NETWORK

NOVEMBER 2026



HIGHLIGHTS



From dream to reality: LTC alum Brady Clampet takes leadership role at CCRC.



LTC celebrates first generation college students.



LTC men's soccer team wins second Region XXIV Championship.

NEW SOCRATES ROCK GARDEN CREATES OUTDOOR CLASSROOM AT LINCOLN TRAIL COLLEGE

Lincoln Trail College students, faculty and staff have a new place to gather, learn and exchange ideas with the addition of the Socrates Rock Garden and Outdoor Classroom near Miller Lake.

The new outdoor learning space, located along the Rod and Diana Harmon Tribute Trail, was made possible through a donation from Jerry and Victoria Bayne. The Lincoln Trail College Foundation helped coordinate the project. The garden features large limestone blocks arranged to create an informal classroom and gathering space in one of the most scenic areas of the LTC campus.

"We are incredibly grateful to Jerry and Victoria for creating a space that will benefit our campus for years to come," LTC President Tona Ambrose said. "This gives our students and employees another opportunity to take learning beyond the walls of a traditional classroom. It is a beautiful setting for a class discussion, a conversation, quiet reflection or simply spending time together."

UPCOMING DECEMBER EVENTS

4	**Fall Vocal Concert** 7 p.m., Zwermann Arts Center Theater
6	**Music Student Recital** 1:30 p.m., DeMent Auditorium
7-8	**Music Juries** Varies, DeMent Auditorium
8	**IECC Board of Trustees Meeting** 6:00 p.m., Frontier Community College
9	**All-IECC After Board Meeting** 2:30 p.m., Teams
11	**Last Day of Fall Semester Classes**
	Fall Jazz Concert 7 p.m., Zwermann Arts Center Theater
14-17	**Final Exams**
15	**Bring Your Own Book Club** 11 a.m., Learning Commons
18	**Last Day of Fall Semester**
21-1/1	**COLLEGE CLOSED - Winter Break**

Jerry Bayne is a former Lincoln Trail College faculty member and has been involved with the James Jones Literary Society. Jones, a Robinson native, was the author of several novels, including From Here to Eternity.

The new outdoor classroom also recognizes Lincoln Trail College's role in the history of the James Jones Literary Society. A plaque provided by the LTC Foundation at the site reads:

"This outside classroom is dedicated to LTC and the LTC Foundation for their generous and steadfast support in helping found the James Jones Literary Society HERE, at LTC on November 7, 1991."

The plaque also notes that the project was underwritten by Jerry and Victoria Bayne in September 2026.

"The connection to the James Jones Literary Society makes this space especially meaningful," Ambrose said. "Lincoln Trail College has long been a place where people come together to learn, create, discuss ideas and connect with one another. The Socrates Rock Garden captures that spirit while also celebrating an important part of our college's history."

The garden sits just a short distance from Miller Lake, giving instructors the opportunity to use the space for classes and discussions while also providing students, employees and visitors with another place to enjoy the campus.

Parkhurst Landscaping completed the installation with assistance from Lincoln Trail College Operations and Maintenance employees.

"I can't wait to see how our faculty and students make this space their own," Ambrose said. "Whether it becomes the setting for a literature discussion, a class meeting or an unexpected conversation between students, that is exactly what we hope an outdoor classroom can inspire."



FROM DREAM TO REALITY: LTC GRADUATE TAKES LEADERSHIP ROLE AT CCRC



Seven years ago, Brady Clampet was a student worker in Lincoln Trail College's Marketing and Communications office when he got an inside look at plans for a new community recreation center. He was studying sport management, gaining valuable work experience and beginning to imagine what his future might hold.

As plans for the Crawford County Recreation Center began taking shape, Clampet saw more than a new facility. He saw a place where he wanted to build his career.

He even arranged a meeting with college administrators, including then-LTC President Ryan Gower, to share his ambition of someday working at the recreation center.

In October 2026, that dream became a reality when the 2019 LTC graduate became executive director of the Crawford County Recreation Center.

"It's unreal," Clampet said. "It's been a plan for, you know, since 2019, that I would like to come to the CCRC and eventually work."

For Clampet, the appointment represents the culmination of a journey that began in the classrooms and offices of Lincoln Trail College and continued through several professional experiences that helped prepare him for the opportunity.

As a student, Clampet was part of the college's first sport management class. He also worked in the Marketing and Communications office, where he developed relationships and gained exposure to the planning process for what would eventually become the recreation center.

When the project was announced, Clampet wanted to make his interests known.

"The plans were announced, and I was like, 'Hey, I would love to get a meeting with Dr. Gower,'" Clampet recalled. "I just professed that I wanted to



eventually work out at the rec center. It's crazy how it's worked out."

After earning his associate degree from LTC in 2019, Clampet transferred to Indiana State University, where he earned a bachelor's degree in sport management in December 2021.

