

Thinking about the Varney family, supporting all our kids



For Wednesday, December 23

Hit the GLIC!

The [Grade-Level Information Center](#) has information that is relevant for each class.

An index and archive for this year's weekly [Mustang Minutes](#)

Our Daily Announcements to our students

[Our website](#)

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Grieving the passing of student-leader Sophie Varney, thinking about her family

Junior Sophie Varney passed away last weekend, after a long and courageous struggle with an inoperable brain tumor. (Her passing was not COVID-related.) Sophie was a thoughtful student, strong Student Council officer, and intense and successful softball player here. Through her journey with Diffuse Intrinsic Pontine Glioma, or DIPG, over these last two years she inspired us with her courage, perseverance and grace. All of our thoughts and prayers are with the Varney family, her friends, and all of her teammates that were so positively impacted throughout her life.

If you had not had an opportunity to know Sophie, Patrick Nothhaft of the Kalamazoo Gazette did a terrific job of telling her story a couple of years ago. Click this [link](#) to learn more about this incredible young lady and the effect she had on those around her.

Whenever we lose a member of our community, we have to be mindful of all our daughters and sons

Over the many years we have been blessed to work with PC students, we have learned that when we lose one of us, many of us struggle. And it is not always who we expect. Sophie's parents and

brothers are wonderful and strong people who will appreciate every ounce of support we all can give them. Likewise, her friends need our care so they can grieve in ways that are helpful for their long-term health. And, sometimes our kids who did not know the young person we lost are also affected. So we would ask that all of us as parents and caregivers be mindful of how our kids are responding, so we all can give them the support they need. And know that you are not alone; we are here for you and our community has many resources that can help in difficult times like these.

- Sometimes it is hard to tell if one of our children is struggling or not. Here is a description of the [signs and symptoms](#) to watch out for, as well as ways you can help.
- [Here](#) is a collection of recommendations and advice given parents who have helped their sons and daughters through similar, difficult times.
- Over the years we have been so grateful to have Gryphon Place as a community partner. Colleagues there provide support for folks struggling with grief and loss. The Gryphon Place helpline open anytime; please call (269) 381-4357. This county-wide, confidential helpline is there to support families' needs 24 hours a day, seven days a week. And this organization provides [a host of other services](#) as well.
- We are also fortunate to work with [Integrated Services of Kalamazoo](#), and their colleagues also help members of our community through times like these. Among other supports, they provide through online tools to keep everyone safe during the pandemic.
- Our counselors will be back at school and available to support students following the Holiday break.

Again, when PC families are in need...

The PC community responded in a huge way -- and we are so grateful

Families donated nearly \$4000 so that we could buy Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners for our families. Then [Off the Cuff Catering](#) stepped in to help even more! Indeed, after the dust settles, we will likely have some resources left over, and those will be used thoughtfully in the weeks and months ahead for our families who need additional support during this difficult time. Plus, we had thousands of pounds of food donated by parents and students at our Community Garden, and all of that was delivered to the Portage Community Center to help all folks throughout our community.

At the risk of sounding like an emotional old man, words cannot convey how thankful we are for the support and kindness you all have given. I am not surprised: our community has always risen to the occasion when we have needed to. And, we are so, so grateful.

Restarting our in-building support

Starting January 4th, we are hoping to be able to allow students who do not have internet access to come in for In-Building Support. In order to give us the best chance to keep this program operating for those students who need it most, we are asking students who are able to stay home and remain academically successful to do so. Don't forget to hit this [link](#) to sign up for this support. Thanks for this.

Last call to get the less-expensive yearbook cost...

2021 Yearbooks on Sale for \$75 through December 25! A Roundup yearbook is a great gift idea! You won't want to miss out on the chance to buy this keepsake of this special year that's one like never before. Go to yearbookordercenter.com and use school code 3604 to purchase yours! While there, you can order a Senior Book for \$12, too. Price of the main yearbook increases to \$80 on December 26. Not sure if you have ordered one yet? You can look that up at yearbookordercenter.com, too!

Hoping all is well for you and those you care for, during this Holiday season,

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And if you want even more PC news...

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