

CARROLL TIMES HERALD

W E E K E N D E D I T I O N

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1 DOLLAR

EDUCATION

Family says teacher told students not to speak Spanish in class

By **TREVOR BABCOCK**
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A Carroll High School student and her family members have asked for repercussions and an apology from a teacher who told two students not to speak Spanish in class.

Ninth grade Carroll High School student, Jennifer Villanueva, said in an interview

with the Times Herald that CHS teacher Shelley Helmich told her and another student not to speak Spanish in her class while they discussed fruit related to a food and nutrition class project.

The Times Herald authenticated a partial recording of the incident. A transcript of the recording can be viewed in a sidebar to this story and

can also be listened to in the online version of this story. Iowa is a one-party consent state, meaning anyone can record oral communications with the consent of just one party.

Villanueva and members of her family say they felt compelled to go public because they say the school district has not taken action

against the teacher nor has the teacher apologized.

"The district is aware of the incident in question," Superintendent Casey Berlau said in a statement to the Times Herald. "Once high school administrators were informed of the situation, they acted promptly and addressed it in accordance with district policy. This included working

with the family of the student and the teacher. We want our community to know that we take all student concerns seriously, and address each swiftly and appropriately. We also take seriously the legal requirements that exist for schools to keep student and personnel matters confidential."

Helmich has not responded to an email request for comment.

In late November, Villanueva was in a food and nutrition class working on a group project. Villanueva said one of her classmates responded in Spanish after Villanueva spoke in English while discussing the project.

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CHILDREN'S LITERACY

PARTON'S IMAGINATION LIBRARY SPARKS LOVE FOR READING



SPECIAL TO THE TIMES HERALD

Gage and Elizabeth Beers of Breda and their children, Hazel, 2, and Henry, 3 months, receive books in Dolly Parton's Imagination Library program.

Program that provides free books introduced in local counties

By **LARRY DEVINE**
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For 2-year-old Hazel Beers, mail delivery at her family's Breda home is an fun time of day. But once a month, there's a special delivery that's opened an exciting new chapter in her life.

Hazel is an enthusiastic new reading fan with help of her uncle Chris and the Dolly Parton Foundation.

Every month, Hazel receives a

free new book through Dolly Parton's Imagination Library program.

Hazel is one of millions of boys and girls — newborns through 4-year-olds — in several countries who receive age-appropriate books. Parton's Imagination Library operates in partnership with local sponsors, and the program recently became available to children in Carroll, Audubon, Greene and Guthrie counties.

The program's website says, "Since

1995, Dolly Parton's Imagination Library has been putting books into the hands and hearts of children across the world with collaboration from local affiliates.

"Each month children who enroll receive an age-appropriate book delivered to their home until their fifth birthday."

The website says that as of September 2022, Parton's childhood-literacy program had gifted more than 190 million books to children across the U.S., Canada, United Kingdom, and

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ELECTION

Tracy cites experience in community, economic development

Democratic candidate for Carroll County supervisor in 5th District

By **LARRY DEVINE**
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Tim Tracy says that in his career he played a part in successful economic-development initiatives in a number of rural communities and now he wants to contribute that experience on the Carroll County Board of Supervisors.

Tracy recently entered the race for the open 5th District seat on the Board created by the resignation of Supervisor Rich Ruggles due to a health issue. Tracy was nominated by Carroll County Democrats in a special convention. He is running against Cynthia "Cindy" Scaturico, who was nominated by county Republicans in a special convention.

Polls will be open from 7 a.m. until 8 p.m. Tues-

day, Feb. 7. Deadline to mail in absentee ballots is Monday, Jan. 23. Last day to vote early at the courthouse is Monday, Feb. 6.

The seat will come up for election again in November 2024.

Iowa code allowed a committee of county auditor (Kourtney Payer), recorder (Ashten Wittrock) and treasurer (Lisa Wagner) to appoint someone to fill the seat; however, due to strong interest in the position, they decided it was better to call a special election. The 5th District is

TRACY, PAGE 4



Tim Tracy

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

City council hears update on rental inspections

By **JACK McCLELLAN**
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Carroll's City Council received a report on its rental housing inspection ordinance Monday evening, hearing of the challenges associated with demanding compliance from the city's various property owners.

Rick Peugh, the code compliance officer for the City of Carroll said there are currently 514 registered rental properties in the city, of which he has inspected 279. Peugh said 72% of those properties are single-family homes, 10% are duplexes and 18% are apartment buildings.

"For the most part, people, once they're inspected, they comply with correcting the deficiencies," Peugh said. "We do have a couple of bad actors that I've had to go after a little bit."

Out of the 279 properties that Peugh has inspected, Peugh said 23 have not complied with correcting their deficiencies.

Peugh said some of the non-compliance issues are due to landlords having trouble with actually facilitating the repairs, while other landlords have planned out necessary renovations years in advance, and are rotating through different properties.

A lot of the non-compliance is small ticket items: smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors and GFI outlets. Peugh said items like those may not have been required upon the construction of the properties. Peugh said he gives property owners 30 days to get everything taken care of, and property owners typically comply within

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GOVERNMENT

Gov. Kim Reynolds celebrates victory as 'school choice' program becomes law

By **ROBIN OPSAHL**
Iowa Capital Dispatch
After years of debate and a decisive election with school choice at center stage, Gov. Kim Reynolds signed her private school scholarship program into law Tuesday.

Students and staff of Iowa private schools gathered around the lectern in the Capitol rotunda as Reynolds and supporters celebrated passing the legislation, which cleared the Senate less than 12 hours earlier.

The governor thanked Republican lawmakers, "school choice" advocates and parents for their work in getting the bill through the legislative process.

"I urged the General Assembly to think big and to aim high, to ignore the hysteria that always accompanies school change," Reynolds said. "In passing the Students First Act that is what you did, and I cannot think of a more worthy cause to aim high and dream big for than the future of our children."

The Iowa House and Senate spent nearly 10 hours debating the legislation, which Reynolds named as her top priority for the 2023 legislative session. The law establishes an education savings account (ESA) program for K-12 students, giving students an account of \$7,598 each year to use for private school tuition and associated costs.

Starting the 2023-2024 school year, all kindergartners, Iowa public school students and private school students with

a family income of 300% or below the federal poverty line will be eligible to receive funds from the program. The income eligibility expands to 400% of the federal poverty line in the second year and there is no income limit starting in the third year.

While Republicans celebrated the victory, Democrats and public school advocates continued to express disappointment in the legislation. Demo-

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Start delivery of the Carroll Times Herald

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