everyone's life has been altered. From students to teachers to parents to our community to our entire world. It seems as though there has not been one thing that has not been impacted by the pandemic. It is during these times that we have to search for all the good people are doing right in front of us. As principal of Clay Middle School, I am so proud of our students and teachers for what they have had to adjust to. We pivoted quickly to virtual learning and parents were remarkable as well. We are fortunate to live in a caring and supportive community like Carmel where people take care of each other. In a year that has brought so many challenges for us all, these are some example of true humanity and the human spirit that will never be forgotten.

What are signs of courage that we can take note of during this global pandemic?

- Witnessing the courage, determination and an unwavering spirit of caring has been astonishing.
- Hearing stories of people in our own Carmel community having to spend time away from their own families to take care of others in need.
- Recognizing our front-line workers (including our teachers) as "heroes".
- Educators working diligently to transform their educational delivery during this virtual time period so that our students have the best educational experience possible amid a pandemic.
- Witnessing middle school students ages 11, 12, 13 and 14 doing things that are quite remarkable. The hybrid schedule is one that requires discipline and organization that often times students in college may struggle with. With students only seeing their teachers essentially half of the year, it takes a true partnership from the school to the family and the

*...continued on the next page*

### ADMINISTRATION

Todd Crosby, Principal

Brooke Cole, Assistant Principal

Mark Smith, Assistant Principal

John Corcoran, Athletic/Activities Director

BUILDING A LEGACY OF GREATNESS  
FINDING THE POWER OF OUR...  
OUR STUDENTS  
OUR STAFF  
OUR COMMUNITY



WE WANT TO BE THE BEST  
AT GETTING BETTER

## PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE *continues...*

family to the school for success to happen. Kudos to our families and parents that have been there to support their child during these rather challenging times in education. Please know your efforts and support for your child and their education does not go unnoticed.

- We have always tried to address the social emotional well-being of our students first and foremost at Clay Middle School, but there has been a heightened level awareness this year with COVID where I have observed our teachers and Student Services Department (guidance counselors and social workers) going the extra mile to “connect” with our students to ensure they are taken care of.
- Efforts made by Mr. John Corcoran (Clay Activities and Athletic Director) and our Fall and Winter season coaches and athletes for being able to offer and participate in sports for our students during this pandemic. The amount of time and precise preparation it has taken to do this, has been no short of remarkable. Thank you to all of our parents who continue to adhere to our COVID guidelines as you attend our sporting events on campus. Thank you for all your hard work everyone!

These are just a few examples of how this pandemic has brought us all together to realize that it will indeed take all of us working as a TEAM to get through this. The extra effort and dedication being displayed is pretty amazing. As an educator of 26 years, perhaps others may be now seeing what I already knew, that educators are true heroes and the work they do deserves our respect and appreciation.

As we look to this holiday break, I challenge each of us to look for something to be grateful for. When we look back on 2020, I think we can all admit, this year has been one we will never forget.

The amount of GREATNESS that I have witnessed is more than I can fit into one letter and attempt to describe. As I reflect on the year, it makes me very proud to be a Clay Trojan. I am quickly reminded how fortunate we are at Clay to have such a supportive school community. As principal, it never seems to amaze me all the great work being done at Clay help develop the whole child. Having said that, please know that our success could not have been accomplished without the support of you as parents. Thank you Clay Nation, for all you have done in 2020 to make Clay Middle School the best it can be. I speak for all Clay faculty and staff when I say, what a blessing and a privilege it is to serve the Carmel Clay Schools Community, where anything is possible – especially when we all work together. We want to always strive to be the best at getting better.

### GREATNESS Highlights

Our faculty, staff, and student body have been very busy this first semester adjusting to all the changes from the COVID pandemic. They have been working so hard to share their GREATNESS throughout this holiday season. Here are a few examples:

#### Clay Middle School - 12 Days of Mindfulness:

Mindfulness is the simple act of being present in the moment without judgment. It helps us to manage thoughts and emotions, notice more of what's happening in a situation, and immerse ourselves in the moment. Clay Staff members have been celebrating the season by participating holiday challenges from making holiday crafts to enjoying prepackaged treats that have helped



us all be present and find joy in this holiday season. These days of mindfulness could not have been possible without all the work from the following people: Mrs. Cole (Clay assistant principal), Mrs. Nowlin, Mrs. Mann and Mrs.

