



# STUDENTS



# CULTURE



# PRIDE

Featured: Various photos of Clarke Central High School students show the spirit of the school. With a year of virtual learning separating the school community, the school lost some much of its spirit and unity. "Schools provide a kind of a social culture, and I think that's important for students to have. And so even being in the same building, we get a feeling that we are a community," Gladius adviser and Career, Technical and Agricultural Education (CTAE) department teacher Nestor Domingo said. "I think it helps a lot in terms of mental health." Photos from ODYSSEY Media Group Archives





*CCHS' inclusive environment and loving community defines the school, but COVID-19 removed students and faculty from its once-bustling atmosphere.*

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PHOTOS FROM ODYSSEY MEDIA  
GROUP AND GLADIUS YEARBOOK  
ARCHIVES

From drama club to FFA to the football team, Clarke Central High School's culture is made up of a variety of community sectors. A year of online learning removed students and teachers away from their buzzing school pride.

As the CCHS community returns to in-person instruction, a question lingers: Did the locked doors preserve the atmosphere the school embodied over a year ago?

Administrative assistant of 20 years Linda Glenn shows her spirit for CCHS through her words to students. For the past five years until the pandemic, after Glenn had announced the bus changes on the intercom at the end of each school day, she would take a moment to ask the entire student body to, "Tell somebody you love them."

"You always have to treat people the way you want to be treated. And that's something that I had tried to make other students (and) people in general realize," Glenn said. "I would hope that through this pandemic, more people have become aware of how important it is to tell somebody you love them."

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**-- LINDA GLENN,**  
administrative assistant

Junior Zaili Gantt is appreciative of Glenn's unconditional love for the CCHS community.

"It's something about when (Glenn) is on the intercom. Everybody just loves to listen to her talk. When she says, 'Tell someone you love them,' it honestly makes it seem like the teachers, faculty and staff all really care about your well-being," Gantt said. "She just wants to make sure that the students know that they are cared for and loved and that (she) wants to see us succeed."

Glenn can be spotted in the front office, at football games and even at the grocery store sporting CCHS gear.

"My favorite colors have always been red and gold. I graduated from (CCHS) in 1976, so as they say, I bleed red and gold. Always a Gladiator," Glenn said. "I will represent in the front office, any sport, club. I tell everyone, 'Give me a T-shirt -- I'll wear it on Fridays.'"

Physical education department teacher and head track and field coach Justin Jones observed a high point in school spirit among students and community members due to a streak of success in CCHS athletics in the months leading up



Featured: SPREADING COMPASSION: Clarke Central High School administrative assistant Linda Glenn sits in the CCHS Main Office at her desk. For 20 years, Glenn has spread a specific message throughout the school community. "Whenever we have our staff meeting once a month, I say something to the teachers and staff. I tell them how I love them and how it is important for them to tell somebody you love them," Glenn said. Photo by Luna Reichert





Above: REPRESENTING CCHS: CCHS cheerleader Nikita Laye, a senior, cheers at a CCHS football game. Cheerleader McKenna Ezekiel, a sophomore, feels that sports events at CCHS and the people involved contribute to school culture and spirit. "Cheerleaders show school spirit through social media a lot, like we have cheer pages and stuff like that," Ezekiel said. "(We) represent Clarke Central and show how good we are at football games, and basketball games and all that type of stuff." Photo by Krista Shumaker

to the pandemic.

"At the end of 2019, (school spirit) was pretty high. The basketball team was having success, they came off a good year. Spring of 2019, we had a couple of (track and field) state champions and a couple (athletes) finishing high in the state meet. The boys soccer program, they were rolling," Jones said. "So school spirit was as high as it had been since I've been here, since 2016."

Adaptive curriculum department teacher Jennifer Frost, who has taught at CCHS for 19 years, sees school pride as an important social tool for her students. The lack of connection to the rest of the student body has even affected adaptive curriculum students, who have attended consistent, full-day classes in person since November 2020.

"One of the easiest ways to (bring adaptive curriculum and general education students together) is through school spirit, something common that they all have," Frost said. "Without all of those pep rallies and dances and things that foster that school spirit, it's hard to really incorporate some of my students because they just don't really have an opportunity to interact."

For senior Ietta Veeder, bonding with peers makes up an important part of

CCHS' atmosphere, specifically through mutual academic support.

"I think one of the easiest ways that I feel connected to students is sharing our struggle of school. Sometimes if we all struggle on a test, I can connect (with) multiple people like, 'Oh, me too, that was a horrible test,'" Veeder said.

