

## The horrifying truth about human trafficking

According to HTCourts.org, in 2021 Nebraska had 57 different cases dealing with human trafficking which affected 107 victims and survivors. Too often, high schoolers don't find this topic to be that important. However, it is a problem all over our country, including small towns in Nebraska. The color of your skin doesn't matter, where you come from doesn't matter, and your age doesn't matter. You can be a victim of human trafficking.

The first step in protecting yourself is to have a better understanding of how human trafficking works. It often starts with groomers who will build a connection with a child or young person so they can manipulate them. There are many ways that groomers attempt this. First, they try to appear familiar. Then, they might start developing your trust by getting to know you. After that, they try to establish secrecy or slowly erode boundaries that you have set. Finally, they will start using direct intimidation.

Young kids often get into these situations because they are seeking attention, sympathy or love. The organization YouthOnline.SharedHope.org explains, "Instead of kidnapping their victims and keeping them in a dungeon, they use their victim's love and trust to manipulate them into doing whatever they want, including sexual acts, oftentimes without anyone around them knowing something is wrong."

Students must learn that just because someone gives you attention, it doesn't mean that they are a safe person to give your trust or information to. Use safe practices such as not meeting online acquaintances in real life. Don't be alone or isolated with strange or new adults. Always let your parents know where you are going and who you are with. Tell a trusted adult like a parent, teacher, or school counselor if something or someone seems off or makes you uncomfortable. Be aware of your surroundings.

One of the hot spots for human trafficking in Nebraska is Grand Island especially during the State Fair. This is because there are thousands of people in a concentrated area at the same time. Many students and families from Southern Valley attend this event each year. Additionally, throughout the school year, there are many places that Southern Valley travels to for sports and activities that draw large crowds. While you aren't likely to get trafficked every time you step out of your house and attend large events, there is always the possibility of it happening. We know that groomers are out there, so you must be aware of your surroundings; it is a key factor in your safety.

It might seem like human trafficking is a topic that high schoolers don't have to worry about in our small communities. You don't always have to feel targeted because there are many different things that you can do to make sure that you are safe. Stay alert. Know who is around you and what is going on. Stay with a group of friends or with a trusted adult or sponsor at school activities, and have an exit plan just in case something doesn't feel right or something goes wrong. Be safe so you don't become a statistic.

## Ashley Serfontein-- Headline Writing

by Celia Zetterberg

Cash or card? While customers might expect to hear that question in a restaurant, it's not something many people would expect to hear at a high school concession stand. This year Southern Valley Schools installed a card reader for both the outside football and track concessions as well as the inside concession stand. For many fans, it is more convenient to carry a card than cash while attending a sporting event.

The idea of adding a card reader was brought up by the Southern Valley administration over the summer. High School principal Josh Lanik said, "Fewer people carry cash as we now live in a world where using a card or a cash payment app is almost everywhere. We decided to go with the Square so we could incorporate inventory and stock into our process for the students to learn real-life skills."

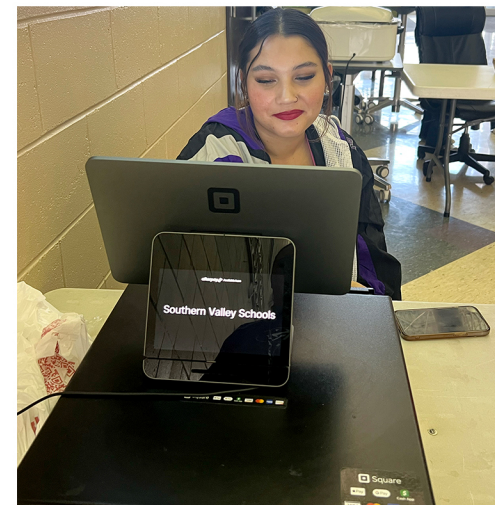
Southern Valley High School business teacher Joe York works with students to organize and run concessions at all home events. It wasn't difficult to implement the new payment option because "It's the same as when you are checking out of a grocery store or coffee shop and you can pay using debit, credit, or cash app," said York.

