

Nailing the future

Students get out of the classroom and learn trade skills.

By: Allison Steffen
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This school year has been new in so many ways. There have been so many new things that some don't get the spotlight they deserve. One of those things is the flip house.

The flip house is a house in Marion that some of our very own classmates are remodeling. The idea came from Mr. Semler many years ago. Semler and Janelle Brouwer, our superintendent, connected with Nick Flew from MEDCO (Marion Economic Development Corporation). After multiple years of planning and figuring things out, the project was set into motion this year.

This is the first year that our district has done a true flip house, but Mr. Fleege's predecessor worked on 27 new houses in his teaching career. This project is not only good for the students in our Building Trades class here at the high school because they gain experience in various trades, but it also benefits the community. After a house is finished, it's sold to a low-income family who needs a home.

The money to even renovate the house in the first place comes from the city. MEDCO asked the city for a certain amount to use to cover the cost at the beginning of this project. The profit made from the sale, if any, is put aside for renovations of next year's flip house.

With six Marion students and three Linn-Mar students, those working on the house hope to finish it by June 10th. Fleege said, "The nine students working on the house have been doing a great



Two students work on the Flip House's roofing.

job and come every day ready to work and learn something new." One of those students being Nathan Jones, a senior.

Jones has been working on the house since the beginning of the school year and has learned many things. It's one of his favorite aspects of helping with this project. So far he has learned about siding, flooring, drywalling, mudding, and how to frame. He also enjoys working on the house with his friends, but it's bittersweet.

"The hardest part of working on the house is it is 60 years old and a lot of things were done incorrectly making the class a good challenge," said Jones. With there being so many things to fix, Nathan is frustrated with the amount of time per day he has to work. The class works on the house during 4th block. Giving them only an hour and a half to work a day.

While there are ups and downs, the people involved with the flip house are constantly persevering, working hard, and learning new things. The overall goal is being met every day. That goal being, "... a great experience for the students to learn how to do multiple trades in construction and gain skills to help them remodel their first house in the future," said Fleege.

Hidden heroes

By: Mila Van Weelden
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Thirty-seven and a half hours a week, 1,600 kids, 1,600 hundred meals. For five days straight, food is prepared and served to students without question, but how often are the people that provide this food thought of?

Lunch ladies are the hidden heroes of schools. They work tirelessly in the kitchen to provide healthy yet enjoyable meals to students. Brenda Caraway has been working for the school for 20 years. She is the director of the districts food services, so she is involved in all five

buildings. "I like to cook, and I love visiting with the kids," said Caraway. Debbie Grosskreutz is the assistant manager at the high school who has been a school cook for 32 years. Grosskreutz said, "The kids are my favorite part. Definitely the kids."

Sadly, being a cook for the school isn't all sunshine and rainbows. At the high school, there is very little to no air conditioning. This leads the kitchens to get extremely hot. There are no windows in the kitchen which means no air circulation. When five ovens are going, the temperature starts to climb and it climbs fast. "It's all you can think about. We have to try to talk about the food and getting it to the kids but you are all thinking 'I want to get out of here,'" said Caraway.

For the cooks, the government restrictions can also be particularly frustrating. The restrictions and guidelines in place prohibit them from making what they truly want to make. "I want people to know that we try

our best. There are guidelines, and we can't do what we really want to do. We are restricted. We wish people would understand we are not serving whole-grain things because we want to. It is mandated that we have to. We have to do the healthy choices. So when they go 'Ew, yuck.' it kind of hurts our feelings," Grosskreutz said.

While there are negatives about the job, there are also many positives for the school cooks. To start, their utilities are about to get an upgrade. "We are getting some new equipment this year which is huge for us because school foods service pretty much has to support themselves.

The school helps us somewhat but we're supposed to be self-sufficient and that's hard," said Caraway. Having the proper equipment is crucial for an efficient kitchen. It helps make things run smoother and overall creates a better environment.

Over the years, there have been many oppor-

tunities for students to be unkind and ungrateful. This year has been different. Caraway said that students in general have become more kind as the years went on. Using more of their manners- please and thank yous. She said that even with all the changes this year, students have stayed gracious. "There have been years where we didn't get please and thank yous. Sometimes even fellow staff treat us as though we are less than," she said.

The food service team works hard to please students while staying within guidelines and staying healthy. Next time you come across one of these assiduous people, try and take 30 seconds out of your day and thank them for all they do.



Brenda Caraway serves lunch to a student during one of the four lunch cycles.