He credits Lincoln Trail College with providing a foundation that made the transition possible, both academically and financially.

"They set me up. My credits transferred to Indiana State," Clampet said. "I think I would not be here without LTC, for sure."

Following his graduation from Indiana State, Clampet built a diverse professional background that included positions in college athletics recruiting, information technology, sales and community engagement.

Most recently, he served as community manager for United Way of Knox County, a position he held beginning in November 2025. He also gained experience organizing sporting events through Randy's Court, developing skills in tournament management, sponsorships and community partnerships.

Clampet believes those experiences helped prepare him to lead a facility that serves a broad range of community interests.

"I've done a lot of growing, and I think that I'm prepared for this role now compared to when I was younger," he said. "I have a lot more experience, thankfully, with the United Way, with Randy's Court, learning how to get sponsorships, learning how to do community engagement, and working with everybody within the community."

His experience with United Way provided insight into building community relationships, while his work with Randy's Court strengthened his understanding of sports programming and event management.

Now, Clampet hopes to bring those two areas together at the Crawford County Recreation Center.



His vision extends beyond traditional fitness facilities and athletic programs. He wants the recreation center to become a gathering place where people of different ages and interests can find opportunities to participate, connect and become more involved in the community.

"A place where people want to come. I think that's huge," Clampet said. "If kids don't have anywhere to go, I would love for them to come out here. If there's a community event that you want to run, I want it out here."

That philosophy includes expanding recreational leagues and fitness classes while exploring opportunities for programs that might not typically be associated with a recreation center.

Clampet mentioned activities such as garden clubs as examples of how the facility could serve people whose interests extend beyond sports and exercise.

"It's not just gonna be sports. It's not just gonna be workouts. It's gonna be everything," he said.

Above all, Clampet wants the facility to become a central part of community life.

"When you think of community, I want you to think of the rec center," he said. "I want you to think of the Crawford County Rec Center."

For Clampet, the opportunity is especially meaningful because it allows him to continue building his career in the community he calls home while working on the Lincoln Trail College campus.

He said his time at LTC remains an important part of his story, from the relationships he developed as a student worker to the opportunity to help establish the college's sport management program.

"Overall, I love Crawford County. I'm very involved in Crawford County. LTC has been so good to me in so many ways," Clampet said. "Being a part of the first sport management class, I kind of hold that high. I think that's really cool."

Now, each day he walks into the recreation center, he is reminded of how far he has come since first expressing interest in the facility as a college student.

What began as a conversation about a future career has become an opportunity to shape the future of a community resource.

And for Clampet, the significance of that journey is not lost on him.

"I really feel like 18-year-old Brady is so proud of 27-year-old Brady and all the hard work that he's put in," he said. "I'm very grateful, and I hope to help a lot of people."

LTC STUDENTS CELEBRATE FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE JOURNEYS

For Lincoln Trail College students Al Crosley and Molly Stanton, attending college means more than earning a degree. It means exploring new opportunities, building connections and creating futures that once seemed uncertain.

As the nation observes National First-Generation College Celebration Day on Nov. 8, their experiences highlight the challenges and opportunities that come with being among the first in their families to pursue higher education.





For Crosley, a sophomore studying toward a career in animation, being a first-generation college student offers a unique sense of accomplishment.

"I think it's really cool because, usually your parents are more experienced than you in, like, everything. But not this," Crosley said. "It's that one thing I get to be like, I'm going here and I'm doing something maybe a little bit more than you."

Although he was excited about studying art and animation, Crosley said the prospect of attending college initially felt overwhelming.

"College just seemed like such a big step, financially," he said. "And just in life, it just seemed way too big."

Financial concerns became one of his biggest challenges, but support from LTC's TRIO Student Support Services program helped him navigate the process.

Crosley said his TRIO advisers encouraged him to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, which helped him qualify for grants. They also encouraged him to pursue tuition waivers connected to his interests in music and theater.

"I got half tuition on music and half tuition on theater," he said. "So I'm able to do what I love, take the classes I like, but, it's able to pay for my school. It's awesome."

Theater has become an especially meaningful part of his college experience.

"Theater really has been a family to me," Crosley said.

He described the relationships he has developed with fellow performers as a source of comfort and encouragement, particularly during difficult times.

"It's nice to have that place on campus where I can go and just be myself," he said.

His experiences have also taken him far beyond the LTC campus. Through TRIO, Crosley earned an opportunity to travel to Washington, D.C., where he met with members of Congress and experienced the nation's capital firsthand. He was selected after writing an essay as part of an opportunity offered to students across the Illinois Eastern Community Colleges district.

Crosley said the experience was something he never imagined having before attending college.

Now, he has a clear vision for his future. After graduating from LTC in the spring, Crosley plans to transfer to Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana, to study 2D animation. He hopes to eventually build a career in animation production, potentially in Los Angeles or Atlanta.

