



# LEYDEN

HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 212

## Homecoming



# Superintendent's Corner



Nick Polyak, Ed.D.  
Superintendent

Dear Leyden Community,

In our Spring 2021 newsletter, we shared the Leyden School Board's recently adopted Equity and Justice Statement. It can be found on our Leyden website at: <https://www.leyden212.org/Page/4837>. Now our challenge is how we put that statement into action. Specifically, one section of the statement asks us to focus on: "Recruiting, hiring, and retaining a diverse staff that enhances the school community in regard to age, cultural background, physical abilities and disabilities, race, religion, sex, sexual identity, and gender identity."

We believe that if we want to grow a teaching staff that more accurately reflects our student body, the best thing we can do is hire more of our former students back as our teachers. In an effort to recruit our former students back to Leyden, we have created the Golden Ticket Initiative.

When our students complete our education career pathways, a group of courses designed to help them prepare for a career

in education, they are given a physical Golden Ticket. Here's how it works:

- All Leyden alumni are guaranteed an interview for any open teaching position at Leyden High School District 212 or at the elementary school district they attended.
- All Leyden alumni who are hired for a full-time teaching position back at Leyden High School District 212 will be given a \$5,000 signing bonus.

When our students go on to become teachers, we want Leyden to be the first place they want to work. This is in effect now, whether they took education courses at Leyden or not. So if you know any alumni who attended Leyden and went on to study education in college, please encourage them to come back home and rejoin the amazing Leyden teaching faculty. Thanks for your help with this and for your support in all we do at Leyden.

With Leyden Pride,  
Dr. Nick Polyak



## One Amazing Story: Pascuala Herrera

Our One Amazing Story series continues with Pascuala Herrera, a community member and parent of our Leyden family. Pascuala recently wrote a book, "Not Always a Valley of Tears," detailing her journey from a small town in Mexico. She has overcome numerous challenges in her life, including contracting polio as a child, and has adapted her mindset to one of perseverance, resilience and above all, positivity. Her story is one of inspiration, for our students and for our community. #OneAmazingStory #LeydenPride

The video is available on the Leyden High School YouTube Channel, or by scanning the QR code:



# Teacher leaves for Arctic Adventure



Jon Pazol

A few weeks after the school year began, West Leyden Science Teacher Jon Pazol departed for a 10-day quarantine in Norway before embarking on a six-week adventure aboard an icebreaker in the Siberian Arctic. Pazol joined a team of teachers and scientists from around the world to study interactions of fresh and saltwater ocean currents and climate change. While he is conducting his studies, he is checking in with students via phone and video calls as wifi permits, from some of the most remote corners of the globe.

Pazol is one of eleven educators selected through a nationwide search to participate in PolarTREC, an educational research experience in which classroom teachers and informal educators participate in polar research, working closely with scientists as a pathway to improving science education.

While on field expeditions, educators and researchers will share their experiences with scientists, educators, communities, and students of all ages through the use of Internet tools such as online teacher and researcher journals, message boards, photo albums, podcasts, PolarConnect real-time presentations from the field, and online learning resources. After the field experience, teachers and researchers will continue to share their experiences with the public and create instructional activities to transfer scientific data, methodologies, and technology to classrooms.

\*Oh, and speaking of that 10-day quarantine: In case you are wondering what Pazol had in the Netflix queue: "Atypical," "Big Bang Theory," and "Arrested Development," and then the entire Harry Potter book series.



Pazol shares the plan for his expedition with his science students

*Ribbon Cutting & Dedication Ceremony*

October 26, 2021 5:30 PM  
East Leyden High School  
3400 Bloor Street, Franklin Park

DOING WHAT IS BEST FOR THE KIDS.

## Save the Date:

**Tuesday, October 26**  
**East Leyden Ribbon-Cutting and Dedication Ceremony**

Join us on Tuesday, October 26, as we officially dedicate the new addition at East Leyden and celebrate the innovation and opportunities offered by the completion of this recent renovation. It is only through the support of our communities that this project and its impact for students was possible, and so we look forward to showcasing this point of Leyden Pride with our residents, alumni, partners, dignitaries, parents, students, and staff.

# World Premiere of "Wave" debuts



Pilolla and students early on in the rehearsal process



A student studies the script

Seven years ago, it occurred to a couple of Leyden theater directors that there was a large group of students missing out on participating in productions. For these teachers who believe deeply in the important life skills built both on stage and behind the scenes, something had to change in order to offer more students opportunities. Then, an idea - take one common script, and perform it in English and Spanish, giving multilingual students who were developing English language skills an equal shot in live theater. And, the award-winning Teatro Leyden was born.