Pletcher in our Clay front office, our Clay Student Services Department for all they do to help our students and staff and last but not most certainly not least a special thanks goes out to our Clay PTO who have helped with making these days happen.

#### Make-A-Wish Campaign:

We have completed our 2020 Make-A-Wish campaign. Make-A-Wish has been a long-standing tradition at Clay Middle School. Thank you to Mrs. Kelly Speidel and Team Avenger teachers and students for carrying on this tradition. Clay Middle School collected more than \$13,250 this year. This money will have a direct impact on sick children by helping to grant their wish. This is truly life changing and we appreciate everything Make-A-Wish does.

#### Adopt a Family (Holiday Drive):

For several years Clay teachers such as Mrs. Mehl, Mrs. Reinhart, Mr. McGuckin and Mr. Stewart, Mrs. Doyle, Mr. Patane and Mrs. Giles in grades 6, 7 and 8 have helped to organize the Adopt a Family program. This year is no exception; we have partnered with our elementary schools

and were able to collect "family activities" baskets. There has been a huge outpour of support from our Clay Nation community and THANK YOU for helping so many families in our community that may be struggling during this time.

### Clay Performing Arts:

As many of you know this would typically be our holiday concert season. A huge thank you goes out to our Clay performing arts program. Throughout this month choir, band and orchestra have given our students opportunities to perform in this virtual learning model. For example, our choir under the direction of Mrs. Susie created virtual concerts for our families to view online. Mr. Frizzi recorded the students and then posted to Canvas for families to view. Mrs. Pote and Mr. Grifa have made incredible efforts to partner and do some things with the high school to then post some things to our band families. These are just some of the ways our performing arts students in choir, band or orchestra and our directors (Mr. Frizzi, Mrs. Susie, Mrs. Pote and Mr. Grifa) have went the extra mile. They all have really done an amazing job on finding new ways to connect with our families during this pandemic and we are delighted the students and directors got to perform.

### Clay AVID Program:

Back on December 3, 2019 Clay hosted a Clay AVID Parent Information Night. This year things have looked quite different due to the pandemic. The pandemic did not stop our super AVID team for moving forward and making the best of our situation. Special thanks go out to all of our AVID teachers,

Mrs. Catherine Gahl, Mrs. Liz Wegner and Mr. Mark Smith for their leadership of the Clay AVID program. This year we have had to redefine our processes in order to give parents information on our AVID program. Thank you to all parents that attended our meeting.

### CCS Green Team:

Recycled Lights - REMINDER that you can still donate used Christmas lights to our Recycled Christmas lights effort through Thursday January 7th, 2021.

### THE CLAY WAY!

I challenge all Clay Trojans to inspire others to greatness and together we will take Clay Middle School to even greater heights. As principal, I believe it is my position to help provide vision, leadership, oversight, safety and the best instruction to every student that attends Clay Middle School. I truly realize success cannot be accomplished without an active school community to continue to take Clay Middle School in the direction of continuous success and excellence. Please take care of yourself and your family.

**HAVE A GREAT HOLIDAY BREAK AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR.**

**THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU DO FOR CLAY MIDDLE SCHOOL.**

Reminder to follow us on Twitter @ClayTrojans #ClayGreatness

### GO TROJANS!

Sincerely,  
Todd A. Crosby, *Principal*



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## Youth Dance

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**Kids Dance Classes and Private lessons**  
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(contact studio for schedule and more details)

111 Medical Dr., Carmel, IN - 317-203-7341  
info@carmelballroomdance.com

## UPCOMING DATES

### DECEMBER AND JANUARY

12/21- 1/4 ..... Winter Break  
1/22 ..... PTO General Meeting

For information on Clay Athletic dates and schedules, please visit the following link: <http://www.ccs.k12.in.us/clm/athletics/>.