Outside of academics, the pandemic has established a universal experience among CCHS community members -- a commonality that Gantt sees as a uniting force.

"We had to make it through this digital school year, and it was new for everyone. We really did a good job adapting. We were all welcome to change. I think that's a personality trait of all of us -- we're open to change, and we can work with change and roll with the punches really well," Gantt said.

During virtual learning, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) department teacher Kathy Erickson spoke with many students eager to get back to the school building.

"I have never made so many phone calls, so many contacts, to get people motivated and get them going," Erickson said. "(Students) kept asking, 'When are we going back to school? Let me go back to school.'"



# GCHS! GCHS!

Freshman teachers are responsible for guiding new high schoolers into CCHS. During online learning, Jones missed building new relationships with his physical education students through in-person interactions.

"(During virtual learning), I (didn't) get to have (relationships) with the students who I don't necessarily coach every day. I (wasn't) getting to see those freshmen, I'm not (able to) introduce them to our school," Jones said. "We see each other on Zoom, but that is just not the same as a lot of interactions I had with the students in the hallways, in the lunchroom, in the cafeteria."

Throughout most of Veeder's high school years, she was immersed in CCHS' culture without the barrier of COVID-19.

"I felt really excited (to start attending CCHS) because there's so much energy within the school. Everyone was doing the things that they loved. Each person found clubs that they enjoy, or classes that they like," Veeder said. "I think we have a great family, even though I don't talk to as many people nowadays because I'm (taking classes) online."

Along with other athletic teams at CCHS, the cheerleading team has met in person for their games and practices. Cheerleader McKenna Ezekiel, a sophomore, is excited to be in school in person, but there are still factors that make her cheerleading experience feel abnormal.

"I've been able to go to (CCHS) because of my athletic events, (but) it's hard to have a lot of people get together and enjoy going places when there's a limit on everything," Ezekiel said. "It's a relief to get off of your computer and actually be able to go to (school in person). It's a good thing to actually go out and see people, (even if) with our masks on."

As freshman Desmond Schmutte prepared to take in-person classes for the first time as a high school student, he predicted that online learning will have lasting effects on connections between peers.

"People don't really like speaking up or having their cameras on during (Zoom) class. I feel like people will be awkward when they come back," Schmutte said. "People probably won't relate to each other as much because people change over time. I guess since people haven't been together, they haven't been able to change together."

Now that the opportunity to learn in person is here, Gladius adviser and Career, Technical and Agricultural Education (CTAE) department teacher Nestor Domingo has found that students are not as passionate about returning to CCHS campus as anticipated.

"Although (students) are doing a good job with (the return to in-person school), I think I expected more enthusiasm in terms of (being) back to the way things (were), like some facsimile of what it used to be," Domingo said.

Instead of the Stegeman Coliseum at the University of Georgia, graduation will take place in the Billy Henderson Stadium on May 22. Reflecting on the

change this year has brought upon the school, Jones sees the change of location as an opportunity to add something new to CCHS' culture.

***"I think that's a personality trait of all of (CCHS) -- we're open to change, and we can work with change and roll with the punches really well."***

