

## October 2023 Governing Board Brief

### Remembering Uriel Garcia Vanegas



The DHH Program at Hersey High School recently suffered a sudden and tragic loss. Uriel Garcia Vanegas was an 11th-grade student from District 211. His teacher, Pamela Wechman-Mueller, shared the following about him:

*Having Uriel in my class these past few years reminded me of why I became a teacher in the first place. He was curious, challenging, stubborn, smart, and energetic. Every day, I had to figure out ways to keep him interested in learning and he made me a better teacher and person.*

*He loved to tell stories, pull pranks, and make everyone laugh. He was so excited to start the new school year and proud to be the only student to come to school on the first day with all his school supplies.*

*He wanted people to think he was tough and indifferent, but he had too big of a heart to fool anyone. He was a kind and gentle soul who brightened every room he entered. He had the best smile and laugh.*

*My favorite thing about Uriel is that he embraced and included everyone. He was confident and never afraid to meet new people. He always entered my classroom saying hello or good morning. He was friendly and social; he made our students feel cared for and important.*

*Uriel shared his life with me and others in such an open and honest way. He did not pretend to be anyone other than Uriel. He appreciated any help he received and always expressed how he was feeling. He was thoughtful, mischievous, polite, goofy, fun-loving, creative, energetic,*

*talented, and a pleasure to know. He was one of the main reasons I looked forward to coming to work and I will miss him every day.*

## October Shooting Stars - Timber Ridge Scholarship Recipients



We want to thank everyone who participated in the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Timber Ridge Golf Outing held on June 3, 2023. It was a great way to relax and have fun while helping to provide support to special education students who are entering their journey into their post-secondary education. The Timber Ridge Golf Outing benefits our Timber Ridge Scholarship Fund, which provides past Timber Ridge students who have successfully completed their high

school education, a financial start to begin their vocational and college futures. Over the last 12 years, we have raised over \$60,000, of which we have awarded 17 students scholarships to attend an educational institute of their calling.

A special shout out to the Timber Ridge Scholarship Committee: Officer Corey Dugan, Michael Wagrowski, Nancy Milne, Rachel Suarez, Matthew Barton, Alex Flasch, Kasey Gandenberger, Aileen White, Brianna Taylor, Kaitlyn Roscoe, Kylie Extin, Gina Lozano, Megan Cordes, and Rachel Weber. We would also like to recognize Beth Anne Ausnehmer, who helped coordinate and helped us gain access to local businesses for their donation(s) towards our Scholarship Fund.

On behalf of our Timber Ridge Scholarship Fund, the Scholarship Committee wants to especially thank the NSSEO School Board for your ongoing support, which has carried our students through their elementary and high school years and beyond, from what is to what is possible!

It is with much excitement we honor Dylan Warner, who is a former District 21 student and Nicolette Lembke, who is a former District 26 student. Both graduated from the Academy at Forest View, District 214. They have accomplished no small feat but rather a product of hard work and the culmination of significant effort one goal at a time. What they have learned both academically and socially has become a part of them in a million ways, helping to guide them through life. It is their compass to go by. Dylan and Nicolette, we appreciate the magnitude of what you have accomplished and the power you hold as you move forward. All of us celebrate you, your accomplishments, plus the exciting path and opportunity that lies ahead as you enter into your post-secondary educational journey.

Dylan will begin his journey attending Harper College, where exploration and path-finding are at hand. Nicolette will begin her journey attending Harper College, then enter into a vocational training program to pursue a career in welding. We want to congratulate Dylan and Nicolette on their recent high school graduation. It is with great pride that we honor you for your achievements, for the many achievements yet to come, and for being this year's Timber Ridge Scholarship Recipients.



Dylan Warner  
- District 21 & District 214 Graduate



Nicolette Lembke  
- District 26 & District 214 Graduate

### **NSSEO School Safety Plan Update -**

NSSEO has an established NSSEO district-wide Safety Committee which includes NSSEO staff, first responders, community agencies, parent participation and a representative from the NSSEO Governing Board. An essential role of our committee is to continually assess, plan, develop, and audit safety solutions. New safety measures being adopted by NSSEO this year include updating our NSSEO School Safety Plan, integration of the School Safety Plan with the Crisis Go app, and the establishment of a Parent Information Site.

In 2007, NSSEO adopted a Standardized School Safety Plan. In alignment with the Illinois State Board of Education requirements, this plan is reviewed and updated annually with representatives from our local fire and police departments. This year, NSSEO is in the process of updating our plan in alignment with the I Love You Guys response protocol endorsed by the Arlington Heights Police Department and adopted by several of NSSEO member districts.

## I Love You Guys Foundation

It was a tragedy that launched the I Love You Guys Foundation. Ellen and John-Michael Keyes started the foundation after losing their daughter, Emily, during the Platte Canyon High School shooting. Emily sent a text to her parents that day saying, "I love u guys." Soon after, Ellen and John-Michael Keyes turned their focus to bringing together schools, families, communities, government entities and other organizations in an effort to increase the safety of students and staff.

The graphic is a black rectangular box with white text and icons. At the top, it reads "I LOVE YOU GUYS FOUNDATION" in large, bold, white capital letters. Below that, it says "Standard Response Protocol" in a slightly smaller, bold, white font. The main content is organized into five columns, each with a circular icon, a bold label, and a descriptive subtitle. The icons are: a purple circle with a white door and a diagonal slash (HOLD), a blue circle with two white hands (SECURE), a red circle with a white padlock (LOCKDOWN), a green circle with three white figures holding hands (EVACUATE), and an orange circle with a white figure under a roof (SHELTER). The labels "HOLD", "SECURE", "LOCKDOWN", "EVACUATE", and "SHELTER" are in bold white capital letters. The subtitles are in smaller white capital letters: "SOFT LOCKDOWN (MEDICAL EMERGENCY)", "HARD LOCKDOWN", "EVACUATION (POSSIBLE RELOCATION)", and "SHELTER IN PLACE". In the bottom right corner, there is a small pink and white logo for "i love u guys FOUNDATION".