## COMMUNICATIONS

Please forward this email to other parents you know and encourage them to sign up for PTO email updates at <https://goo.gl/FQ5ue6/>.

Also, follow us on Facebook at 'Clay Middle PTO' and on Twitter at '@ClayPTO'

More information about Clay Middle PTO can be found at <http://www1.ccs.k12.in.us/clm/pto/>.

## SportClips

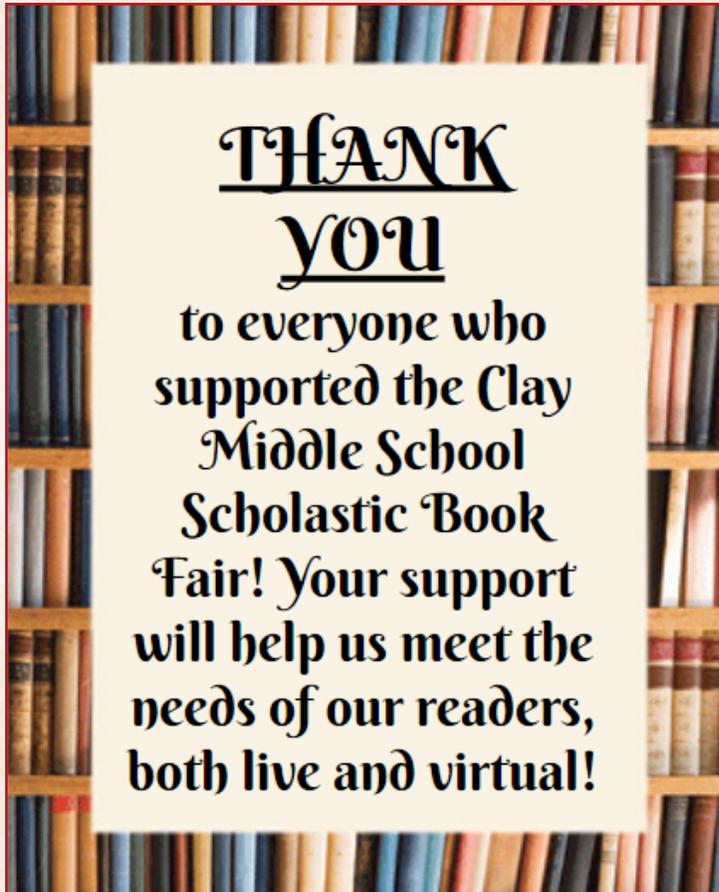
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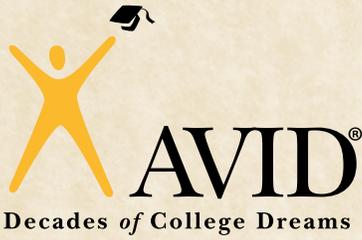
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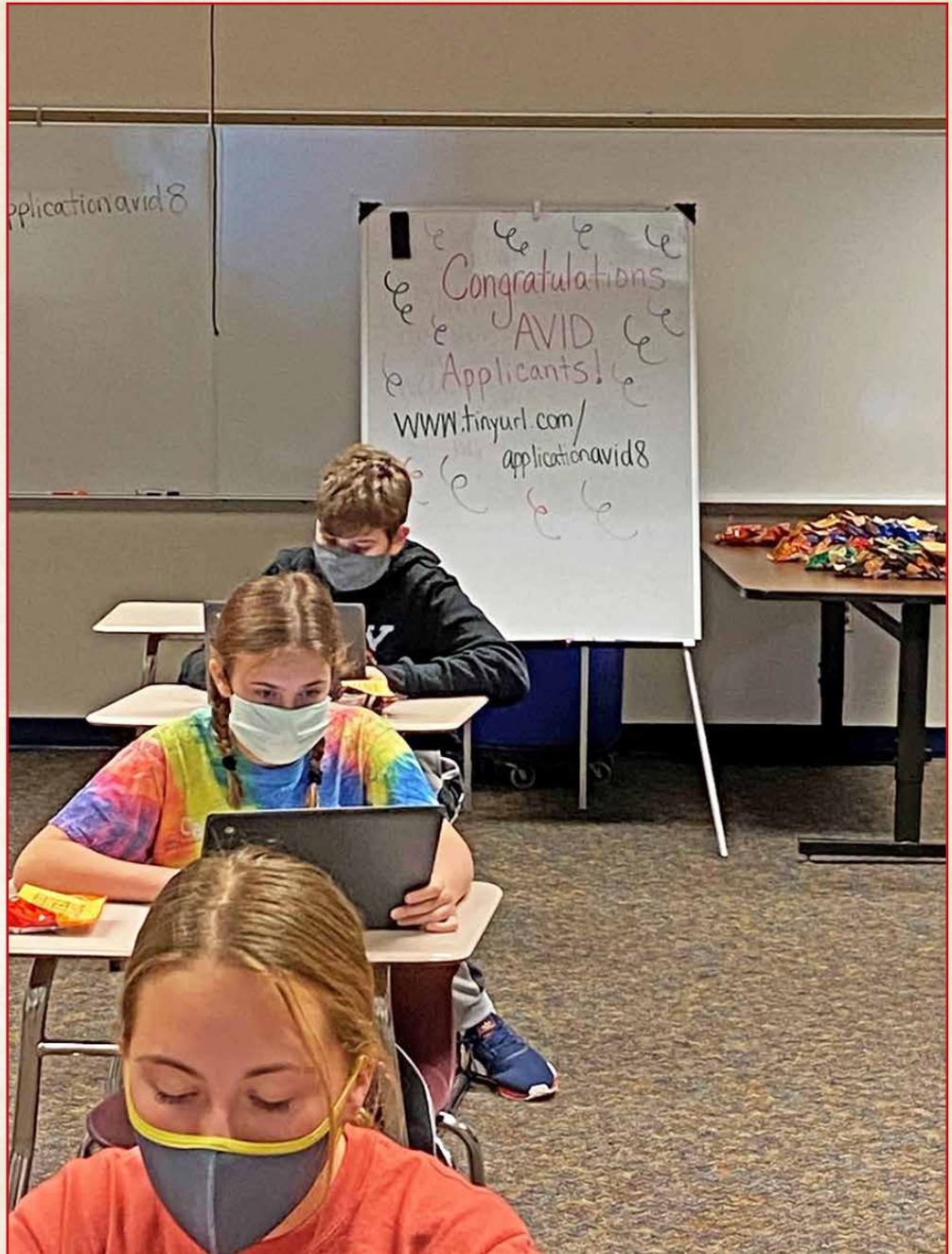
Brett R. Finkelmeier, DDS, MS  
912 S. Rangeline Road, Suite 120  
Carmel, IN 46032





