



The TUSCOLA JOURNAL

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Journal Entries

"Don't tell me sky's the limit when there are footprints on the moon."

Block Party & Outdoor Movie

The next Tuscola Public Library Block Party & Outdoor Movie will be Friday, July 19. The fun and games will start at 7 p.m., and the movie "Wonder Park" will begin at dusk.

License to Win

TCHS Alumni Cola Wars License Plates are on display! Did you forget to order yours? Don't worry; we still have some available for purchase. We will continue selling until they are gone – first come, first serve. Please contact Sherri Stewart at 217-549-8132 for details on how to get yours. They can be displayed on your vehicle through midnight Sept. 6, 2019, which is the date of the Cola Wars football game.

Correction

Chad Daugherty is an officer with the Douglas County Animal Shelter. This information was printed incorrectly in the Wednesday, July 10 edition of The Tuscola Journal.

Casting a Historic Vote

"Casting a Historic Vote: Suffrage in Illinois" will be presented at 12:30 p.m. Saturday, July 27 at the Douglas County Museum by Jeanne Shultz Angel, the executive director of the Nineteenth Century Charitable Association. Lunch will be served at 12:30 p.m. and the program will begin at 2 p.m. The cost is \$8 for museum members and \$10 for nonmembers; reservations are needed by Monday, July 22. The menu will include sloppy joes, baked beans, chips, and desserts.

Library Happenings

The weekly children's Story-Time will be 10 a.m. Tuesday, July 23 at the Tuscola Public Library. Other library events on deck include: Science Fun for children at 4 p.m. Wednesday, July 24, Travel Club-Puerto Rico at 5 p.m. Thursday, July 25, and a Tech Drop In from 2-4 p.m. Friday, July 26.

VBS at Forty Martyrs

Forty Martyrs Catholic Church will host Vacation Bible School "To Mars and Beyond!" from 9-11 a.m. July 22-26. All Tuscola children in kindergarten through six grade are welcome. For more information, contact the parish office at 253-4412.

34 Days!

Only 34 days before Tuscola students return to the classroom. With that in mind, online registration will remain open through July 31. In person registration will be Monday, Aug. 12 at the students' respective school buildings. Enjoy these dog days of summer 2019 before they slip away.

1989 graduate Alexander returns to Tuscola schools

By Kayleigh Rahn

It's no secret that Tuscola schools are busy places, even in the summertime.

Athletic teams are taking advantage of long summer days for workouts, tournaments and team outings. Construction crews, custodial staff, and educators are making quick work of relatively quiet halls to complete projects and ready for the 2019-2020 school year.

However, of all the hustle and bustle, one move may have a bigger effect on the coming school year than any other. New Tuscola schools superintendent Gary Alexander has moved into his office and is quickly finding his footing.

Alexander moved into the district office just one week ago, and he says he's happy to see the active buildings.

"It's been a busy few days, but any time you have kids in the building it's nice," he said. "I like summer, but I love when kids are in the buildings."

Alexander may have a new office with a new view, but the



Three things you may not know about Mr. Alexander

1. He is a cancer survivor.
2. The Albingdon, Ill. varsity basketball coach died on the bus while riding next to Mr. Alexander when he was serving as junior varsity basketball coach. The death was the result of a medical condition and was entirely unpreventable.
3. He is a proud Dance Dad, and loves every minute of it.

surrounding area is all familiar.

The 1989 Tuscola Community High School graduate was hired by the Tuscola board of education to fill the vacancy left by former superintendent Michael Smith.

When word of the open post reached his household, Alexander says he knew he needed to apply.

"I woke up one day and decided if I didn't apply I would regret it all my life," he said of the surreal homecoming. "I knew there were no guarantees, but I at least had to put my name in the hat to see where we could go. The Tuscola school system did me very well, even though I may not have taken full advantage of that when I was a teenager. I've since realized that. Now, I have an opportunity to give back to the community and school system that helped me along my way."

He said, of course, family also played a role in his decision to make the move home as he and his wife both have Douglas County roots. However, the move is a bit complicated for the Alex-

ander clan of six.