This type of theater is very rare and unheard of at the high school level.

Technical director Vic Pilolla recalls one female lead, who quite literally got off the plane from Columbia and was cast in a show one week later. She later told her English teacher that this experience made her want to learn English even quicker so that she could do even more in theater.

"The students, and helping them connect with theater, is where my heart is - it's why I do what I do and have been grateful every day that I get to come to Leyden and 'play,'" said Pilolla.

Even though a tropical paradise retirement awaits in Hawaii, Pilolla felt deeply compelled to finish out this year,

and with good reason. A few years back, when Teatro Leyden won an award and additional funds for its innovation, the Superintendent asked the theater department what they wanted to do with the money. "New lights, perhaps, or maybe some special equipment?" No. Again they had their sights set much bigger, on creating more opportunities for kids. They wanted to commission a playwright to author a play just for Leyden - a show that we would own.

"I wanted to produce a World Premiere, right here on our stage. I want our kids listed in the script as the original cast, and our set design on a back cover," said Pilolla.

The theater department was off and running with the full support of the

Leyden leadership to commission a play. They secured Chicago-based playwright Nancy Garcia Loza, a former student of Leyden's Director of Curriculum Michael Manderino, to draft a script. García



Nancy Garcia Loza

Loza, is a self-taught pocha playwright who is currently under commission from Steppenwolf Theatre, Goodman Theatre and Albany Park Theater Project.

Garcia Loza and the team at Leyden worked through nearly 17 rewrites and drafts before the final script was ready to roll in March of 2020. The day after the cast list was posted, schools

Teatro Leyden PRESENTS THE  
**WORLD PREMIERE**  
 OF  
**WAVE**  
 BY NANCY GARCIA LOZA

**SHOW DATES:**

ENGLISH	OCTOBER 22ND, 7PM
	OCTOBER 24TH, 1PM
	OCTOBER 30TH, 7PM
ESPAÑOL	23 DE OCTUBRE, 7PM
	24 DE OCTUBRE, 6PM
	29 DE OCTUBRE, 7PM

**WEST LEYDEN AUDITORIUM**  
 1080 WOLF ROAD, NORTHLAKE, IL  
 ADULT: \$3.00 • STUDENT: \$2.00

TO BUY TICKETS, AND FOR MORE INFO  
[HTTPS://OUR.SHOW/TEATROLEYDENWAVE](https://our.show/teatroleydenwave)

# on the Leyden stage

in Illinois were shut down due to the pandemic. What started as a few-week delay, turned into an entire school year and then some. Wanting to honor the seniors in the cast, a scaled-down radio style version was produced for a close group of family and friends.

During the 2020-21 season, Garcia Loza had various projects that were halted by the pandemic including five world premieres; one of them being Teatro Leyden's Wave.

Here we find ourselves, a year-and-a-half later, and well into the 2021-22 school year. The show has been re-cast and is currently in rehearsals, with an eye on a World Premiere of the play "Wave" on October 22.

"Some of the students who were initially cast in the younger roles when they were freshmen and sophomores, have aged out, and look too old now to play those roles," said Pilolla.

And according to director Frank Bavone, that's more than okay. "The dedication these students have shown in spite of a global pandemic and having this

show postponed multiple times is as impressive as the resolve that one of the play's main characters, Dahlia, shows within the story itself," said Bavone.

Bavone goes on to share that a group of 10 students have been with this project from the very first table read in spring of 2019. They spent countless hours during the lockdown as well as that summer workshopping the script via daily Zoom calls, which culminated in a LIVE audio drama July 2020. Over the next year, they participated in several other readings, all of which playwright Nancy Garcia Loza used to write the play that will finally see the stage in October.

"During that entire time and throughout this pandemic, each of these kids maintained a solid GPA, held down gainful employment, dealt with family struggles, health issues and other private issues," said Bavone. "And yet, in this uncertainty, their commitment to theatre and particularly this show has never wavered. These kids' resolve and positivity gave me hope that everything was going to be ok after all," said Bavone.