**AVID**

Avid at Clay has begun the first step of the application process. Designated students came down for a celebration in their honor and to apply for the program. They found out that they were really all that and a bag of chips!



**12 DAYS OF MINDFULNESS**

The Coffee Bar was a HUGE HIT with Teachers and Staff, thank you all who donated. We will post photos of the "Fishing for Stillness" and "Create a Bouquet" events on social media as we get them.



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## 4-H GROWS HERE

### 4-H EXPLORATION NIGHTS

"4-H is an experiential program for youth in grades 3-12 (mini 4-H for grades K-2) that is delivered by Purdue University Cooperative Extension. 4-H stresses "Learning by Doing" and cultivating life skills such as cooperation, leadership, decision-making, and responsibility through hands on projects in over 60 different subject areas. 4-H welcomes young people of all beliefs and backgrounds while giving youth a voice to express who they are and how they can make their lives and communities better. Nearly 1,800 youth from Hamilton County are currently involved in 4-H and close to six million kids and teens worldwide and that is because 4-H has pivoted and adapted to today's changing world by providing a platform to promote individual growth by learning, doing and engaging."

Explore 4-H at the event at the Hamilton County 4-H Fairgrounds. To register <https://bit.ly/4HExplorationHamCo> or to learn more about 4-H visit <http://puext.in/hamco4h>.