When it comes to transactions, the behind-the-scenes process is relatively simple. York said, "Our Square point-of-sale account is linked to a school bank account and transfers funds on a schedule to the school."

There is a cost when using the Square. The school is charged a fee which equals 2.6% of the sale when taking a payment. For this reason, the school examined and adjusted concession prices at the beginning of the year. Slightly higher concession prices have not impacted sales. York said, "So far this school year, sales have increased by 25%. It is amazing how many people rely on their cards, especially the cash app cards."

For students working in concessions and using the Square, there was a quick training session that focused on finding the correct screens to enter the items being purchased. The overall system is a quick, easy, and effective way to take care of the finances of the concession stand. York said, "A big benefit is the people in the concessions stand that are making and delivering food do not have to deal with money."

As the winter sports season gets started, be sure to check out the great food options offered at the Southern Valley concession stand. Bring your card; cash is not required.



Cheerleader Brooklyn Santifer runs the register with the card reader at the home wrestling tournament on December 8, 2023.

## No cash? No problem SV concessions now accepts cards

## Joe's Snack Shack

### Menu

Something hot.  
Something tasty.

- Hot dogs.....
- Nachos.....
- Pretzles.....
- Candy.....

Snickers, Twix, Skittles, M&Ms

- Pizza.....
- Popcorn.....
- Pop.....
- Water.....

Now accepting  
cards!!

Located outside of the  
Southern Valley gym.

Open 30 minutes before games  
until the 4th quarter.



Square





## Shaking the boots off country

Zach Bryan partners with diverse artists to create a new sound

by Addy Warner

Zach Bryan. Sound familiar? Undoubtedly you've heard about him on the news or heard him singing on the radio. Earlier this year Bryan shocked fans with his fourth album titled *Zach Bryan*. While on the *Burn, Burn, Burn* tour, the singer dropped the album on August 25, 2023, and it quickly rose to be the number one listened to album in the country.

If you don't know much about Bryan, you should. In his short career, he has released four albums. Bryan began his jump into the country music genre when he, along with a few Navy buddies, decided to film and upload the song, "Revival," to YouTube. After the video started to go viral and get recognition, Bryan received an honorable discharge to continue his music career. In 2019, he released his first album *DeAnn* in honor of his late mother. After that he went on to release three more albums. His most recent, a self-titled album, has been gaining attention on the popular app TikTok. Bryan has always understood the power of social media marketing and had the album shaking things up and going viral before the release date was even announced.

In the newest album, Bryan has partnered up with other talented artists, some from different music genres, to write a few of his new songs which have shaken up the country genre. When Bryan announced he was writing a song with The Lumineers, fans from both genres were patiently awaiting its release. Bryan and The Lumineers created a piece, "Spotless," that expertly bridges country and folk rock. They found the perfect balance, making it feel as though they were equally involved in the performance of the song. It was a well-written and well-executed song. To me, it is about embracing one's imperfections within a relationship and finding self-acceptance. It's a message that everyone should think about and embrace in their personal lives.

If you are trying to reminisce on a past heartbreak, "I Remember Everything," is the song for you. This song included singer/songwriter Kacey Musgraves, whose songs always have a strong message behind them. Both artists come from the country genre and have been producing songs for some time. "I Remember Everything" is about remembering the little things from a past relationship, whether it ended on good or bad terms, that somehow pop into your mind at random times. Throughout the song, you hear different perspectives about how and why the relationship didn't work out. With the expertise of both Bryan and Musgraves, the song evokes an emotional response from fans and quickly became a favorite for many.