**-- ZAILI GANTT,**  
junior

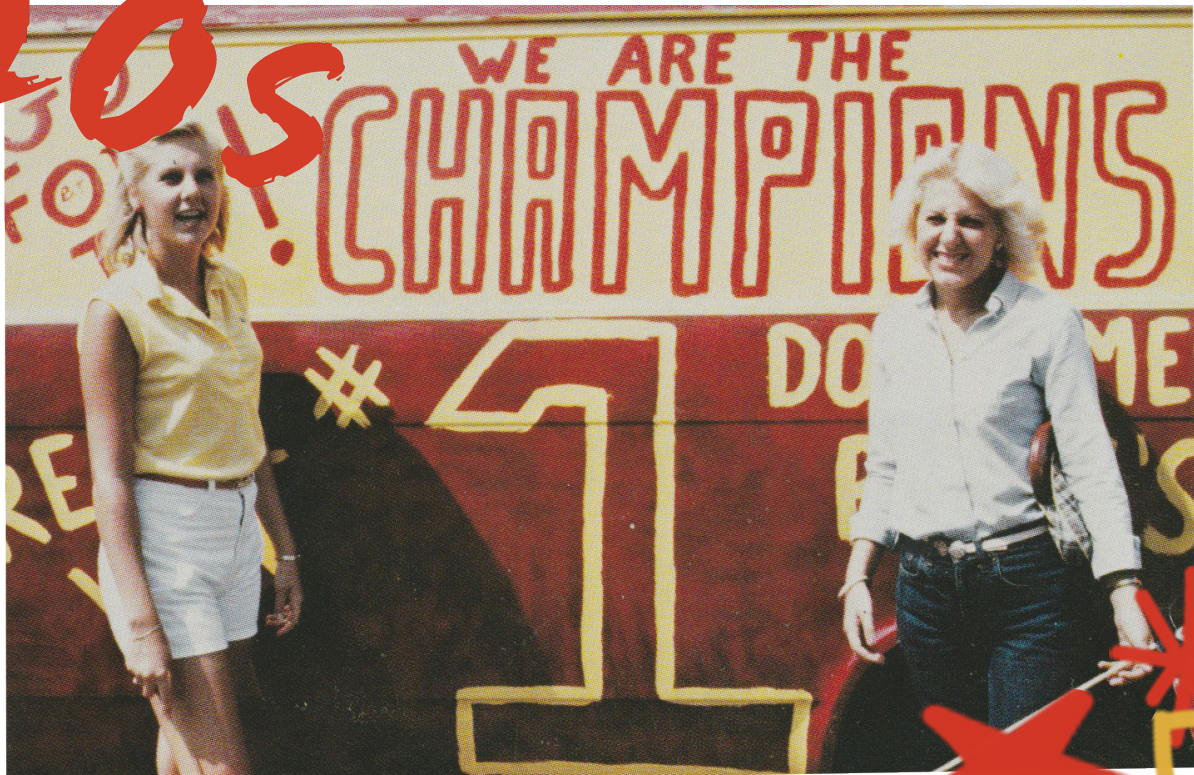
"I think (this will) start a tradition (as) our 2021 seniors are gonna get an opportunity to graduate in Billy Henderson Stadium," Jones said. "I don't think we need to go back to UGA. I think we can have all of our students graduate right there in our stadium. They'll throw their hats up in the air, we'll enjoy one another there because that's our school. That's our stomping grounds. Hopefully, that's something we continue to do and not just not just for 2021." o



**Above:** Clarke Central High School students laugh in front of the main entrance at CCHS, showing the culture of CCHS. The school has always had a unique and spirited environment, but the pandemic has limited the once thriving community greatly. "Academics is just one layer to Clarke Central. There's so many. You have your academics, you have your clubs and organizations, then you have your athletics. You have school spirit when everyone comes to the games and (shows) support for different teams," junior Zaili Gantt said. "(CCHS) is a fun community to grow with and to learn more about. I'm looking forward to a senior year when I can experience more, when things are a little bit more normal. Hopefully, we can have more events to increase our school spirit even more." Photo from the ODYSSEY Media Group Archives



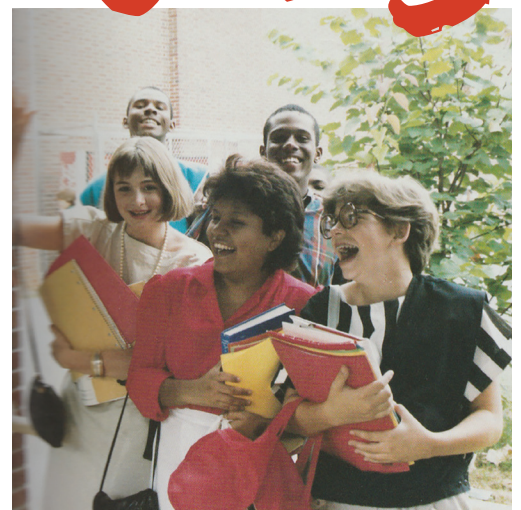
# '70s



"I felt really excited (to start attending CCHS) because there's so much energy within the school -- everyone was doing the things that they loved."

-- IETTA VEEDER,  
senior

# '80s







'90s

"We enjoy one another (at CCHS) because that's our school. That's our stomping grounds. And hopefully, (holding graduating at CCHS) is something we continue to do."

-- **JUSTIN JONES,**

physical education department teacher and head track and field coach

'70s

**Featured:** SPIRIT THROUGH THE YEARS: Five photos of Clarke Central High School students spanning from the 1970s to the 2010s from the CCHS Gladius Yearbook are shown. According to physical education department teacher and head track and field coach Justin Jones, the community can withstand obstacles such as the pandemic. "One of the things I'm truly thankful for is that we're still here. We have an opportunity and it's our duty to go forward through the pandemic, to try to come out on the other side of this and have a positive attitude," Jones said. "We want to be prepared when it's over to continue to move forward. We did this together, we're all in it together, and let's move on." Photos from the CCHS Gladius Yearbook Archives

