

# EMPOWERING EDUCATION

## Students Lead the Way

When Lafayette Catholic School System (LCSS) implemented a new classroom strategy pairing all seventh through 12th graders with a MacBook, a talented group of students volunteered to assist with deployment.

That was just the beginning.

Today, approximately 12 students comprise LCSS's technology team, which provides tier 1 support for peers, teachers and administrators. A sampling of services:

- Installs computer cables
- Handles device management and technology training
- Creates tech boot camps
- Develops online curriculum for students
- Teaches younger students (kindergarten through sixth grade) how to use iPads
- Assists parents in installing home content filters
- Coordinates before and after school support
- Edits videos (LCSS promotional videos and United Way campaigns)



Members of the Lafayette Catholic School System's technology team (David Rebmann, right) spoke to an international audience in the fall of 2018 about their experiences with FileWave's mobile device management system.

"Along the way students can earn high school credit for working the technology support desk and participate in paid internships over the summer," shares Jeffrey Botteron, director of learning design and technology.

Purdue University freshman Nate Kerr founded the tech team as a seventh grader in 2014. "It gave me a chance to fulfill a passion and learn more about technology while being able to help people," he comments.

High school freshman David Rebmann aspires to be a filmmaker or work in a profession that involves video creation. He joined the team two years ago.

"I know that (for) the next step, I'd like to start a small business during the summer to help other kids learn how to use certain programs. Help them make videos so they can become more familiarized with that sort of thing. The school really gives me a lot of opportunities to not only practice, but also put myself out there."

Botteron contends that the program generates substantial savings.

"The school system itself benefits from this summer help to configure the devices, but also during the school year when the kids are working the tech desk. Typically that would be staffed by probably a \$40,000 employee plus benefits and so on. Here, we've got students stepping up into that role and allowing us to reallocate money that would otherwise be going into the tech program."

But best of all, he asserts, is that the students "figure out how to do the majority of this on their own because they're simply empowered to do so."

**RESOURCE:** Jeffrey Botteron, Lafayette Catholic School System, at [www.lcss.org](http://www.lcss.org)

## Defying the Odds

Growing up, Raven Osborne loved to "play school" with her stuffed animals and beloved family dog. Today, the 20-year-old is a reading interventionist at 21st Century Charter School in Gary.

"I work with kindergarten through fifth grade," she remarks. "I like how I have contact with almost every child in the school and how I can develop relationships with all of the kids."

In 2017, she graduated from 21st Century Charter School with a high school diploma – two weeks after earning a bachelor's degree from Purdue University Northwest in sociology (with a minor in early childhood education). An associate degree from Ivy Tech Community College came first.

Her mother and late grandmother are lifetime role models. "There were several times I wanted to give up, but my mom was a big motivation for me," she recalls.

21st Century Charter School assists students by paying 100% of college tuition, covering textbook expenses and providing transportation. Students take a college preparation class over the summer between their eighth and ninth grades. Topics range from study habits to time management and self-discipline.

"Because they're getting that kind of experience, they're building their own confidence level and their own knowledge of what it means to be a college kid," stresses Kevin Teasley. He's president of Indianapolis-based GEO Foundation, which manages and supports 21st Century Charter School.

"At her (Raven's) graduation at Purdue, I had several kids come up and say, 'I want to do what she did. Can I transfer into your school?' She inspired lots of other students to do the same thing," he reveals.



Raven Osborne pushed through obstacles to earn a bachelor's degree and high school diploma within days of one another.

Among them are four 21st Century students who plan to earn a bachelor's degree while in high school. In addition, nine are slated to obtain an associate's degree prior to high school graduation in May.

Osborne is thoughtfully choosing her next career move.

"Working in the school has given me the opportunity to try to figure things out, so that's what I've been taking this time to do. I didn't go straight into a master's program. I'm still not in one. I didn't want to do it just to say I did it. I want to make sure I think everything out. This fall, I'll be able to start pursuing a teaching license. And from there, I'll keep trying to figure things out."



In Gary, more than 50% of 21st Century Charter School students take college and career courses. All freshmen attend an orientation day at Ivy Tech.

**RESOURCES:** 21st Century Charter School at [21cchartergary.org](http://21cchartergary.org) | Kevin Teasley, GEO Foundation, at [www.geofoundation.org](http://www.geofoundation.org)

## Innovating and Engaging

Gaze at different galaxies. Enter a hologram cave. Create mountains and build streams with your bare hands.

It's all in a day's work – make that all in a name – at ETHOS Innovation Center.

ETHOS stands for Encouraging Technology and Hands-On Science. Located in Elkhart, the facility promotes STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics) for children in kindergarten through 12th grade.

The organization was founded in 2000 and moved to its current location last April. It has approximately 18,000 to 20,000 annual visitors.

"Our core business is to partner with area schools. We manage their hands-on science materials component," explains founding executive director Patsy Boehler. "Instead of teaching from a textbook, the schools we work with would adopt a science kit curriculum.

"This allows students to really explore. To do hands on (activities). At fourth grade, they're doing electric circuits. They're building series and parallel circuits. And by the end of that grading period, they're going to completely wire a house."

An inflatable planetarium, for example, offers an IMAX-type experience, where a Tyrannosaurus Rex (not so quietly) lurks.

"We also do things like body code in there, where it shrinks you down to molecular size and then whips you through



Searching for clues ... and a way out of ETHOS Innovation Center's escape room.

the brain and through the lungs and through the heart," Boehler vividly describes.

Students can venture into a living material center and encounter a tarantula ... or a python!

Music lovers: Take note.

"We have a variety of musical exhibits where kids can learn the different pitches that are required for music, but we also talk to them about the math component that's

associated with that music," Boehler relates.

Upcoming summer camps include Health Heroes (career paths, how diseases are spread), Wizard Science (imagine filming YouTube videos in a room with a green screen), Our Wild World (various living environments and their inhabitants) and more.

Can't make it to ETHOS Innovation Center? A Science 2 Go Bus brings education to the schools.

**RESOURCE:** Patsy Boehler, ETHOS Innovation Center, at [ethosinc.org](http://ethosinc.org)