Though this was not my favorite album Bryan has released, many fans would beg to differ. Personally, I enjoyed when it was just Bryan and his guitar singing true country. I do enjoy some of his new collaborations with the various artists, but I will always prefer his true country tracks. After expanding his image on TikTok, Bryan gained a lot of attention and grew his fan base which caused a surge in the price of concert tickets. Older fans started to complain. I admire that Bryan has done his best to keep tickets at a fair price and even decided to perform more concerts. Older fans, such as me, have a hard time seeing tickets go to the new fan base who only know a few songs and often don't see the importance behind the lyrics.

Those wanting to hear songs from the new album performed live will have the chance in 2024. The *Quittin' Time* tour is scheduled to perform in Omaha on April 29 and 30. Bryan is a talented artist. Although he has shaken up the country genre with his new album, older and new fans alike can appreciate his music. The self-titled album, *Zach Bryan*, is worth a listen.

To purchase his albums, find concert tickets, or for more information on the artist, go to his official website

<https://www.zachbryan.com/>

## Superhero success on and off the stage

Southern Valley's One Act educates and entertains

by Kamden Bose

Superman, Spiderman, and Batman. Most know these famous superheroes, but there are many superheroes that don't receive the same attention. Enter *The Amazing Angelman*. This fall, the Southern Valley One Act team performed *The Amazing Angelman*, a play that follows the life of a 13-year-old boy named James Cooper who is confined to a wheelchair because he has Angelman Syndrome (AS).

The play takes the audience into the imagination of James, played by Kamden Bose, who is a self-professed superhero. By using his imagination, James escapes his wheelchair. In his fantasy, James has supersonic hearing and the ability to fly, to shoot lasers from his eyes, and to turn invisible. With the help of his sidekick Stargirl, played by Tori Bose, the Amazing Angelman uses his superpowers to help save lives and defeat villains.

The script not only highlights how Angelman Syndrome affects the person with the disability but also how the disability affects the parents. Isaac Hamilton and Laurel Stalder played the roles of James's parents, John and Tina Cooper. Hamilton and Stalder demonstrated the emotional shifts between uncertainty, sadness, optimism, anger, remorse, and acceptance that parents of children with AS often endure. "Acting as James's father in the play has taught me that having a child with a disability can lead to difficulties in marriage and at work," said Hamilton.

The One Act team performed the play a total of five times this year. They kicked off their season on November 3, by attending the Elm Creek Early Bird Competition. They performed at the Southern Valley Fine Arts Festival the following week. Later in November at the RPAC East conference competition, the Eagles came away as the runner-up performance. Receiving the honorable mention acting awards were Isaac Hamilton, Laurel Stalder, Adi Hunt, Tori Bose, and Bennet Jorgenson. Kamden Bose was awarded the Most Outstanding Male Performer Award.

Although the One Act team came up short at conference, they went on to win the C2-4 district competition, earning a trip to state One Act in Norfolk. Isaac Hamilton, Laurel Stalder, Ann Bose, and Sully Bantam received honorable mention male and female actor awards. Kamden Bose and Tori Bose were awarded Outstanding Male and Female Performer awards.

The Eagles ended their season on December 7, at the Johnny Carson Theatre in Norfolk. Competing against the best plays in the state of Nebraska, the team ended up placing 5th out of six teams. Southern Valley One Act director, Ashley Blickenstaff, said, "I am so proud of all the students who put in the time and effort to bring this amazing story to life. I'm certain that our play touched the hearts of many people and that wouldn't have been possible without our amazing cast and crew."

According to *angelman.org*, Angelman syndrome is a rare neuro-genetic disorder caused by a loss of function of the UBE3A gene in the maternal chromosome 15. People with AS experience seizures, difficulty walking, talking, and balancing, developmental delays, and hypermotoric behavior. This disability may be difficult to initially diagnose because people with AS appear to have a happy and excitable demeanor. "By playing James's mother, I've learned that the mother may put a lot of blame on herself because AS is inherited from the maternal gene," said Laurel Stalder. Angelman Syndrome occurs in 1 of every 15,000 children. There are 500,000 known cases worldwide. To put condition, Down Syndrome, occurs in 1 of every 700 children.