## WAVE Synopsis

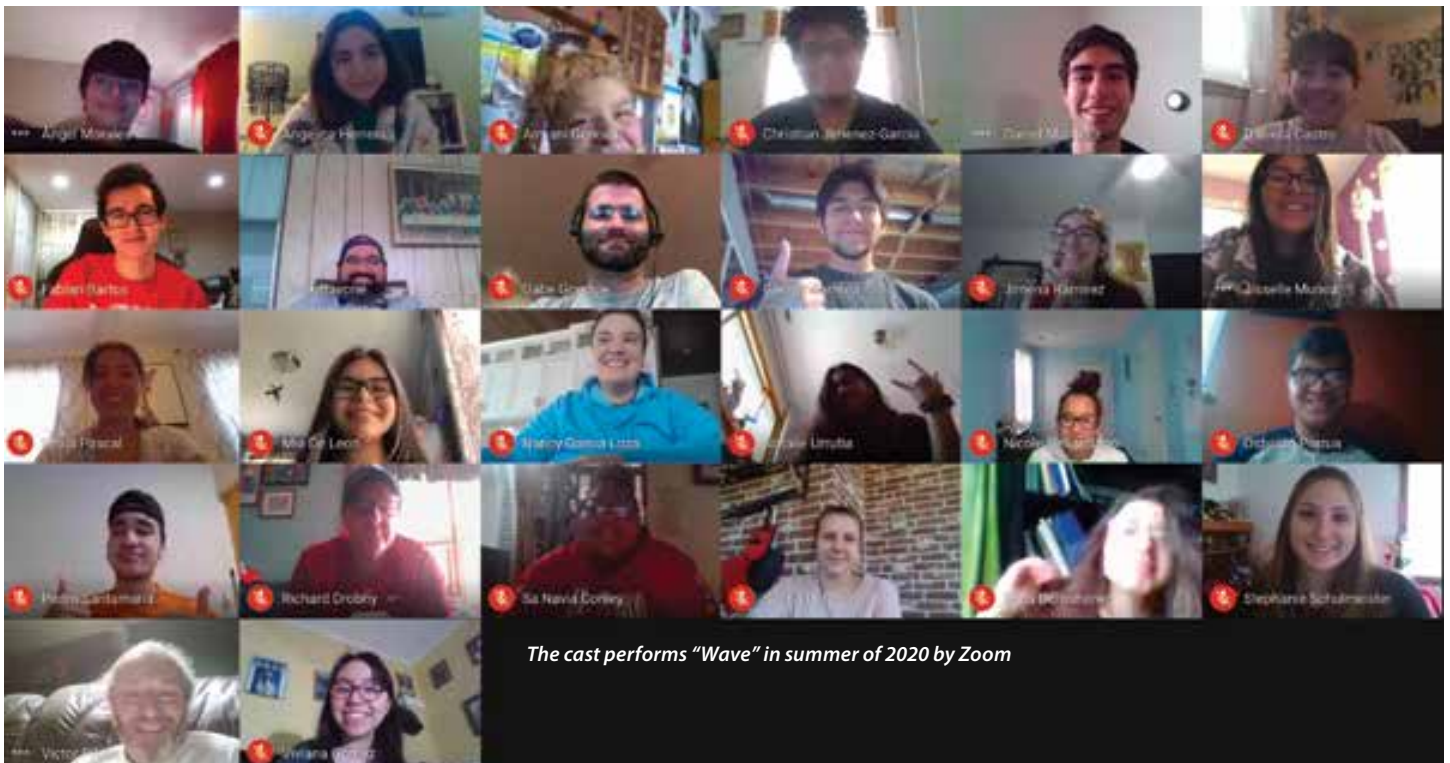
Everything is on the move in Tijuana: a border wall cuts into sand and sea, a blazing presidential campaign is soon to arrive, and the whales migrate. Everything is on the move, except for one young girl: Dahlia. On Playas de Tijuana, Dahlia is waiting to be reunited with her mother, just as promised a year earlier. For the past year, she has been living with relatives in Tijuana, keeping a painstaking count of the days. When her plans are disrupted, Dahlia is determined to find a new way. Together with her best friend, Diego, the unlikely pair venture into uncharted waters looking for a way north.

**English-Speaking Cast:** Armani Gennell, Mia De Leon, Daniel Martinez, Julia Aragon, Mia Herrera, Yamilet Garcia-Gaona, Selma Duratovic, Christian Jimenez Garcia, Rhiannon Dienenthal, Gabriela Rodriguez, Grace Dillon, Oliver Prus, Gabriela Drozd, Stephanie Garibay, Alessia Incandela, Giovanna Fermin and Alexander Suryovch.

**Spanish-Speaking Cast:** Angel Morales, Daniela Castro, Rodolfo Torres, Jimena Ramirez, Danna Vera, Kathy De Jesus, Desiree Morad, Christian Jimenez Garcia, Madeline Medrano, Athiana Moran, Grace Dillon, Jairo Reina Perez, Gabriela Drozd, Layla Diaz, Gabriela Rodriguez and Alexander Suryovch.

