



Serving the Children of the World

The Nugget

Golden K Kiwanis Club
Decatur, Illinois

Club Officers 2025-2026

President: Tom McQuiston **President Elect:** Dick Virgin **Vice President:** None

Secretary: Lynda Durnil *Asst. Secretary: Roberta Williams*

Treasurer: John Baird *Asst. Treasurer: Karen Sivils*

Directors:

Cheryl Boss, Joel Hawkinson, Pat Riley, Cathy Sebok, Kathy Thompson, Sally Williams

Past President: Harold Wilkinson

Regular Meeting each Wednesday at 9:30 A.M. at Salvation Army Reception Hall

January 28, 2026

God Bless America /Pledge of Allegiance / Kiwanis Pledge: Ron Black

Invocation: Mark Avery

Piano: Larry Wade

Mike Runners: Kyle Anderson, Dan Sebok

Photographer: Joel Hawkinson

Program: John Baird introduced Ashley Grayned, Executive Director of Innovative Programs & Strategy Planning, Leslie Risby, Innovative Programs Supervisor, & Ragged Qatoum, student at Millikin. There are opportunities to mentor one of these students. Go to www.dps61.org/PrepMentor.

Overview

- **Prep Academy** is a DPS–Richland Community College partnership enabling students to earn a **high school diploma + an associate degree (61 credits) at zero cost.**

- **165 active students** across four cohorts now; **25** graduated (May 2025) and **22 of 25** transferred to 4-year universities.
- Program scalability: **50 more incoming freshmen** to be admitted (application opens district-wide next week) and an annual cohort graduating cadence established.
- **Funding & access:** District education fund covers the core costs and Heart of Illinois Foundation raised **>\$400,000** to cover tuition, books, trips, devices and program supports.
- Strong student outcomes and supports: average cohort GPAs **3.1** (first graduating cohort) and **3.66** (current cohort), weekly grade checks, mentors, college transition supports and bus transport to campus.



Program structure & timeline

- Freshmen take **6** high school classes; only dual credit: Student Development **101** (1st semester) and **102** (2nd semester).
- Program limits freshman dual-credit to ease transition into dual-credit rigor.
- Sophomores remain on high-school campus; take **5** high school classes plus **2** dual-credit classes each semester taught by high-school teachers hired as Richland adjuncts.
- Juniors and seniors transition to Richland campus; juniors attend high school half-day and are dismissed around **11:00 AM** to travel to Richland by bus or car for dual-credit classes.
- Program provides college experience preparing students for university-level study; student Regan reported a seamless transition to the Richland campus.

Student support & mentoring

- Program provides a MacBook to support dual high-school and college learning; college mentors serve as high-school tutors.
- Program conducts weekly grade checks; continuation GPA requirement is **2.75** (many students achieve **3.5–4.0+**); expectations for behavior and attendance enforced.
- Roadmap by year: freshman mostly high-school with dual credit each semester; sophomore includes early-university (early-bird) exposure; junior mornings at high school and afternoons at Richland with twice-weekly study hall staffed by the dean and dual-credit coordinator; senior mornings at Richland and afternoons finishing DPS classes.
- Cohort outcomes: cohort two had **34** students; **3** students completed high school and their associate degree in **December** and are in senior internships.
- Mentoring/community: each student paired with an adult mentor; mentors asked to check in (**100** sites a month) with brief in-person visits (homeroom, lunch); program has **165** active students and is adding **50** more.

Health Report: Cathy Sebok – none

Attendance: Lynda Durnil

45 members 3 speakers 1 guest 49 Total

Dick Virgin – word of the week – apthotic – pitch black, darkest dark
Linda Rowden guessed the meaning.

Dick Virgin – Guess the Kiwanian – Don Wenneker guessed correctly that Gary Goeken was the person!

Announcements:

Cheryl Boss – There will be a Kids Invite Someone Special breakfast at Franklin Grove on February 12. She'll need volunteers from 7:45-11:00. Signup sheet available now.

- From Kyle Karsten – volunteers and donations are needed for MRI's Night to Shine, Friday, Feb. 13, GT Church. Cheryl has info if interested.
- From Susan Rayhill – 9 volunteers served 137 hot lunches yesterday at Good Samaritan. 45 cold lunches were given out and 4 children were served.

Dan Sebok – Feb. 21, 7:30 pm, Winter Formal Dance (St. T. Key Club). Note change of date. They could use donations of water, candies, cookies, desserts. You could bring to our meeting on the 18th or drop off at St. T.