*Give the gift of Exploration*

Looking for the perfect gift to give your kids this holiday season?

Explore 4-H on **December 2, 2020** or **January 12, 2021** anytime between 5:30 - 7:00 p.m. at the Hamilton County 4-H Fairgrounds and **give the gift of doing!**



For more information about 4-H got to [puext.in/hamco4h](http://puext.in/hamco4h)

#### 4-H EXPLORATION NIGHT: Passport to 4-H

Register at:  
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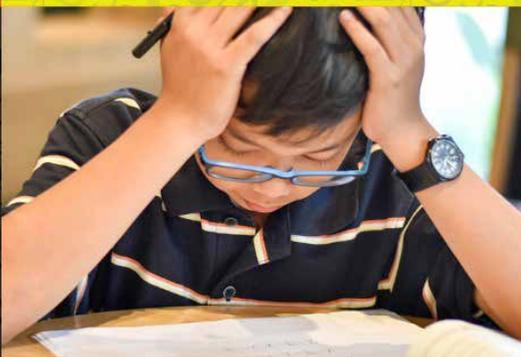
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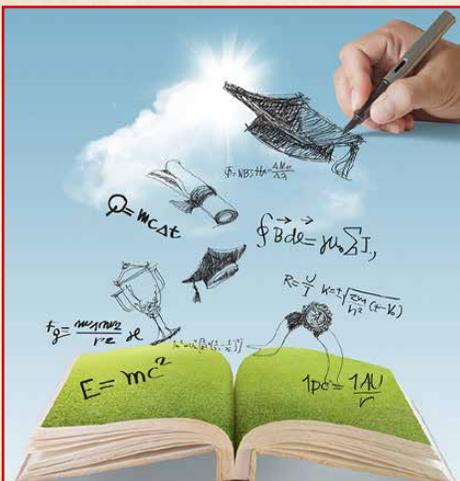




## 8TH TO 9TH GRADE SCHEDULING

The below are important dates to be aware of as we move into the 2021-2022 scheduling season. Should any questions arise, please contact Mrs. Janson at [mjanson@ccs.k12.in.us](mailto:mjanson@ccs.k12.in.us).

- **Before & After Winter Break:** Mrs. Skeens-Benton, Carmel High School Assistant Principal, will send communication to 8th grade parents regarding the freshman scheduling process and Virtual Academic Transition Night
- **January 4th:** 8th grade students are invited to the 8th Grade Scheduling CANVAS Course
- **January 5th-18th:** OCR (online course registration system) is open for 8th graders to enter course requests. All students need to have 12 requests entered (6 fall, 6 spring). High School counselors will pre-enter math courses prior to January 11th.



- **January 6th, 7th, & 8th:** Mrs. Janson & Mrs. Naas will talk with 8th graders (via Core+) about the OCR and entering courses
- **January 11th:** Academic Transition Night (Virtual)

\*Should a student or parent need to meet with a freshman counselor, more information will be coming from the high school on when these Zoom meeting dates will be held.

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## STUDENT SERVICES CANVAS PAGE

Clay Middle School's Student Services Canvas page serves to provide social emotional lessons, resources, and department contact information. Students wishing to sign up to meet with a counselor or social worker should do so through the CONTACT US link. Lessons can be found under MODULES including VIRTUAL STUDENT EXPECTATIONS geared toward providing tips to help students navigate online learning. Finally, we provide links to RESOURCES including a variety of community links under FAMILY RESOURCES.



Students should have accepted an invitation to the Clay Student Services Canvas page at the start of the year. Parents set to be observers can then view the page. If a student needs a new invitation, please email Mrs. Naas at [enaas@ccs.k12.in.us](mailto:enaas@ccs.k12.in.us).



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## ✓ Attendance

Please remember to call the school's Main Office (317-844-7251) or our Attendance Line (317-571-4450) for **ALL** attendance issues before 8:30am on the day of the occurrence:

### Full Day Absences

### Late Arrivals

If you are picking up your child early, please call the Main Office (317-844-7251) when you are on your way and we will call for your child to meet you in the office for you to sign out.




