

# ROCKET NATION

WITH DIANE DUCEY



On Saturday, February 7th at the Elks Club in Savoy, participants in the fundraiser for Catholic Charities were pleased to be a part of Bingo night!

Plenty of players won cash jackpots and other fun prizes as radio personality, Diane Ducey (also volunteers on the Catholic Charities Advisory Board) had players take part in quick activities between games (like "Heads or Tails" and Music Trivia) to try and win certificates from sponsors, a jacket and hat or Illini Tickets.

Baskets with gift cards, wine, whiskey and treats were won by the lucky person drawn from the buckets in front of that display, with a few "Valentine's" themed for their sweetheart.

Cookies, brownies & homemade cinnamon rolls were sold for a donation along with a 50/50 winner at the end of the night.

The St. Pat's Pantry coordinator, Jan Blaney, got up and explained how money was needed to help others in our community. Connecting people 55+ with the Second

Wednesday of the Month "Senior Luncheon" also provides social time and a nutritious meal for people who come to the parish hall (304 E. Vine in Tolono) between 11am-1pm.

Others have tapped into the Caring Companions (rides/deliveries) and Light of Hope programs (assisting a person one time if they are struggling to pay a bill).

To give, one can send a check to Catholic Charities from Champaign and Piatt Counties, P.O.Box 8937, Champaign, IL 61826



Mark Montgomery, the "caller" for bingo on Saturday, February 7 explained to the Catholic Charity members about how a person can visit the Elks Club three times before becoming a member and that they may want to try a first and third Tuesday of the month Bingo night at 6pm. Photo by Diane Ducey.

## 3 Ways to take Charge of your Health this Heart Month

American Heart Association's Nation of Lifesavers initiative calls on individuals: "You are the first responder until help arrives" Illinois — February 2, 2026 — More than 350,000 out-of-hospital cardiac arrests occur in the United States each year[1]. This February, during American Heart Month, the American Heart Association is calling on everyday citizens to be agents of change by stepping in as the first responder until professional help arrives.

Nine out of every 10 people who experience cardiac arrest outside of a hospital die, in part because they do not receive immediate CPR more than half of the time. In rural areas, where EMS response times can be longer, having individuals respond quickly with CPR and using an AED if one is available is key to improving outcomes from cardiac arrest. The American Heart Association, devoted to changing the future to a world of healthier lives for all, envisions communities where people don't wait for help—they become it.

The Association's Nation of Lifesavers initiative offers suggestions on how to take charge of your personal health and inspire a Nation of Lifesavers this American Heart Month:

Learn CPR and join the Nation of Lifesavers™. In Illinois, individuals and families can take an online or in-person CPR course, watch a 90-second video to learn Hands-Only CPR for adults or watch this video to learn how to save an infant or child using CPR with breaths. To learn more about CPR, including new CPR guidelines published in Circulation this fall, visit heart.org/nation.

Make a plan. During a cardiac emergency, a

well-developed plan could make all the difference. Don't wait for help, become it. Remember, you are the first responder until professional help arrives. A cardiac emergency response plan or (CERP) establishes specific steps to reduce death from cardiac arrest in any setting – be it a school, community organization, workplace or sports facility. Learn more about CERPs and find free resources at [heart.org/cerp](http://heart.org/cerp).

Get Local.

Join a local Heart Walk. Strong communities are built by preparedness. So check in. Lace up. Whether it's joining a Heart Walk team, taking a CPR class or making sure your office, school or church has a plan, now is the time to take charge of your own health and the health of your community.

Cardiac arrest can affect anyone, anywhere - at the gym, in the grocery store, or during a child's soccer game. However, bystanders only intervene less than half of the time, often due to uncertainty or lack of training. Yet CPR, especially if performed immediately, can double or triple a person's chance of surviving sudden cardiac arrest.

"In an emergency, bystanders don't need medical training to save a life.

All you need is knowledge, courage, and the willingness to act," said Dr. Heather Baker, a cardiac arrest survivor, CPR trainer and member of the American Heart Association's Midwest Region Board of Directors. "I've learned through the American Heart Association that cardiac arrest can happen to anyone. But it's also true that anyone can step up and save a life, whether it's a stranger or someone they love, by learning CPR and taking action in an emergency."

The goal of the Association's Nation of Lifesavers initiative is to turn bystanders into lifesavers, so that in the face of a cardiac emergency anyone, anywhere is prepared and empowered to become a vital link in the chain of survival and provide CPR.

The Association leads global efforts in public awareness, education and policy change, while also serving as the scientific authority that develops the official CPR and emergency cardiovascular care guidelines used by other CPR and first aid training providers in the U.S. and in over 90 countries worldwide.

To join the Nation of Lifesavers and continue to raise awareness during American Heart Month, visit [heart.org/nation](http://heart.org/nation). Nation of Lifesavers is nationally sponsored by Walgreens.

