



TITAN TIMES

RUTHVEN-AYRSHIRE COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Back to School is a Great Time for a Fresh Start



They say the livin' is easy in the summer time. Which is why back-to-school time is a great time to consider a fresh start or a restart to some battered habits. With the change of work and school schedules, travel, vacations and a more laid-back atmosphere, many find that their eating, fitness, sleeping and overall health and wellness habits have taken a hit. There is no need to wait for the new year. As families prepare for sending kids back to school, now can be a good time to refresh your habits.

The school year means a new start for some staff at R-A and you can learn more about them in this issue. Readers can also gain some advice on refreshing their workout routine.

For students, the transition from school break provides a chance to create new habits that will lead to a successful and worthwhile school year.

Mrs. Amy Sikora says that routines for children are very important. "It's important for them to go to bed on time and to get up on time," she said. "Try to have meals together when possible. It can be hard, but working on a regular evening schedule really helps. It is also helpful to check the backpacks each night to see that they are ready to go and that they have what they need for the next day."

"Returning to a bedtime and early wake routine is important," adds Mrs. Brandie Malm. "Often in the summer, children stay up later and sleep in. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, it is recommended that children ages 3-5 years get 10-13

hours of sleep, including naps. Those 6-12 years old need 9-12 hours of sleep and 13-18 year olds should be getting between 8-10 hours.

"Another important skill to practice is teaching younger students how to use their backpack and lunch box. Most elementary students can open and shut their personal items with little to no help. Make sure they know how to open everything in their lunches.

"Older students will want to include a sturdy backpack when picking up their supplies. Middle school and high school students often carry books and their Chromebooks to classes. They need a strong quality backpack. They can also never have too many pencils.

"Students can be practicing tying their shoes. This is a skill that we hope students can do independently by the middle of kindergarten.

"Students that are starting at a new school or are nervous about meeting a new teacher can find comfort in reading books

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AUGUST 2022

about school. Reading to children or with children is one of the best things parents can do for their children's education."

Ms. Melanie Williams agrees with much of that advice. "My advice for the little ones is to start practicing school routines at home before school starts.

"Have a consistent bedtime and wake up time. Have your child practice getting ready in the morning. If your child brings lunch, it's also helpful for them to practice opening the lunch box and other containers they might use. Reading books to your child is always a great idea!"

When it comes to middle school and high school students, Principal Jon Josephson says there are three important aspects to success: great attendance, a good attitude, and a strong work ethic.

Superintendent Marshall Lewis says that safety is another topic that parents should talk about as a family before heading back to school.

"This is the perfect time to practice safety awareness with students as you prep for the start of the school year," he said. "As families, and as a community, we need to take care of each other. If a student hears something, or sees something they don't think is right, they should tell someone. We want them to feel comfortable to let an adult know about the situation."

Keeping students and staff safe continues to be a top priority for administrators. Lewis says there are and always have been frequent discussions about safety efforts and protocols.

"Parents should understand that things like restricted access to the building may be an inconvenience, but it all comes down to the safety of the kids and others.

"We will look at effective ways to protect students, but really it is the students and community that have the best chance of seeing or hearing things. It is important that we talk about anything that makes us feel unsafe or uneasy. Having regular conversations about safety and safe habits will keep students aware and help them to feel more comfortable in talking about it. We are always concerned about safety and security. So, let's just get used to communicating about it."

The first day of the 2022-23 school year is Tuesday, August 23. The day will begin with the traditional Opening Day exercises including the flag-raising ceremony at 8:30 a.m.

The ceremony will be in front of the school. In the case of inclement weather, the exercises will be held in the school gymnasium.

The ceremony will start with the Presentation of the American Flag by the American Legion and the Presentation of the Iowa Flag by the Legion Auxiliary. The flags will be raised by students with the National Anthem and Pledge of Allegiance. The ceremony will close with dismissal by Mr. Lewis and the school song.