<b>HOLD</b>	<b>SECURE</b>	<b>LOCKDOWN</b>	<b>EVACUATE</b>	<b>SHELTER</b>
SOFT LOCKDOWN (MEDICAL EMERGENCY)		HARD LOCKDOWN	EVACUATION (POSSIBLE RELOCATION)	SHELTER IN PLACE

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i love u guys  
FOUNDATION

The "I Love U Guys" Foundation's programs for crisis response and post-crisis reunification are used in more than 45,000 schools, districts, departments, agencies, organizations and communities around the world. They are created through the research-based best practices of school administrators, psychologists, public space safety experts, families, and first responders.

Another update to NSSEO's safety procedures is establishing NSSEO's Parent Information Site. In partnership with the Arlington Heights Park District, NSSEO has identified the Arlington Ridge Center as a place where our parents would gather and access critical information during a crisis.

## Harvest Fest at SLOEC

It is among the most exciting times for our NSSEO families and students. The 7th Annual Harvest Fest takes place on Saturday, October 28th, and is jam-packed with good fun for all ages! Pumpkin carving, hot chocolate, apple cider making, archery, hiking, music, hotdogs, s'mores, and our colossal trebuchet, where we can launch pumpkins into the lake

with the right amount of teamwork. This is the first of two special events hosted by our Sunrise Lake Camp and all our family and friends are invited to enjoy the festivities.



NSSEO's Seventh Annual 

**2023**

# Harvest Fest

**October 28th**  
**11:30am - 3:30pm**

**Sunrise Lake Outdoor Education Center**  
**401 S. Route 59, Bartlett, IL 60103**

FOOD | PUMPKIN LAUNCHING | PUMPKIN CARVING | HIKING | MUSIC  
APPLE CIDER MAKING | ARCHERY | S'MORES



Food will be provided - corn on the cobb, hotdogs and apple cider.  
If language translation support is needed please contact:  
Bryan Bolger - [bbolger@nsseo.org](mailto:bbolger@nsseo.org)



## Heartbeat of the Week is Back

NSSEO Heartbeat of the Week, Kari Benjilany



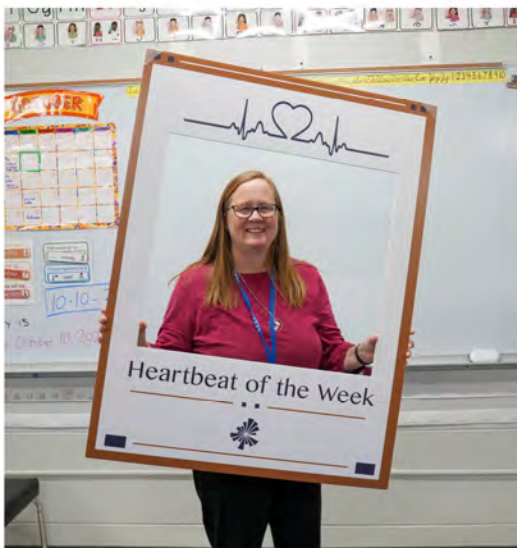
“Kari is consistently going above and beyond for her students. She creates a safe space for her students and is their perfect sounding board. I am constantly impressed with her ability to handle difficult situations. During these situations, she shows empathy and compassion while staying honest and true to who she is. She is exactly what her students and staff need!”



### NSSEO Heartbeat of the Week, Roman Sentowski

“For being a sub, it seems like he has worked for NSSEO for years at Sunrise. Emailing and calling Member Districts to schedule their visits, along with NSSEO classes, is just one of the essential components of Roman’s job. Trying to help plan the perfect day for as many individuals he has never met sometimes can be challenging - especially when he doesn't know the students' abilities.”

### NSSEO Heartbeat of the Week, Terri Bernstein



“Terri is one of the most hard-working people I know. She always takes on more than she needs to and always has the students and her co-workers in mind. She frequently takes her time to help navigate problems or issues in our DHH program. She is so thoughtful, kind, smart and just an extraordinary person. I am blessed to have worked with her all these years.”

## NSSEO Heartbeat of the Week, Alana Pickard



“Alana goes above and beyond a regular teacher. Her passion for each of her students and staff is extraordinary. She cares about each student and seeks ways to help her students and families inside and outside school. Alana’s charisma and her dedication make her even more special.”

### Continued Focus on Recruitment and Hiring

NSSEO has continued the recruiting and hiring efforts and there are still a few available positions for the upcoming year that are posted for the upcoming 2023-24 school year. [Click this link to check out any job vacancies.](#)

### Upcoming NSSEO Events:

Literacy Night @ Timber Ridge

Harvest Fest @ SLOEC

Halloween

Governing Board Meeting @ Miner School

### Date/Time

10/26/23 @ 6:00pm - 7:30pm

10/28/23 @ 11:30am - 3:30pm

10/31/23

11/1/23 @ 7:00pm

### Making a Difference

NSSEO continually seeks ways to expand partnerships with parents, districts, community leaders, and legislators to join together as a community committed to deepening understanding and positively impacting NSSEO students and families. To learn more about how to make a difference, visit us at [Make A Difference](#) as well as on our social media platforms:

Twitter

[@NSSEO\\_org](#)

Facebook

[@NSSEO](#)

Instagram

[NSSEO\\_org](#)