Take 90 seconds to learn how to save a life at [www.heart.org/nation](http://www.heart.org/nation)

About the American Heart Association

The American Heart Association is a relentless force for a world of longer, healthier lives. Dedicated to ensuring equitable health in all communities, the organization has been a leading source of health information for more than one hundred years. Supported by more than 35 million volunteers globally, we fund groundbreaking research, advocate for the public's health, and provide critical resources to save and improve lives affected by cardiovascular disease and stroke. By driving breakthroughs and implementing proven solutions in science, policy, and care, we work tirelessly to advance health and transform lives every day. Connect with us on [heart.org](http://heart.org), Facebook, X or by calling 1-800-AHA-USA1.

were named to the Dean's List:

Homer - Loran Tate  
Tolono - Kyler Williams  
Sidney - Kayla Nelson

Founded in 1850, Illinois Wesleyan is a nationally recognized, highly selective liberal arts university.

The University is exclusively undergraduate and enrolls approximately 1,700 students

from across the nation and around the globe.

Illinois Wesleyan prides itself on producing graduates who are well-rounded, broadly educated individuals with a spirit of inquiry who can successfully adapt to the demands of a rapidly changing, complex world.

# Rocket Rundown

By Olivia Witheft  
Student Writer  
Unity Boy's Basketball had a successful week. They started against Paxton's Panthers on Tuesday. The Rockets continued their winning streak and won 71-48. Then on Friday, they took on the St. Joe Spartans in a high intensity game that went into overtime. In the first half the Rockets were down four points, but in the second half the Rockets led in both quarters. The Rockets won 68-63 against the Spartans.

This week they play IVC on Tuesday and Pontiac on

Friday.  
Girls Basketball played PBL on Tuesday as well. The first half was close and PBL led by one. The Rockets fell behind in the second half and lost 53-46. They faced St. Joe on Thursday. The girls lost 45-57.

Next Tuesday is Senior Night, where the girls will go up against WLHS.

Track and Field had their first meet of the indoor season on Friday with promising results for the season. Here are some highlights: Emma Swisher placed first in the 60 meter and the 400 meter while Camden Fairbanks

placed first in the 800. Maddix Sutherland dominated the 60 meter hurdles with a personal record of 8.75 seconds and placed first. Both 4x200 relays placed third. Clint McCormick placed first in high jump and Ava Jones placed first in long jump with a PR. The team will compete again this Friday at the Army.

Girls wrestling had regionals on Saturday. Ava Beldo placed second and Phoenix Molina placed first. Both boys and girls will compete at Regionals this Friday and Saturday.

## Parkland College for Kids, DiscoverU Registration Opening Soon

CHAMPAIGN, Ill. — Parkland College is once again hosting summer fun and learning opportunities for area youth this summer, with registration opening soon.

College for Kids (CFK) is a two-week enrichment camp designed for children ages 6-13 to College for Kids explore, create, code, and imagine. With small, interactive classes, students can:

Engage in fun, hands-on STEAM-based learning experiences. Build friendships in a collaborative environment led by professional educators. Discover new interests while diving into both familiar and exciting new topics

Kids will be able to enjoy CFK favorites like Lights, Camera, Action; Kids in the Kitchen; Engineering with Legos; Messy Scientists; and Dungeons and Dragons. They can also explore new options designed to spark fresh interests and discoveries like Ju-



nior Archaeologist, Pet Club, Pet Safety, Woodworking, and even a Taylor Swift camp!

CFK camps for summer 2026 are scheduled June 15-25 and July 6-16. Sessions are 12:45-2:45 p.m. and 3-5 p.m. Classes are now open to preview at [parkland.edu/cfkRegister](http://parkland.edu/cfkRegister).

DiscoverU camps serve students ages 10-18. More information on individual

campers in June and July can be found online at [parkland.edu/duRegister](http://parkland.edu/duRegister).

Registration for summer 2026 CFK and DiscoverU camps opens on Monday, February 16 at 6 a.m. (new time).

For more information about CFK or DiscoverU summer camps, contact Community Education at [communityeducation@parkland.edu](mailto:communityeducation@parkland.edu) or by phone at 217/351-2235.

## EIU President Jay Gatrell Delivers EIU's Spring Update

New programs, strategic realignments, campus projects positioning EIU for enduring success

An assembly of Eastern Illinois University students, faculty and staff gathered this morning to hear EIU President Jay Gatrell deliver the University's annual spring update. Speaking to a crowd in Dvorak Concert Hall in EIU's Doudna Fine Arts Center, Gatrell offered updates and insight about a variety of EIU and higher education topics. Some highlights included:

The launch of Navigate 360-a system providing holistic early alerts that allows EIU to offer immediate support to students who need it most. Navigate 360 will modernize student communication, course scheduling, and advising, ensuring EIU's operations are as student-centered as possible.