Building Refresh

Over the summer, many areas of the school building got a refresh. New carpet and tile was installed in several classrooms, the main entrance was enhanced, and bathroom stalls were upgraded. For technology, there were improvements made to the network and server and additional interactive display boards were installed in classrooms. Pictured below is the Family Consumer Science Classroom.



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Meet the New Staff at R-A

Bailey Quarnstrom

Position: Middle School/High School Social Studies teacher

Experience: I have taught high school social studies and Spanish for 12 years, most recently at Pocahontas Area Community School District.

Education: I graduated from Buena Vista University and am currently completing a masters at Northwest Missouri State University.

Making the choice for R-A: I'm really looking forward to the variety of classes I will teach at Ruthven-Ayrshire. I'm also excited to have small class sizes and the opportunity to work together in different activities.

Enjoys most: I most enjoy getting to know about the perspectives of my students as we learn and discuss new topics. It's so interesting to understand their thoughts and where they are coming from as they learn more skills and figure out who they are and what they want in life.

One thing you will tell students as part of your introduction? I'm so excited to get started this year! In my spare time I like to walk outdoors and ride my bike. I also really enjoy reading and baking.



Katie Tomason

Position: Paraprofessional

Experience: I have worked at Exceptional Opportunities for the last 7 years and with that experience there will be similar and different experiences that have helped prepare me for my current position.

Education: High School/ Community College for Vet Assistant

Making the choice for R-A: I have been living in Ruthven with my husband and daughter for the last two years. I've been interested in working in a school setting for some time. With my experience it's a good fit to join and help the school community.

Enjoys most: The reward of seeing the smile on the kid's face that I've been able to help and also getting to see the kids enjoying school and learning.

One thing you will tell students as part of your introduction? If you have a dream, chase it!



Racheal Fogarty

Position: Paraprofessional

Experience: I have worked with children since I was 11. I have worked in child care centers and at Forest Ridge

Education: Early Childhood Diploma

Making the choice for R-A: When I interviewed, I felt like I had worked at this school for years. It's also closer to where I live, which is Emmetsburg, and I have always loved school even when there were times I struggled.

Enjoys most: I enjoy seeing children have the smile on their face when they have achieved their dreams and helping them achieve those dreams.

One thing you will tell students as part of your introduction? That I am enjoying helping others learn and achieve success and excited to be here.



Chris Conlon

Position: School Business Official

Experience: Banking internships

Education: University of Northern Iowa, Financial Management

Making the choice for R-A: GTRA has a "family" feel to it. I loved the opportunity to come back to the community and help out our schools.

Enjoys most about finance: I enjoy crunching numbers, making budgets, and following the trends of accounts.

Enjoys most about R-A: I enjoy getting to work in each of the schools.

One thing most people may not know: I am a big Lord of the Rings and Oldschool Runescape nerd.



Mona Rosdail

Position: 4th grade teacher

Experience: I began teaching in a self-contained 5th grade classroom in Tuba City, Arizona. Once I returned to Iowa, I began teaching in Spirit Lake, beginning in Title I/Reading Recovery, many years in 1st grade, and most recently in Transitional Kindergarten (TK).

Education: BA and MAE from University of Northern Iowa.

Making the choice for R-A: I was drawn to Ruthven-Ayrshire when I realized how happy people are that work here.

Enjoys most: I enjoy seeing the light in a child's eyes when he/she comes to understand something and feels capable.

One thing you will tell students as part of your introduction: My favorite color is orange and I love chocolate.



A Restart or a Fresh Start to Fitness Habits



Some families may find that the summer break and changes to a normal routine have made it difficult to work in regular fitness efforts. For those, or others who are just considering getting started on a new fitness plan, Mr. Adam Mickelson provided a tour of the R-A fitness center and offers advice on building up a routine.

He is the physical education and health instructor at R-A and encourages those getting started with an exercise routine to begin with simple stretching, squats and techniques that use your own body weight.

