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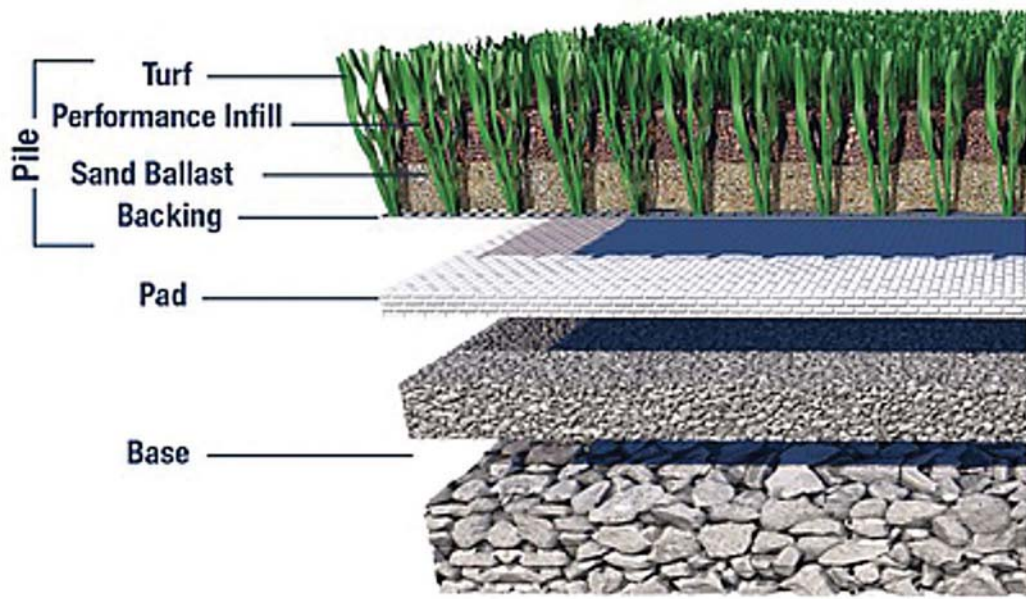
A CHECK FOR \$7,321 was presented to the Coal City Board of Education last week to pay off some of the debt owed by students on their lunch accounts. Coal City resident Mary Glagola (left) took the original idea from Wilmington fifth grader Aria Jandeska (center) who raised over \$6,000 to assist her classmates at Stevens Intermediate School in Wilmington. They teamed up to present the check to District Unit 1 superintendent Chris Spencer.

## Great idea pays off \$7,321 in lunch debt

A Coaler and a Wildcat team up to help students. Aria Jandeska, a fifth grader at Wilmington's Stevens Intermediate School, took on a project during the holiday season to raise over \$6,000 to clear out the lunch account debt of students at her school. The idea caught the attention of Coal City resident and Coaler alumna Mary Glagola who, with the

support of Aria and her family, reached out to Coal City area residents via a social media campaign to do the same thing to help students and families in the Coal City School District. Glagola said the idea quickly took hold and the funds started rolling in. Last week, Mary and Aria delivered a \$7,321 check to Coal City School Superintendent Chris Spencer. A day later,

the Board of Education gratefully accepted the funds that will be used to offset negative school lunch account balances. The community is full of caring individuals like Mary and Aria and the Coal City School District is thankful for their efforts and the support provided by the community to assist its students.



## School fields to get \$5.07 million upgrade

STAFF REPORT

Three athletic fields and the tennis courts at Coal City High School will be given a \$5.07 million facelift as part of the facilities improvement plan by the Coal City Community Unit School District 1. The Board of Education approved up to \$5,077,000 to install turf surfaces for the football stadium, baseball and softball fields, and resurface the six tennis courts and six-lane running track. The motion was approved unanimously to pay Lite Construction's low bid. No timetable was given as to when the work will start or be completed but mostly likely the football field will be first before the 2024 fall season. Coal City student Keaton Stroner spoke to the board during public comment session prior to the vote asking that the district take into consideration the track seniors like him who will miss out on having a home meet if the stadium

is started first. Project bids were made available in December 2023 and of the four received, Lite Construction Inc, of Montgomery, was the lowest responsible bidder with a base bid, including contingency, of \$5,077,000. The bid is for a specific type of infill to be used. Infill is a necessary component to turf fields to keep the grass blades upright and protect the backing of the turf for more cushioning for players. In Feb. 2010 an ad hoc committee proposed a crumb rubber turf that was traditionally used as infill. The problem with crumb rubber is it get's too hot and brings on health concerns for those who play on it. Coal City was looking for an alternative such as an organic material or TPE—thermo plastic elastomer—a synthetic product. Overall "it's a much safer product to use," said Jason

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# Coalers speak their way to state



THE COALER SPEECH team has 10 students who will perform their selected piece, "Murder, Mayhem and Betrayal!" at state in the Performance in the Round category. The PIR team is comprised of [from left, row one]: Grace Heatherwick, Caroline Childers, Jada Moore, Juliet Covington and Karli Pierson. Row two: Bradley Burla, Adriana Esparza, Anthony Royster, Mackenzie Brown and Vincent Mugnolo.

Coal City High School's Speech Team will be well represented at the Illinois High School Association [IHSA] State Speech Finals this week as five students have advanced in five speaking categories and the 10 member Performance in the Round team will take part in this state series only event. Madison Wilson, a junior, is headed to state in two categories. She was the sectional champion in radio and finished third in dramatic interpretation. The top three finishers at the sectional tournament advance to compete at the state finals held annually at the Peoria Civic Center. This year's tournament gets underway on Friday, Feb. 16 and concludes with an evening awards ceremony on Saturday, Feb. 17. The humorous duet acting team of seniors Adaline Dowling and Kevin McConnell finished third and will compete at state with their selection titled "The Marriage Counselor." Corinna Barkley, a junior, earned a third place finish in special occasion speaking with her selected title, "Bread Crumbling: Feels Crummy." Sophomore Grey Vanek

is taking her selection, "Drugs are Bad," to state in the category of humorous interpretation. There are a total of 14 speaking categories in speech and when it comes to the state series the IHSA adds a 15 category known as Performance in the Round [PIR]. It's a team event and this year, the Coalers have 10 students who will perform their selected piece, "Murder, Mayhem and Betrayal!" at state. The PIR team comprised of Adriana Esparza, Anthony Royster, Bradley Burla, Caroline Childers, Jada Moore, Juliet Covington, Karli Pierson, Mackenzie Brown, Vincent Mugnolo and Grace Heatherwick finished third at the sectional. As a team the Coalers finished third at the sectional meet held Saturday, Feb. 10 at Morris Community High School. In addition to the state qualifiers, the sectional team was comprised of Giovanni Bruno, Jordan Olson, Jacob Cimino, Dominic

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