EIU's "Firsts Hub" initiative, which will eventually comprise five student-focused spaces and resources across campus. The initiatives first offering, the First-Gen Hub, opened last fall in McAfee, and provides academic resources and engagement opportunities to first-generation students by connecting learners and leaders across divisions.

A new Associate of Arts Degree in General Studies, anticipated to begin in Fall 2026 following IBHE approval. EIU's A.A. in General Studies degree program is specifically designed to assist former bachelor-seeking EIU students who left the University prior to earning a degree.

Gatrell provided an update on EIU's updated academic footprint moving forward. After gathering more than 20 proposals and collecting collaborative feedback in a process that began nearly a year ago, Gatrell indicated the University is intentionally prepared to move forward by merging the College of Education and the College of Health and Human Services; by creating more closely unified Schools-one encompassing English and World Languages, one incorporating Communication, Journalism and Theatre; one containing Engineering, Mathematics, Computer Science, and Physics; and one coupling the School of Art + Design with the Tarble Museum of Art-and by combining a handful of congruent departments within existing EIU Colleges. Gatrell said the decision mirrors similar models at several of EIU's peer

institutions. Most importantly, Gatrell added, taking these actions will preserve all of EIU's existing program and degree offerings while ensuring a minimum of eight faculty members and full-time administrative support for each updated area, saving the University more than \$540,000 in annual administrative costs.

Those savings are necessary, he explained, and a result of EIU's budget and current enrollment fluctuations being so closely interconnected. While EIU's consistent growth in domestic undergraduate, graduate, and transfer student populations continue to offset what has become an increasingly competitive higher education environment, federal policy shifts affecting international mobility have created immense downstream impacts on every university's ability to recruit and retain international students. Both are ongoing challenges driven by factors external to and beyond EIU's control, Gatrell said, before indicating that Eastern's proactive positioning today will reinforce Eastern's longstanding commitments to student success and provide every student a holistic, engaging EIU experience on their way to lucrative personal and professional careers. Research shows that a degree from EIU, on average, translates to nearly \$2 million in additional lifetime earnings, creating opportunities for enhanced financial stability in a new and dynamic global economy.

Gatrell also shared that EIU continues to make progress on campus infrastructure. A new fiber loop last fall improved continuity of operations and enhanced EIU's campus network, the Thomas Hall remodel is expected to begin in 2026-27, a concept for creating a Pemberton Hall Welcome Center is moving forward, and a groundbreaking is on the horizon for EIU's new, integrated Sciences Building as the project advances to the bidding phase. EIU's President expressed gratitude to the State of Illinois for its partnership on current and upcoming projects, and looks forward to strengthening an EIU-State of Illinois alliance that provides more than \$371M in economic output, over 4,500 regional jobs, and \$53M in annual public revenue.

Panther Athletics continues to excel both in competition and in

the classroom, Gatrell said. This fall, EIU Volleyball claimed the OVC Regular Season and Tournament Championships, advancing to the NCAA Tournament, with several coaches and student-athletes representing EIU Athletics earning various recognitions and awards in the fall. More than 100 student-athletes achieved a perfect 4.0 GPA, and 75% of all student-athletes maintained a GPA above 3.0, he said.

Finally, Gatrell thanked the generosity of EIU's donor network. With their assistance, EIU's Board of Trustees recently named Frost Field in recognition of Harry and Gladys Frost, whose philanthropy made it possible to play baseball under the lights for the first time in EIU's history at Coaches Stadium. He also extended his thanks to the Gardella Family for championing EIU's volleyball program, with Gardella Family Court at McAfee Gym preparing for additional off-season improvements. Gatrell also applauded the University's Advancement team for EIU's next comprehensive fundraising campaign.

Gatrell became the 12th sitting President of Eastern Illinois University in July of 2023. Himself a first-generation college graduate, he understands firsthand the impact EIU has on students who are given the opportunity, tools, resources, and professional connections they need to succeed.

"Eastern Illinois University's mission is to transform lives-by preparing students to lead, supporting the people who serve them, and driving cultural and economic vitality across the region," Gatrell said after delivering his address. "EIU does so much more than educate students; we shape futures, strengthen communities, and play an integral role in creating a thriving Illinois."

### PUBLIC NOTICE

**NOTICE OF SELF STORAGE SALE**  
Please take notice Savoy Self Storage located at 116 E Church St, Savoy, IL, 61874 intends to hold an Auction of storage units listed below to enforce its privilege against the following parties at the facility for default of payment of Rent. The sale will occur as an Online Auction via [www.storage-reasures.com](http://www.storage-reasures.com) on 2/26/2026 at 11:00 AM. Heather Martin unit #104; Khalid Shawkat unit #109; Danielle Chenoweth unit #114. This sale may be withdrawn at any time without notice. Certain terms and conditions apply. 6095-961604 published 02/04, 02/11/2026