**Ensemble:** Virgil Oppedisano, Christian Lagunas and Matthew Perez.

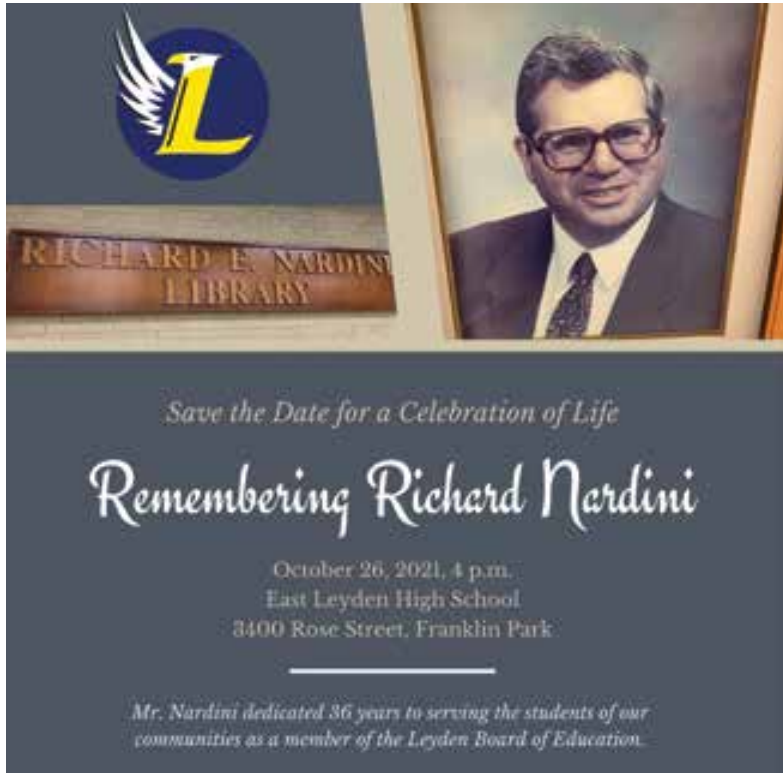
**Crew:** Assistant Directors: Jimena Ramirez and Korneliusz Kopera West; Stage Manager: Jisselle Munoz; Asst Stage Manager: Chloe Kovacevich; Costumes: Alexandra Holubowicz; Projection Design: Cyrill Reyes; Alum Staff: Fabian Bartos and Angelica Herrera; Director: Frank Bavone; Tech Director: Vic Pilolla; Lighting Design: Gabe Gorsline; Costume Design: Soozie Holms; and, Playwright: Nancy Garcia Loza.



The cast performs "Wave" in summer of 2020 by Zoom

# Richard Nardini Celebration of Life

In honor of past Board of Education member Richard Nardini, and his 36 years of service to the students of Leyden, we invite our community to join us in celebrating his life. On Tuesday, October 26, we will gather at East Leyden, in the very library that is named in his recognition, to enjoy stories and share perspectives of our time together. All are welcome.



The Illinois Emergency Management Agency will be holding several COVID-19 vaccine clinics at our West Leyden Campus on the following dates:

**Saturday**  
**October 16 - 10:00am - 1:00pm**

**Friday**  
**October 22 - available at the Football game starting at 6:00pm and available throughout the game.**

## Leyden District 212 Board of Education

Board of Education meetings are in the East Campus Board Room



Mr. Gregory T. Ignoffo  
President



Mrs. Gloria Murawska  
Vice President



Mr. James A. Lima  
Secretary



Mr. Joseph Trevino  
Member



Mrs. Lisa Anthony  
Member

*Leyden High School District 212 is an equal opportunity institution, committed to compliance with all applicable state and federal laws prohibiting discrimination. This includes prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, order of protection status, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, homelessness and marital/parental status, including pregnancy.*



Mrs. Sandra Boehm  
Member



Mr. Cesar Garcia  
Member



Daniel Lechuga  
Student Member



Izabella Laniewski  
Student Member

As required by S.B. 898, you may go to Leyden's website to view our budget at: [www.leyden212.org](http://www.leyden212.org)

**East Campus**  
3400 Rose Street  
Franklin Park, IL 60131

**West Campus**  
1000 N. Wolf Road  
Northlake, IL 60164

**Thank you to those who contributed photos to this edition of the newsletter.**