



First Annual Mackler Scholarship Awarded

In June a newly funded BEF scholarship, the Scott A. Mackler, MD, PhD True Grit Scholarship, was awarded to Liam Griffin, a graduating senior who has demonstrated true grit beginning in infancy. The Mackler award is in memory of Scott Mackler, a 1976 BHS graduate, and recognizes a student who has overcome significant adversity in his/her life. Dr. Mackler battled Lou Gehrig's disease for over 16 years while still maintaining his quality of life and professional career.

Benefactors Harvey Mackler '71 and his sister, Randi Windheim, were on hand scholarship award night to present their scholarship to Liam.

On his scholarship application, Liam described how his complex medical condition has greatly shaped his life, physically and mentally. "I had my first stroke at 10 months old which affected the right side of body and my second stroke at 26 months, which affected the left side of my body," he wrote. "The constant battle against my condition in everyday life has taught me the importance of perseverance, adaptability, and (given me) a positive outlook on the future despite all the obstacles that I encounter daily."

Congratulations, Liam



BLOOMFIELD
Educational ★ Foundation

**BEF 2025 Scholarship
Winners Announced**

BEF gave out a record number of scholarships this year, totaling 30 awards and \$70,000. [Read about some of our winners here.](#)

BEF Grant Funds Student Book Club



Book club students discuss Front Desk by Kelly Yang (left). At right, the students' book club jot books helped them track of notes and activities.

"Social" Book Club helps students build community, critical thinking, and a love of reading.

Fifth and sixth graders at Demarest School discovered the powerful academic and social benefits that can unfold through a student-led book club designed especially for their age group. The book club was funded with a grant from the Bloomfield Educational Foundation.

Accountability in Reading One of the driving goals behind the student book club was to build consistent reading habits. Students were selected not only based on their interest in reading, but also for their responsibility and commitment to at-home reading. With guidance from teachers, students made an informed decision to participate in the club and commit to weekly reading. "We had a big discussion early on about what this commitment meant," Mrs. Dana LaBattaglia, media specialist, explained. "It helped students take ownership of their participation."

Engaged and Reflective Reading Each student received and personalized their own reading journal in which to note ideas, reflections, or discussion points while reading. Initially led by the teacher, the discussions soon evolved to be student-driven. One student even began sketching comic-style illustrations of key scenes, sparking peer engagement and creativity. Students identified and brought up complex themes such as immigration, racism, poverty, and friendship conflict, demonstrating

thoughtful engagement with the material.

Building Confidence and Communication Skills The diversity of the group in terms of background, culture, and identity led to rich, respectful conversations. "At first, they were shy. But over time, they opened up and started respectfully debating and sharing perspectives," said LaBattaglia. The inclusive environment empowered students to express their views, challenge one another, and appreciate differing opinions.

Forging Friendships Beyond the Page Creating social connections was a core objective. The club intentionally brought together students who didn't typically interact during the school day. Through reading and discussion, they found common ground and new understanding. As the students bonded, they took ownership of their group. When the time came to welcome new members, students led a thoughtful nomination process, prioritizing group dynamics and inclusivity over social cliques.

"They saw that reading can be a shared experience that brings people together," LaBattaglia said. "They learned about each other in ways they might not have otherwise."

The success of this student book club underscores the value of literature as a catalyst for personal growth, academic enrichment, and building bridges across differences.

To make a donation to the Bloomfield Educational Foundation, please visit <https://www.bloomfieldeducationalfoundation.org/donate/> or mail to: Bloomfield Educational Foundation, Attn: Donation, P.O. Box 1358, Bloomfield, NJ 07003.

On Track for Success

An annual gathering of members of Bloomfield High School's 1969 Championship Track Team once again celebrated the achievements of two graduating seniors with scholarship awards. Mercedes Cruz-Fletcher (center front) and Alex Travers (behind Mercedes) were joined by head coach Terry Iavarone (far left) and assistant coach Anna Maria Natale (far right), and the



former Bengal track stars. The team's long-term commitment to today's student athletes is notably demonstrated by member Jeff Hartke (back row center), who makes the trip from South Carolina every year to attend.

Register to Race!



Brookdale Shop Rite Tom Fleming Sunset Classic

Thursday, June 26, 2025, 7PM
Foley Field, Bloomfield, NJ

Kids Infield Sprints for 2 to 12 year olds begins at 6:30 PM,

Rick Petersen Mile for all ages starts at 7PM

The Tom Fleming 5 Mile at 7:30PM

[Click for more information and register today!](#)

Save These Dates!



ALUMNI TAILGATE PARTY

FRIDAY, Oct 24, 2025
4:00-6:00
TOWN PUB
PRIOR TO THE
BLOOMFIELD HIGH SCHOOL
FOOTBALL GAME
WEST ORANGE VS BLOOMFIELD
6:00

Not a BHS grad? All are welcome
to attend and support a great cause!

\$30 for adults
\$15 for minors (12 and under)
Includes food, soda, beer and wine
plus admission to the game



Purchase tickets at the door or RSVP to
info@bloomfieldeducationalfoundation.org
973-403-0032

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Bloomfield Educational Foundation

Bloomfield Basketball Alumni [Preliminary Info](#)



SAVE THE DATE

Tuesday, November 18, 2025

Bloomfield High School Basketball Alumni Night

Bella Napoli Restaurant

1640 Broad Street, Bloomfield New Jersey

Proceeds Benefit Bloomfield High School Boys & Girls Basketball Teams
and Scholarships

Starts at 6:00 pm

Special Honorees.....

College Basketball Champions Classic

Kentucky vs. Michigan State and Duke vs. Kansas

Buffet Dinner Cash Bar 50/50 Prizes Free Give Aways

B.H.S. Girls Basketball Update

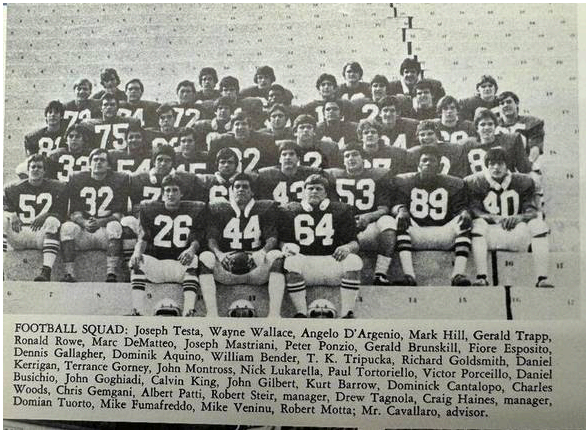
B.H.S. Boys Basketball Update

Looking back: 50 Years Later, the Bloomfield High Football Team Can Take Pride In Qualifying for the First-ever NJSIAA Playoffs

Fifty years ago, a new concept was presented for high school football in New Jersey.

After years of teams being awarded state sectional championships on the basis of an

overall record, and getting the top nod from a local newspaper, the state would initiate a playoff system to determine state champions. [<Read more.>](#)



Looking back: Bengal on Broadway

Irena (Rena) Jorgensen Swilp, a deceased member of the class of '56, was a Rockette for five years. She also toured the US and Canada with two other dancers with a Copacabana troupe with Steve Martin. She met her husband John in San Francisco, and they married 6 weeks later. They were married for 60 years.

If you would like to call John to say hello, please e-mail Ann Dassing at info@bloomfieldeducationalfoundation.org for contact info.



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