Alexander's wife Kristi works for SIU Medicine in Springfield as a developmental pediatric nurse.

"Of the two of us, she's the better one; she's truly really great at her job," Alexander admitted.

Add to that, daughter Jillian—the Alexander's youngest, who is a talented dancer and entering the eighth grade, a move to Tuscola is proving to be a gradual process.

"There was a lot going on, but we sat down to discuss it, and we felt this was a good family move," Alexander said. "(Kristi's) plan is to continue to work for Springfield; she will continue to make the drive. Our house is for sale in Pawnee, and for now I may be the only superintendent in the State of Illinois living with their parents. I have wonderful parents, so it's working well."

Once their home sells in Pawnee, Kristi, and the two youngest Alexander kids will make the move to Tuscola, a move teen

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Pictured is Darren Stenger's wheat field just west of Tuscola which was custom harvested by Justin Wierman of Atwood Wednesday, July 10. The combine is from Kuhn's Equipment in Arthur.

ROSC Council working to break stigma in Douglas Co.

By Kayleigh Rahn

One group in Douglas County says it's time to break the stigma surrounding substance abuse.

Since January, around 20 community leaders within the county have been meeting to exchange ideas and put those ideas into motion to help in the battle against substance abuse for a brighter, and sober, tomorrow in Douglas County.

Jenna Hays is the Recovery Outreach Coordinator at CEAD Council, and through her work she has been charged with leading the ROSC grant execution through five area counties—Coles, Cumberland, Douglas, Effingham, and Shelby.

ROSC stands for Recovery Oriented System of Care and is administered through the state's Department of Human Services, according to the IDHS website. It is a coordinated network of community-based services and supports that work to achieve recovery and improved health, wellness, and quality of life for

those with or at risk of substance abuse disorder.

"The idea is how can we gather community support for individuals and families who have either persons in recovery or need treatment or assistance with substance abuse treatment," Hays said. "There's been a lot of studies done that show when that population—because the drug and alcohol epidemic is so large, especially in rural areas—was addressed the crime rate, poverty, and under education rates decreased. So, in turn, when you help this population you in turn help your community, and that's the overall goal of the ROSC group."

In the initial meetings, the five counties sat together with more than 175 stakeholders, and Hays said the level of interest was telling of the problems these community leaders have recognized.

Douglas County has key stakeholders, which is a requirement of the grant, who have a presence in the county with the ability to make change, she said

Sheriff Joshua Blackwell, State's Attorney Kate Watson, Douglas County Health Department coordinator Summer Phillips, RISE Director Lauren Christina, Tuscola Fire Chief Brian Moody, and North Ward Principal Jason Wallace are just a few of the stakeholders who sit at the table for the county.

"We have made one-, three-, and five-year strategic plans for each county and what they feel the county needs the most," Hays said. "We felt we need to start trying to break down the stigma of substance abuse, addiction, and recovery. There are people in this county who have been in recovery for 20, 30, 40 years and you might not even know it, because they even still feel people aren't accepting of recovery. That has become the forefront of our strategic plan. We can't educate a community and we can't help the community until we can break down some of these barriers or they won't listen."

A tangible move ROSC has

made in Douglas County this year has been Chief Deputy Steve Pulom's idea to create recovery resource cards.

"He says the first question everyone has is 'where do I go to get help?' and no one knows who to call," Hays said. "He thought it'd be nice to have something to give to a mom or a person on a street that you know is suffering."

Douglas County Sheriff Joshua Blackwell says several county department leaders have met outside of the ROSC council to decide on the key issues.

"We're in the planning stages now, and I think the key issue has been transportation," Blackwell said. "We've made some good progress, but there is still work to be done with a community attitude. I think some people jump on the bandwagon thinking that they're addicts and forget that they are human, they are a family member and someone's loved one."

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Photo: Rachel Ray

Lyla Ray and Devin Stabler of Tuscola work on a puzzle during the Golden Apple Program Thursday, June 27 at North Ward Elementary School.



Photo: Rachel Ray

Renee Lyons works a puzzle with the help of Mr. Currie during the Golden Apple Program Thursday, June 27 at North Ward Elementary School.