"The worst thing you can do is start out with too much weight or overdoing it. Work with different muscle groups and separate the areas you are working on," he said. "For example, you can alternate the different muscle groups while still keeping your heart rate up. That is the goal which will ultimately make your resting heart rate lower. A healthier heart beats less often."

At-home workouts can include utilizing anything around the house that has a little bit of weight to increase muscle strength. Purchasing weighted vests, wrist weights or other items that don't take up much space as well as dumbbells are good options.

"Walking is one of the first things we do in PE each year. It is the perfect exercise. You can control everything while you walk. You can talk with friends or listen to music. On a treadmill at home, you can set

a goal to walk a mile or two and it will keep track of your workout. There are lots of ways to do something you enjoy while getting exercise.

"Anytime you start a routine it has to be something you want to do. Find a fun way to do it. It doesn't have to be an hour a day. Thirty minutes a day is really all it takes. After a few weeks, it becomes routine and is a regular part of your day," said Mickelson.

Parents should be thinking about helping their kids to get regular physical activity. "Parents should be thinking about how to work in regular physical activities for their kids. It could be a walk or a bike ride or finding something as a family to do that is active. It is a chance to spend time together and make memories together as a family. Childhood obesity is a huge deal. Limiting screen time and encouraging something active is better for them. The kids that are active, also enjoy trying new activities. For kids that aren't use to being active, they don't want to participate."

"The worst pain is having pain from not being active. Kids can have a chance to learn teamwork and find success in participating in activities."

In his health class, he teaches freshmen about the importance of eating healthy and making



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healthy choices when it comes to things like tobacco. "We also encourage them to be an example to their friends.

Students can struggle with these choices. They see things on social media and there are many influences outside of school."

The fitness center at R-A is used for some PE classes. It is open to the public with a paid membership.

"I recommend talking to a health care provider before starting an exercise program. Find out what you can and should be working on. Make sure it is the right thing for your personal health. Then, I encourage people to try something, even if it is simple. Try it a few times a week and then build from there. It could be yoga, or use online resources to try something new. Just do something."



Mickelson says even beginners can learn to use the weight machine because it provides graphic images and instructions. This machine can help work different muscle groups and is easily adjusted to the user needs.



According to Mickelson, the machines can make a work-out easier by assisting the user and helping them learn what muscle groups are being worked. Some also provide ways to work different muscle groups on one machine.

Treadmills and elliptical machines can track results and provide custom programs for a workout.

A user can start slow on a treadmill and learn to increase the speed and the incline or use one of the programs to add more challenge.

There is a radio and television in the center available for those using the equipment.



R-A Fitness Center

Single membership: \$100/yr.

Family: \$150/yr.

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For details, contact: 712-837-5212 during school hours or 712-260-3212 after hours.

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Sikora Moves out of 4th Grade to Teaching Adults

Amy Sikora has been in the classroom for 30 years. Starting as a substitute in Northwest Iowa, she became a long-term 3rd grade sub at Sheldon in 1992. That was followed by teaching second and first grade. In 2001, she married her husband, Mike, and made the move to Ruthven.



She started teaching as an adjunct instructor for Buena Vista University at their campus locations in Emmetsburg, Spencer and Estherville. In 2006, there was a 4th grade opening at Ruthven-Ayrshire and she has filled the position since then.

This year she leaves her 4th grade classroom and takes on the role of Master Teacher for GTRA.

"I was a mentor teacher for six years and worked with adults in the past. When I got here, I was on the leadership team for many years before the mentoring program started. I was interested because I like working with adults and curriculum and trying to make sure that we are getting done what we need to," she said. "I was a little hesitant about leaving the classroom, but I was ready for a change. I will miss the one-on-one time and doing reading groups. I am getting excited. We have the new math curriculum in K-12 this year. We are evaluating a new reading curriculum also. I am looking forward to getting our curriculum tightened up so our buildings are closely related."

A master teacher in an Iowa school is part of the Iowa Instructional Framework that calls for an Individual Growth Plan for all certified teaching staff.