- There is one Charity Mania ticket left!

Roberta Williams – has ordered some L & XL GK sweatshirts, \$15. Let her know if you want one

Dick Virgin – **we're going to ask all members to take part in an anonymous survey until next Wednesday, Jan. 28.** The link is below. This is to get information about how you feel about the club. **You will be able to click on a link until 9pm tonight (Jan 28) to complete it.** This is a local survey, not from International. It only has 24 questions & you can go back while taking it to correct any answer (before you hit "submit"). 45 surveys have been completed. **See more information below.**

Tom McQuiston – Reminder - complete the survey today by 9pm.

Key Club Updates:

St. Teresa Key Club: Planning a Winter Formal on Feb. 21st, 7:30 pm.

Dates to Remember:

2/1/26 Golden K Dues 2nd installment due

2/8/26 Careage House meal

2/9/26 Board meeting, Central Christian, 1 pm

2/12/26 Franklin Grove Special Someone breakfast, 7:45-11:00am, volunteers needed

2/17/26 Trauma Doll workshop, Police Benevolent Hall, 8-1pm, lunch included

2/24/26 Good Samaritan Inn, 11-1pm

Birthdays & Anniversaries: Kevin Cleary

Birthdays: Jerry Pelz, Pam Smith, John Alley

Anniversaries: None

** Due to a directive from International we are not to publish personal information.

Things your dad always told but you didn't want to hear: Some people will believe anything if you whisper it!

50-50 Drawing: Pat Riley did not draw the Queen of Hearts. The \$175 rolls over. Get your tickets!

Up Coming Programs:

2/4/26 Lacie Elzy, City of Decatur, topic: Future of Transportation and Economic Development in Decatur

2/11/26 Jami Fawley, Decatur Arts Council

2/18/26 Mark Scranton, Lincoln Square Theater

2/25/26 Clay Gerhard, Decatur Park District

Ongoing Projects

- Collecting Food Coupons for the military - Cheryl Boss
- Collecting clean plastic caps & lids for school benches & tables - Paula Luckenbill
- Collecting pop tops for Ronald McDonald House, Springfield - Paula Luckenbill
- Turn in hours to Karen Sivils - **itcpa96@gmail.com**, estimate #children helped
- Kiwanis clothing - Roberta Williams
- Golden K board meetings - 2nd Monday each month, 1:00 pm, Central Christian Church
- Decatur Lakeside 9/11 Memorial Flagpole and Flowers

Wednesday Donations

1st – Food Bank

2nd – K.N.R.F.

3rd – School Support

4th - Trauma Dolls

5th – Scholarship Fund

Speaker ideas...if you have an idea for a Golden K speaker, please let John Baird or Mark Avery know.

Golden K Kiwanis Member Survey

Members of Golden K, the link to the member survey is below. **It is open only until 9pm tonight (Wednesday, Jan. 28).**

All information is anonymous and results will be shared with the Board and the club.

If you would like assistance in completing the survey, please communicate with Mark Avery at: illinixctf1978@gmail.com or call/text to 217-520-3752.

If you send him a message, make sure you include your name and the best way to get back to you.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BRN2HNF>

Story for today: Ron Black

Bob was thrilled when his company gave him a free ticket to the Super Bowl! But his excitement faded when he arrived—his seat was way up in the nosebleeds, closer to the Goodyear Blimp than the field!

Halfway through the first quarter, he noticed an empty seat 10 rows from the field, right on the 50-yard line! Taking a chance, he snuck down and asked the man sitting next to it, “Excuse me, is anyone sitting here?”

The man shook his head, “No.”

Bob, now grinning from ear to ear, said, “This is unbelievable! Who in their right mind would have a seat this good at the Super Bowl and not use it?!”

The man sighed, “Well, actually, the seat belongs to me. I was supposed to come with my wife, but she passed away. This is the first Super Bowl we haven’t been to together since we got married in 1967.”

Bob felt terrible. “I’m so sorry... But couldn’t you find anyone—a friend or relative—to come with you?”

The man shrugged, “Nope... They’re all at the funeral.”

Editor: Linda Thomas, lthomasxq@aol.com, 217-454-2605

Substitute Editors: Lynda Durnil & Roberta Williams

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Golden K at Lids Workshop Jan. 22



Golden K at Good Samaritan Jan 27

Click to view meeting

<https://www.youtube.com/@GoldenKKiwanisofDecatur>

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100071723247020>