While Crosley has found his direction through creative pursuits, Stanton's journey has been shaped by independence, involvement and the relationships she has developed at LTC.

A second-year student, Stanton moved away from home to attend college, an experience that brought both excitement and uncertainty.

"Honestly, for me, since I moved kind of far away, I was nervous about being away from home," Stanton said. "But also, it did make me excited to be away from home because it's a completely different environment."

She said her first visit to LTC helped ease those concerns because she was drawn to the community surrounding the college.

Like many first-generation students, Stanton also faced the challenge of learning how to manage college expenses and responsibilities on her own. She credits her family and the support she found at LTC with helping her adjust.

"My parents have been a big support, but honestly, just the community," she said. That community has become an important part of her college experience.

Stanton has worked in the Student Services office, participated in student government and earned membership in Phi Theta Kappa, an honor society for community college students. She has also found support through her soccer coaches and other members of the college community.

Those experiences have helped







her develop relationships that extend beyond the classroom.

"I've been able to reach out to everybody in the community and just kind of build my own family here," she said.

Stanton is now preparing for the next chapter of her life. She plans to graduate early in December and begin working in special education.

"I am very excited because I kind of sped through everything really fast, and I was able to do that here with all the support," she said. "So I'm excited to get my real life started."

Although their experiences have been different, Crosley and Stanton share an appreciation for the opportunities college has provided and the people who have helped them along the way.

Both also have advice for other first-generation students who may be uncertain about pursuing higher education.



Crosley believes college offers lessons that extend far beyond academics.

"It's like adulthood light. It's like a training area for you," he said.

Stanton encourages prospective students to explore their options and take advantage of the resources available to them.

"It's nice because there's so many resources here that you can figure out truly what you want to do for the rest of your life," she said.

National First-Generation College Celebration Day is observed annually on Nov. 8, commemorating the signing of the Higher Education Act of 1965, which expanded access to higher education through federal financial aid programs and other initiatives.

TRICK OR TREAT AT THE TRAIL DRAWS 2000 VISITORS TO LTC

Lincoln Trail College welcomed approximately 2,000 visitors to campus Oct. 22 for its annual Trick or Treat at the Trail, filling the college with costumes, candy and Halloween excitement. The event, which has become LTC's largest one-day community gathering, brings together families, students, employees and local organizations for an evening of fun.



A big part of the event's success comes from Lincoln Trail College students, who help transform campus into a Halloween destination. Student-athletes, clubs and organizations embrace the opportunity to interact with children and families, creating a festive atmosphere that extends well beyond handing out candy. Their enthusiasm and creativity have become hallmarks of the annual celebration.



"Trick or Treat at the Trail is one of those events that truly shows what makes Lincoln Trail College special," LTC President Tona Ambrose said. "We love welcoming thousands of people to our campus, but what makes the evening so memorable is seeing our students and staff engage with the community. Their energy, creativity and willingness to make the night special for children are what bring this event to life. It's a wonderful reminder that Lincoln Trail College is more than a place to earn an education. We're part of this community, and we love bringing people together."

COX SHARES CRAWFORD COUNTY HISTORY AT LTC

Local history took center stage at Lincoln Trail College as alumnus Kim Cox ('75) shared excerpts from *Historical Handbook of Crawford County, Illinois* with area residents interested in learning more about Crawford County's past.



During the reading in the LTC Learning Commons, Cox highlighted stories from the 445-page book, which explores the county's early settlers and development and includes both historic and current photographs.

Cox, a retired lawyer who grew up in Robinson, has maintained close ties to Crawford County and has published two books about the area's history. His family's roots in the county stretch back generations, helping fuel his longtime interest in preserving and sharing its stories.

HARLEM WIZARDS BRING BASKETBALL, LAUGHTER, AND COMMUNITY TOGETHER



The Lincoln Trail College Sports Center was filled to standing room only Oct. 28 as the Harlem Wizards brought their high-energy brand of basketball entertainment to Robinson for an evening of laughter, friendly competition and community spirit.

Hosted by the Lincoln Trail College Foundation, the fundraising event brought together families, students and community members for a night featuring basketball tricks, comedy and audience participation.

"To look around the Sports Center and see it packed with families enjoying themselves was incredible," said Bill Sandiford, executive director of the Lincoln Trail College Foundation. "We wanted to bring something special to our community, and seeing the excitement on the faces of the kids and hearing the laughter throughout the gym made the evening everything we hoped it would be."

The Harlem Wizards, known for combining basketball with theatrical entertainment, took on Close Second, a team of local celebrities that included area teachers and other familiar faces from the community.

While the Wizards entertained the crowd with their ball-handling skills, trick shots and comedic antics, members of Close Second joined in the fun, stepping outside their usual roles and onto the basketball court.