Sikora's responsibilities will be to plan and coordinate the professional development programs for staff at all three building locations. Subjects will fall under the environment domain and along with Sikora, mentors will work with staff to achieve their individual goals. Professional development topics will include Illustrative math curriculum, new reading curriculum, social/emotional curriculum, Positive Behavioral and Interventions Support (PBIS), data and assessments and computer science.

The new reading curriculum is being evaluated by a group of elementary instructors from both the Terril and Ruthven buildings and being led by Curriculum Director Michelle TeGrootenhuis.

"We started with research that was done by Mr. Myers. We are looking at the pros and cons of the curriculum. We want to add phonics embedded in the program. Ruthven already has EL phonics but Terril would need to add it."

Patience was the one thing she learned from her 4th graders that she will bring with her as a master teacher. And, she has learned from experience that working with adults requires understanding that they all have different skills and many do not like change. "We need to be respectful of the things they know and we need to make change comfortable and not overwhelming."

"The professional development programs at GTRA have helped to bring the staff in all three buildings together," she said. "The students were already used

to working together in the classroom and other shared programs. For the staff, working together on development has made us more cohesive.

"Setting aside specific time for professional development is important. If we don't have specific time, it is very hard for teachers to grow professionally. Their days are very busy. Having specific time, such as the early out on Wednesday has a lot of value. We should all have a growth mind-set just as much as kids do. Not everyone is in the same place for understanding data and curriculum, so as we work together it does lead to staff growth."

The Sikoras farm and have two children – Joel, a junior at BVU in Storm Lake and Adam, a freshman at UNI.

"It will be a change in our house, especially cooking, but I am excited for them in the next step of their lives."



HOME PLATE

Peanut Butter Muffins

Great for after school snacks or breakfast on the run.

1-3/4 C. flour	2/3 C. peanut butter
1 T. baking powder	1-1/4 C. milk
1 egg	5 T. butter, melted & cooled
1/2 C. light brown sugar	1 t. vanilla

Heat oven to 400°. Prepare muffin tins by lining with paper cups. Whisk the flour and baking powder until combined; set aside. In a large bowl, whisk the egg until lightly beaten; whisk in brown sugar and continue whisking until smooth and pale, about 2 minutes. Whisk in peanut butter, then stir in milk, melted butter, and vanilla. Use a wooden spoon to stir in the flour mixture until incorporated. Do not over mix. Fill muffin cups three-quarters full. Bake for 20 minutes or until lightly browned. Cool on wire rack for 10 minutes before removing from muffin tin. Will stay fresh for up to two days at room temperature or up to three months in the freezer. May add 3/4 cup of milk or white chocolate chips to the flour.

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Before a scrimmage June 28, the GTRA high school baseball team and coaches took to the mound with guest pitcher Bill Lee of the Savannah Bananas and guest catcher Blaise Jacobsen of the Jackson (MN) Bulls.

Lee is the legendary former Boston Red Sox and Montreal Expos left-handed pitcher of the 1970s and 1980s. At age 75, he is a current showman and active player with the traveling Savannah Bananas out of Savannah, Georgia. During the summer, the Bananas compete in the Coastal Plain League as a summer collegiate team, and out of season conduct barnstorming tours across America.

DATES AND TIMES

Friday, August 19

8 a.m. Teacher Professional Development
5 p.m. Volleyball Gatorade Scrimmage at Home
7:30 p.m. Football Gatorade Scrimmage at Home

Monday, August 22

8 a.m. All staff professional development
5 p.m. RA Open House
5:30 p.m. Volleyball JV vs. West Bend-Mallard at Home

