

Winter 2023 Newsletter



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“Increasing access to resources, opportunities, and learning by meeting students and families where they are.”

Wrapping Up 2023

48

Tutoring visits
at Abbey Lane

45

Unique volunteers
involved with visits

31

Average students
present per visit

1

Updated Website

(Check us out at TheBigBus.org!)



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New Executive Director

Kelly Gurich



Kelly Gurich joined us as our new Executive Director in August of 2023.

Kelly grew up in Northwest Ohio where she earned her BFA in Two Dimensional Studies from Bowling Green State University. She continued her education at Ashland University, earning her teaching certificate in K-12 Art Education. Kelly has lived in Westerville with her husband Nick and two boys, Judo and Niko, since 2016.

From her past experiences, she has been an art teacher with The Greater Columbus Arts Council and a substitute teacher in the Westerville City Schools District. She also managed an art studio for four years, where she built relationships with corporate clients creating unique team building experiences. She enjoys being involved in the Westerville community and serves as a Committee Chair on the PTA.

Kelly is currently the Marketing, Membership & Volunteer Coordinator for a local non-profit, The Arts Council of Westerville.

In the summer months, she enjoys floating on the family boat at Delaware Lake with her boys. When she finds the time, she enjoys painting, swimming, grabbing a bite to eat in Uptown, or hosting friends on her patio.

“It has been a truly wonderful experience working with the families on The Big Bus. With our launch of our English Language Learning program at Abbey Lane, I have been able to see first hand the impact we are creating with families in Westerville. From preschool students having access to Kindergarten readiness, parents learning English to meet their families needs, and helping K-5th students with homework and tutoring in a safe environment, the need is great. We are successfully stepping up each day to problem solve and meet the needs of these families in our community, and I am here for it!”

Year In Review

Our Big Bus Team has grown! This past year we've hired an EL coordinator, Stacy Johns to work with our Parent English Language Program as well as a preschool coordinator, Kate Davidson. Our website and social media stay up-to-date with our new coordinator, Leah Vanasdale. We also hired a new bus driver, Dale Grossman for our Abbey Lane visits. Together, we are providing 40+ Abbey Lane families with back-to-school registration, tutor programming, pre-k readiness, and adult English language learning.

Parent & Pre-K programming kicked off this Fall at Abbey Lane. We are excited to see regular attendance from many families for these morning visits!

Our **K-5th Tutoring** program has grown in leaps and bounds. We have split our visits into two 45 minute sessions to accommodate all of the students who enjoy visiting the bus for homework help and tutoring needs.

This past October we had a unique opportunity of learning for all of our Abbey Lane students to carve a pumpkin! Students measured the pumpkins' circumference, counted seeds, and were able to carve a pumpkin to take home. For most students, this was a first time experience to carve a pumpkin! So much fun!

In October we also brought The Big Bus to **Minerva Park Middle School** to help families and students register for the Reduced and Free Lunch Program through Westerville City Schools.



In early November, we hosted an **Evening of Thanks** event at Meza in Uptown Westerville to thank all of our Big Bus friends! This event brought our amazing volunteers, sponsors, and friends of The Big Bus together. The Big Bus was on site for guests to tour, mingle and enjoy wine and a beautiful spread of treats provided by Meza. Thank you to all of our supporters and friends who help to make The Big Bus mission possible!

Thank you Gary Gardiner for capturing photos and featuring The Big Bus in an article: [Big Idea. Big Success. - by Gary Gardiner \(thewestervilleneews.com\)](https://www.thewestervilleneews.com/idea-big-success/)



Looking Ahead!

We have been busy expanding our programming, growing our team, and making new partnerships this past year. Now we look to the future with exciting goals ahead!



Continued weekly morning preschool and adult English learning visits and after-school tutoring visits to Abbey Lane every Wednesday.



Big Bus plans to expand K-5th Tutoring to Newcastle Townhomes in the New Year. Partnering with Fouse Elementary, we are able to connect our K-5th Tutoring Program and extend learning opportunities outside of the classrooms onto The Big Bus.



Monthly orientation sessions for new volunteers. We will need more volunteers in the coming months with our new site location. Please join us!



Plans for a second bus! Our BIG goal is to purchase and launch a second bus to serve middle/high school students and young adults in the Fall of 2024! We are working towards securing funding now to make this a reality. Please consider supporting us and spreading the word!

We are always welcoming new volunteers with The Big Bus! To get involved visit thebigbus.org/get-involved or email us at info@thebigbus.org. Let's connect!