## Holiday Pops

presented by IU Health  
**Saturday, December 12**  
 3:00pm & 7:30 pm

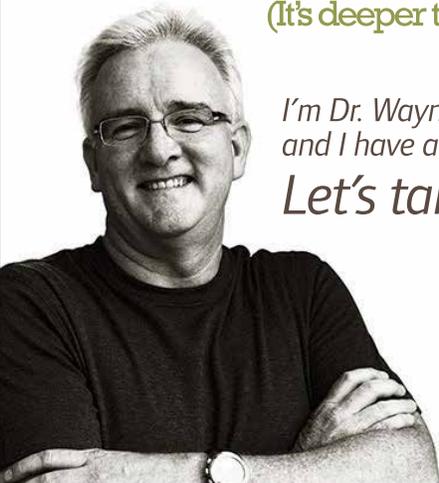
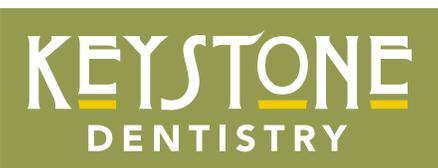
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The holiday season can be a time of joy and warm memories, but it can also be a time of financial strain. If you find that you or someone you know is in need of assistance this holiday season - food, toys, clothes, etc. - some helpful resources you can contact are Connect 2 Help (dial 2-1-1) and The United Way Christmas Service. The Good Samaritan Network is also a helpful resource - applications can be found online at [www.gsnlive.org](http://www.gsnlive.org), or by calling (317) 842-2603.

## CONGRATULATIONS

**Clay Middle School would like to recognize staff members that have received nominations to Carmel Education Foundation Educator Honor Roll.**

**Congratulations!** The following have been nominated to the **Carmel Education Foundation Educator Honor Roll**. This special honor is a person recognition from a student and/or their family recognizing the positive impact you have on the Carmel Clay Schools community!

### THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU DO TO MAKE CLAY GREAT!

Julie Collings	Rebecca Far	Jennifer Mehl	Robin Reinhart
Courtney Cooley	Emily Flores	Kristine Myers	Evan Snyder
Dana Disteldorf	Chris Grifa	Erin Naas	Steven Sturgis
Craig Dragash	Michelle Janson	Leyla Niese	Mary Walstrom
Madame Elliott	Erin Mayer	Chelsey Rasmussen	



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# 10 Building a Legacy of Greatness!

FINDING THE POWER OF **OUR** OUR STUDENTS... OUR PARENTS... AND OUR COMMUNITY

## TOP OF THE NEWS

Thank you PTO families for all of your support in 2020 - you've brought smiles and happiness to Clay Middle through your donations and time.

*We appreciate all you do!*



**THANK YOU** Mr. Crosby for doing the fun pie in face event as part of reaching our goal for the Champions

of Clay PTO fundraiser. If you are looking for end of year donations, you can still donate at the Clay PTO website at <https://www.ccs.k12.in.us/pto-clm/fundraising> and click on the PayPal button in the top left-hand corner.



## STAY UP TO DATE

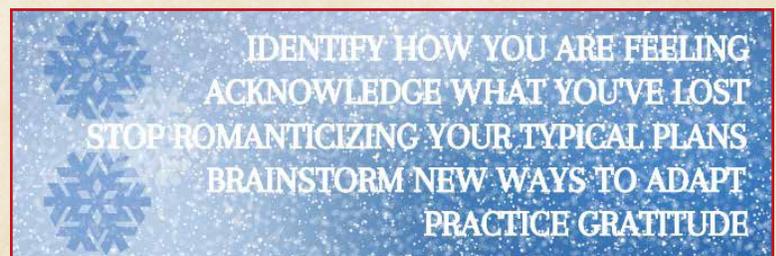
For up to date information, announcements, events and school happenings, please view the Weekly Announcements on our website or at the link below. Also, follow us on twitter @claytrojans.