The event was about more than basketball. It also demonstrated the community's support for Lincoln Trail College and the Foundation's efforts to create experiences that bring people together.

First Robinson Savings Bank and Reinoehl Kehlenbrink helped make the event accessible to young people throughout the area by sponsoring free tickets for Crawford County youth.

"We are especially grateful to First Robinson Savings Bank and Reinoehl Kehlenbrink for helping us make this experience available to so many young people," Sandiford said. "For some of those kids, this may have been their first opportunity to see a show like this. Being able to open the doors to them, regardless of their family's ability to purchase tickets, is something we're proud of."

Lincoln Trail College student-athletes also contributed to the evening's success. Members of

the men's and women's basketball teams were among the student-athletes who assisted with the event, helping welcome visitors and support the activities.

The standing-room-only crowd reflected the enthusiasm surrounding the event and the community's willingness to support activities that benefit the college.
For many in attendance, the evening offered an opportunity to experience the Sports Center in a different way, transforming the home of Statesmen and Lady Statesmen basketball into a showcase of family-friendly entertainment.

Sandiford said the event illustrated how the Foundation can bring the college and community together in meaningful ways.

"The Foundation's mission is about creating opportunities, and sometimes those opportunities go beyond the classroom," Sandiford said. "When we can bring our community together, showcase our campus and give families an experience they'll remember, that's a win for everyone involved."









DECEMBER ATHLETIC EVENTS

Men's Basketball

1	Mineral Area College	7:00
3	at Millikin JV	TBA
5	Community Christian (Mich.)	3:00
9	Lake Land College	6:00
12	at Kaskaskia College	3:00

Women's Basketball

1	Mineral Area College	5:00
5	Olive-Harvey College	1:00
8	Lewis & Clark Community College	5;00
10	at Kaskaskia College	5:00
12	Volunteer State Community College	1:00

Watch LTC home games live on ltcathletics.com

LTC WINS SECOND REGION XXIV MEN'S SOCCER CHAMPIONSHIP





Lincoln Trail College won its second NJCAA Region XXIV men's soccer championship with a 3-1 victory over Illinois Central College on Saturday, Oct. 31, at Robinson High School.

The championship is the Statesmen's first since 2023.

Hayase Taira scored two goals and added an assist to lead the Statesmen. Inaki Azocar scored the other goal, while Jeykol Mosquera recorded an assist.

Goalkeeper Hector Ortiz made five saves in the victory.

Lincoln Trail advanced to the championship match with a 2-0 win at Southwestern Illinois College on Oct. 27 in the opening round of the Region XXIV Tournament.

AUGUST SPEED EARNS ALL-REGION VOLLEYBALL HONORS



Lincoln Trail College sophomore August Speed has been named to the NJCAA Region XXIV All-Region Volleyball Team after a season in which she ranked among the nation's leaders in kills and kills per set.

Speed ranks second nationally in NJCAA Division I with 5.84 kills per set and 13th in total kills, according to the NJCAA's statistical rankings. She led Region XXIV in both categories.

In 23 matches, Speed has recorded 505 kills. She also has 289 digs, 45 service aces and 15 block assists.

Speed has more than doubled her kills total from last season, when she recorded 258 kills in 81 sets and averaged 3.19 kills per set. She also increased her digs total from 104 last season to 289 this year.

She was a two-time NJCAA Region XXIV Player of the Week.

Speed joins a list of recent Lincoln Trail College All-Region volleyball sections that includes Hannah Saucerman and Faith Shull in 2023, Jaylee Hayes and Victoria Schopmeyer in 2022, and Tori Combs in 2021.

She helped the Lady Statesmen advance to the NJCAA Division I Midwest District Tournament for the first time since 2022.

LTC IN PICTURES



Lincoln Trail College alumnus Kim Cox ('75) shares excerpts from his new book, Historical Handbook of Crawford County, Illinois, during a reading in the college's Learning Commons.



Members of the Illinois Eastern Community Colleges Institutional Outreach team gather for a group photo at Lincoln Trail College during the annual Fall Workshop.



Crawford County Development Association Executive Director Resa Shaner introduces The 618 to the IO team during its Fall Workshop at Lincoln Trail College.



LTC volleyball sophomores are recognized during Sophomore Night festivities ahead of the Lady Statesmen's home match against Frontier Community College.



LTC men's soccer sophomores display commemorative photos following their Sophomore Day match against Illinois Central College, celebrating their contributions to the program.



Sophomores from the Lady Statesmen soccer team proudly display commemorative photos during a special recognition following their match against Illinois Central College.



Families and children in costume enjoy Lincoln Trail College's annual Trick or Treat at the Trail, which welcomed more than 2,000 attendees to campus.



Pirates, adventure and plenty of theatrical talent took center stage as Lincoln Trail College presented its fall production of Treasure Island.