Tuesday, August 23

8:15 a.m. First Day of School

Thursday, August 25

5 p.m. Volleyball Triangular at Lake View

Friday, August 26

7 p.m. Football vs. Kingsley-Pierson at Home

Monday, August 29

5:30 p.m. Volleyball JVR vs. multiple schools at Newell

Wednesday, August 31

2:30 p.m. Early Out

Thursday, September 1

4:30 p.m. Cross Country B/G at Milford
5 p.m. Volleyball Triangular at Lake City

Friday, September 2

2:30 p.m. Early Out

7 p.m. Football vs. Glidden-Ralston Away

Monday, September 5

8 a.m. No School - Labor Day

Tuesday, September 6

4 p.m. Football JH vs. West Bend-Mallard Away
4 p.m. Volleyball JH vs. West Bend-Mallard at Home
5 p.m. Cross Country B/G at Estherville
5:45 p.m. Football JV vs. West Bend-Mallard Away

Thursday, September 8

5 p.m. Volleyball JVR-JV-V vs. West Bend-Mallard at Home

Friday, September 9

7 p.m. Football vs. Northwood-Kensett at Home

Monday, September 12

4 p.m. Football JH vs. North Iowa Away
4 p.m. Volleyball JH vs. St. Mary's Away
5 p.m. Cross Country B/G at Emmetsburg
5:30 p.m. Volleyball JVR vs. Manson-NWW Away
5:45 p.m. Football JV vs. North Iowa Away

Thursday, September 15

4 p.m. Volleyball JH vs. West Bend-Mallard Away
4:45 p.m. Cross Country B/G vs. Sioux Central Away
5 p.m. Volleyball JVR-JV-V vs. Sioux Central at Home

Friday, September 16

8 a.m. No School
7 p.m. Football vs. North Iowa Away

Saturday, September 17

9 a.m. Volleyball Varsity Tournament at Home

Monday, September 19

5:45 p.m. Football JV vs. Bishop Garrigan at Home

Tuesday, September 20

4 p.m. Volleyball JH vs. H-LP Away
4:45 p.m. Cross Country B/G at Humboldt
5 p.m. Volleyball JVR-JV-V vs. West Bend-Mallard at Home

Wednesday, September 21

2:30 p.m. Early Out

Friday, September 23

7 p.m. Football vs. West Bend-Mallard at Home

Saturday, September 24

9 a.m. Volleyball vs. Alta-Aurelia Away
Monday, September 26
4 p.m. Football vs. Newell-Fonda Away
4:30 p.m. Cross Country B/G at Algona
5:45 p.m. Football JV vs. Newell-Fonda Away

Tuesday, September 27

4 p.m. Volleyball JH vs. H-LP at Home
5 p.m. Volleyball JVR-JV-V vs. Pocahontas Area Away

Wednesday, September 28

2:30 p.m. Early Out

Friday, September 30

7 p.m. Football vs. H-LP Away
Saturday, October 1
9 a.m. Volleyball vs. ELC Away
10 a.m. Cross Country B/G at Pocahontas

Monday, October 3

4 p.m. Football JH vs. H-LP at Home
5:45 p.m. Football JV vs. H-LP at Home

Tuesday, October 4

4:30 p.m. Cross Country B/G at Eagle Grove
5 p.m. Volleyball JVR-JV-V vs. ELC at Home

Wednesday, October 5

2:30 p.m. Early Out

Thursday, October 6

4 p.m. Volleyball JH vs. Sioux Central at Home
5 p.m. Volleyball JVR-JV-V vs. Alta-Aurelia Away

Friday, October 7

7 p.m. Football vs. Bishop Garrigan at Home

Monday, October 10

4 p.m. Football JH vs. North Union at Home
4 p.m. Volleyball JH vs. Emmetsburg at Home
4:30 p.m. Cross Country B/G at Forest City
5:45 p.m. Football JV vs. North Union at Home

Tuesday, October 11

5 p.m. Volleyball JVR-JV-V vs. Emmetsburg Away

Wednesday, October 12

2:30 p.m. Early Out

Thursday, October 13

5 p.m. Volleyball JVR-JV-V vs. Southeast Valley at Home

Friday, October 14

7 p.m. Football vs. St. Edmond Away

Saturday, October 15

9 a.m. Cross Country B/G, V-JV Twin Lake Conference at Gowrie

Monday, October 17

4 p.m. Football JH vs. West Bend-Mallard at Home
5:45 p.m. Football JV vs. West Bend-Mallard at Home

