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News

'Do good in the world': St. Edward students hold day of service to mark school shooting anniversary



Emma Altergott pushes Nick during a game of "musical squares" Thursday at Marklund Wasmond Center in Elgin, where she and fellow St. Edward Central Catholic High School students held a "Wave of Service Day." Altergott is a sophomore at the Elgin school. (Rick West/Daily Herald)

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Rick West

Posted August 27, 2026 2:34 pm

On the anniversary of a dark day, students and staff from St. Edward Central Catholic High School set out to bring a little light into the world.

The Elgin school held a special “Wave of Service Day” at nine area nonprofits Thursday in remembrance of and in solidarity with Annunciation Catholic School in Minnesota on the first anniversary of a shooting that took the lives of two students there.

On the morning of Aug. 27, 2025, a 23-year-old gunman opened fire on students and staff attending an all-school Mass at the Minneapolis school. Eight-year-old Fletcher Merkel and 10-year-old Harper Moyski were killed, and at least 21 other children and adults were wounded.

The two schools share more than their Catholic faith in common — Annunciation Principal Matthew DeBoer is a 2004 graduate of St. Edward.



St. Edward Central Catholic High School juniors Khloe Sheppard, center, and Mariah Clay-Young react Thursday during a remote control car race as they volunteered with residents, including Lisa, left, at Marklund Wasmond Center in Elgin. (Rick West/Daily Herald)

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DeBoer visited his alma mater in the spring and also sent students a video this week thanking them for their support and prayers. On his visit, he told current St. Edward Principal AnnMarie Woj-Dufelmeier that the best thing the school could do to mark the difficult anniversary was to “bring peace and light to the

world.”

So that’s what they did.

Over 210 students and staff participated in Thursday’s day of service, supporting Food for Greater Elgin, Cal’s Angels, Boys & Girls Clubs of Elgin and South Elgin, Phil’s Friends for Hope in Wheaton, FISH Food Pantry of Carpentersville, Feed My Starving Children, the Gail Borden Public Library and Marklund Wasmond Center.

“I think what’s most important to me is that our students go out into the world and they’re good people,” Woj-Dufelmeier said. “That’s what servant leadership is about. Our goal is to connect students with our own community and give them opportunities to do good in the world.”

At Marklund, about 50 students and staff played games outside with residents, something that normally wouldn’t be possible since each resident needs one-on-one attention.

“This is a huge, huge opportunity for them to have time with the students, play games and be outside,” program director Jeannie Stefanik said. “And this will last for them. They’ll be happy for the rest of the day. We’ll see smiles, and everybody will be in great moods.”

Dawn Lassiter-Brueske, Marklund’s chief communication officer, said it’s a “win-win” when students come to volunteer.

“It’s new faces to see and to interact with. (The residents) love seeing the young people come in,” Lassiter-Brueske said. “They have a lot of energy, so our residents take in that energy, and they enjoy the day, and just being with these guys. And hopefully they make connections and the kids can sign up and be regular volunteers.”

Each student paired up with a Marklund resident, pushing their wheelchairs from game to game and engaging with them for about two hours.



St. Edward Central Catholic High School senior P.J. Tinajero celebrates with Marklund Wasmond Center resident Amanda after winning a water cannon battle. (Rick West/Daily Herald)

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Senior PJ Tinajero partnered with resident Amanda during a water cannon battle.

“Me and Amanda are really smoking the competition,” he said. “She’s really awesome.”

Tinajero said he wants to be a firefighter one day. He said having community service opportunities like this “means a lot.”

“It’s nice to be able to come out and just help everybody,” he said.

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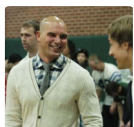


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Tom Zbikowski and Robbie Gould square off for second time when St. Patrick faces St. Viator

Tom Zbikowski was back on a familiar field last weekend, when his St. Patrick team played at Rolling Meadows. During his high school days at Buffalo Grove, Zbikowski was one of the most electric subur...

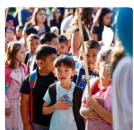
Hoffman Estates man dies after being pulled from Lake Michigan

Cook County authorities have identified a 22-year-old Hoffman Estates man as the person who died Wednesday after being pulled from Lake Michigan on Chicago's North Side. Tirith J. Patel was pronounc...



'We're building family': Harper College's new Fire Academy cohort makes history

For nine weeks this summer, students in Harper College's Fire Academy learned to pull hoses, raise ladders, force open doors and navigate smoke-filled rooms. The 16-student cohort graduated Aug. ...



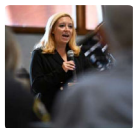
Students return to upgraded classrooms, facilities on first day of school in U-46

Overcoming first-day jitters, thousands of students returned to classrooms Thursday across Elgin Area School District U-46, ushering in the new school year. Roughly 33,000 students in kindergarten thr...



Four Northwest suburbs, DuPage County get \$5.8 million for infrastructure upgrades

Four Northwest suburbs and DuPage County will benefit from infrastructure projects enabled by nearly \$5.8 million in federal funding presented Thursday by U.S. Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi. Des Plaines Ci...



How a suburban prosecutor hopes to close the technology gap with online predators

Despite her success in prosecuting child exploitation cases — 93 of them since she launched a special unit dedicated to the task in 2022 — Kane County State's Attorney Jamie Mosser acknowledges ...

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