[Weekly Announcements](#)

## SUPPORT OUR STUDENTS

### RESOURCES FOR SUPPORTING STUDENTS DURING THIS HOLIDAY SEASON AND A PANDEMIC

Resources for Supporting Students during this Holiday Season: <https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1WsnG7vo3Ck6kbU10OTsnZ7G7dx4FHArN58VuHgWiJW4/edit?usp=sharing/>.



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## MEDIA CENTER RESOURCES & NEWS



**BOOK DASH-** students can request books and have them delivered to their ELA teacher or virtual students may request lobby pick up.



**AUDIO BOOK ACCESS-** request access to our Tales2Go audio book subscription.



**PLACE BOOKS ON HOLD-** login to the Destiny Catalog to place holds on books that are **currently unavailable**. Books will be delivered to ELA classrooms or lobby pick up for virtual learners.



**LIBRARY CANVAS COURSE-** access databases for research, book talks, trailers, tutorials and more through the school website or the menu of any of your classroom canvas courses!



**eBOOKS-** Through our partnership with the Carmel Clay Public Library all CCS students are entitled to a CCPL card to access eBooks. If your child needs a card please have them pick up a form from the media center and return it to us.

**We are extending our borrowing time to 4 weeks temporarily.** Please encourage return or renewal after that time. **Students can login to the Destiny Catalog to see current checkouts, due dates and to create reviews.**

**We still need volunteers in the media center** to fill our roster. If you, or someone you know, is interested please contact our volunteer coordinator Angela Frazier at [claymediavolunteer@gmail.com](mailto:claymediavolunteer@gmail.com).

**HAPPY READING!**

## STUDENT SERVICES STAFF

<p><b>Kaleesha Thompson</b> Administrative Assistant</p>	<p><b>Kelli Grogg</b> School Psychologist</p>
<p><b>Michelle Janson</b> Counselor - All 6th Grade 8th Grade Team 8-2</p>	<p><b>Erin Naas</b> Counselor - All 7th Grade 8th Grade Teams 8-1 &amp; 8-3</p>
<p><b>Gina Potter, MSW, LSW</b> Social Worker - All 6th Grade 8th Grade Team 8-2</p>	<p><b>Britney Coats, MSW, LCSW</b> Social Worker - All 7th Grade 8th Grade Teams 8-1 &amp; 8-3</p>



## HOLIDAY SHOPPING: FREE WAYS TO BENEFIT CLAY!

Don't forget that when you're shopping over the holidays, these are FREE and EASY ways to benefit Clay Middle at no charge to you!



**A FREE & EASY way to raise money for our school!**

By signing up with the following link, Kroger will donate a portion of your shopping trips (when you use your Kroger Rewards card) directly to Clay Middle.

<https://www.kroger.com/account/enrollCommunityRewardsNow>

**School code is #RK877 for 'Clay Middle School'. Sign up now!**

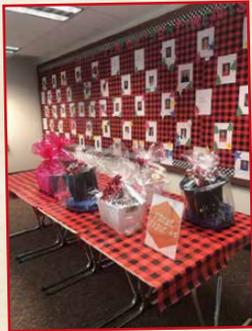
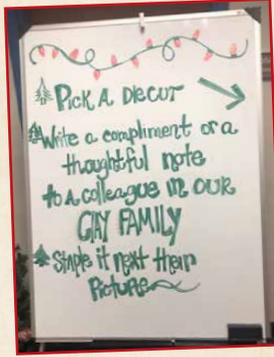
ClayMiddleparticipatesinAmazonSmile donation program! A portion of your purchases will be directly donated back to Clay Middle at no cost to you.

Please click on the unique link below to be taken to smile. [amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com/ch/23-7374823/), where you will be automatically asked to support the "Clay Middle School PTO". Our unique charity link is: <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/23-7374823/>.



# 12 Building a Legacy of Greatness!

FINDING THE POWER OF **OUR** OUR STUDENTS... OUR PARENTS... AND OUR COMMUNITY



CLAY NATION: WE WANT TO BE THE BEST AT GETTING BETTER