Wednesday, October 19

2:30 p.m. Early Out

Friday, October 21

4 p.m. End of First Quarter

Monday, October 24

8 a.m. Begin second quarter

Tuesday, October 25

2:30 p.m. Early Out
3 p.m. Parent-Teacher Conferences

Thursday, October 27

2:30 p.m. Early Out
3 p.m. Parent-Teacher Conferences

Friday, October 28

8 a.m. No School

Wednesday, November 2

2:30 p.m. Early Out

Wednesday, November 9

2:30 p.m. Early Out

Wednesday, November 16

2:30 p.m. Early Out

All activities subject to change.
Spectator guidelines vary
by location. Please view our
website for updates.



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Andy Geelan part of a family string of Ruthven Grads

Flip through the shelves of yearbooks in the school library and you will see a long string of Geelan names. One of those families belongs to Andy Geelan, a 2016 Ruthven-Ayrshire grad.

His dad, Pat, graduated from here in 1972 and his mom, Kristi is a 1985 grad. Adding to the list are his siblings: Bill-2006, Matt-2007, Lynn-2008, Mark-2010 and Tommy-2019.

"I am proud to have that last name," he said. "There is a lot of good history with that name. It is cool to have connections around the community. It is a great thing to have the family support."

Andy says he loved growing up with an extended family in Ruthven and he is very happy to be back in the area where he can enjoy spending time with family.

"I love my family and I love having the chance to be back here where we can spend time together."

After graduation, he headed off to college although he was unsure exactly what it was he wanted to do. "I had no idea what I wanted to do. I looked at what my siblings had done and tried to figure out what I could do."

A friend suggested he visit his family business in Norfolk, Nebraska, Brockhaus Funeral Homes. "I ended up liking it and I worked with them for a year and a half. It turns out that it was something that was a really good fit. I like to work with people and I like the service aspect. I graduated mortuary science school in March of this year and took my national boards after that."

He is now doing an internship at Martin-Mattice Funeral Home working with Alan and Tracey Mattice.

"I just love it," he said. "It is a really good fit for me. It is great to be back home. I know a lot of people and I hope they feel they can trust me. I think that brings a lot to the job."

"I enjoy the work a lot. I think it has been a calling for me. I have the gifts that allow me to be sociable and I try to do my best to serve. I am grateful to be here. Al Mattice is a genuinely good man and cares about people."

Geelan not only jumped into a new career, he also just got married to Kayla who is a 5th grade teacher at Emmetsburg, and they purchased a home that they are renovating.

"As I think back to my school days at R-A, I think what stands out is the community part of it. You can get an education and learn in many different environments, but not everywhere you go that you know your teacher's first name. I have been to my teacher's house for a meal with other students. In sporting events, the community supported us and you don't get that everywhere. The Ruthven community supports the school. It is a great thing. The staff



cared about us and they gave us a quality education. I felt like I was well-prepared when I started college."

While at R-A, Geelan's main activity was basketball, although he also spent some time participating in football, baseball and golf.

Andy has a little advice to current seniors who may not know what they want to do. "I am a man of faith, so my advice would be to turn to the Lord and seek his counsel. It's a tough thing to navigate. I would also suggest being adventurous and trying out different fields of work."

You won't find him on Facebook or other social media. "For my own life, personally, it is important to me to foster intentional and genuine relationships. It's important to me to make phone calls or to see people face-to-face. I find myself being more productive and doing things that will make the future Andy a better person."

Learning
Today for
Living
Tomorrow

Newsletter published by the Ruthven-Ayrshire Community School District. Articles and photos by Connie J. Reinert, Beyond Broken, unless otherwise noted.