Superman, Spiderman, and Batman have all had success at the box office, but the Amazing Angelman with qualifying for state One Act, the Southern Valley One Act team impacted every audience who watched their performance. "Seeing people crying in the crowd because they were so moved from our play assured me that we made a difference," said Blickenstaff.

Reflecting on this year's play, Hamilton said, "Prior to this year, I hadn't even heard of Angelman Syndrome. This play has helped me learn how Angelman and other disabilities can affect the parents and loved ones of the person with the disability."

Extra-curricular activities are designed to teach high school students life lessons beyond the classroom, but this year's play allowed the students to flip the script and teach a life lesson to each member of their audience. For more information on Angelman Syndrome, visit *angelman.org*.



Isaac Hamilton and Kamden Bose perform *The Amazing Angelman*.

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## Jared Fausch: The tech guy every school needs

by Lily Holste

Southern Valley has a lot of technology, specifically Chromebooks, MacBooks and iPads. Without all of this technology, the school wouldn't be able to function properly, so the school has one other necessary piece: Jared Fausch, also known as 'The Tech Guy.' Fausch had been keeping the school up and running for 19 years. While students know Mr. Fausch fixes computers, there is so much more to learn about him.

Before coming to Southern Valley, Fausch graduated from the University of Nebraska at Kearney with a degree in Telecommunication management. There have been many technological changes since Fausch graduated from college in 2005. "The technology landscape has changed greatly. The college had computer labs with Zip Drives that could hold just 500MB and Wifi wasn't readily available," said Fausch.

Those changes have made technology jobs in schools more demanding. He monitors internet sources and websites that students and teachers use each day. "I also work with state reporting for NDE Adviser which tracks student demographics, attendance, grades, and assessment scores," said Fausch.

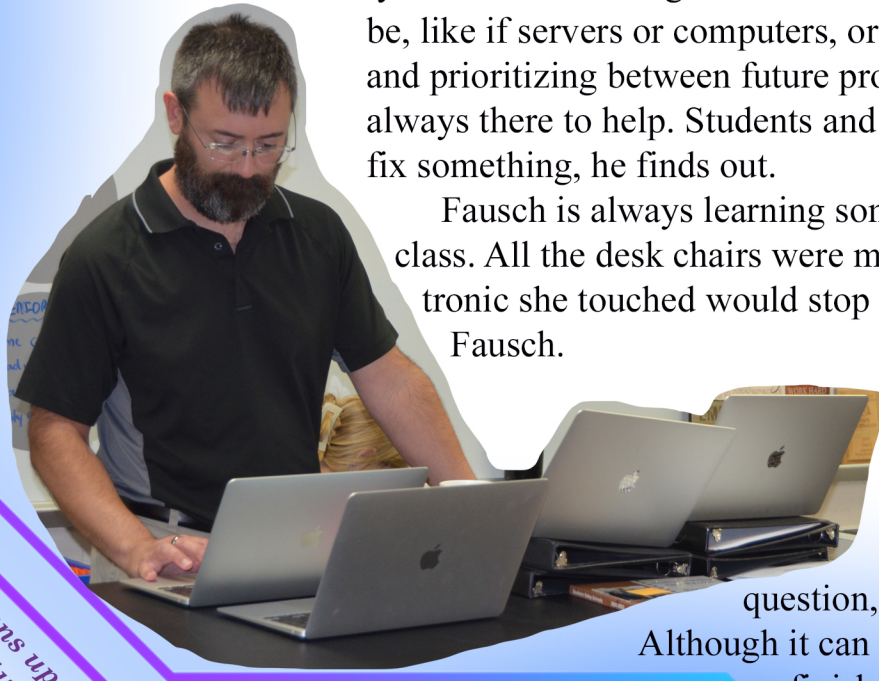
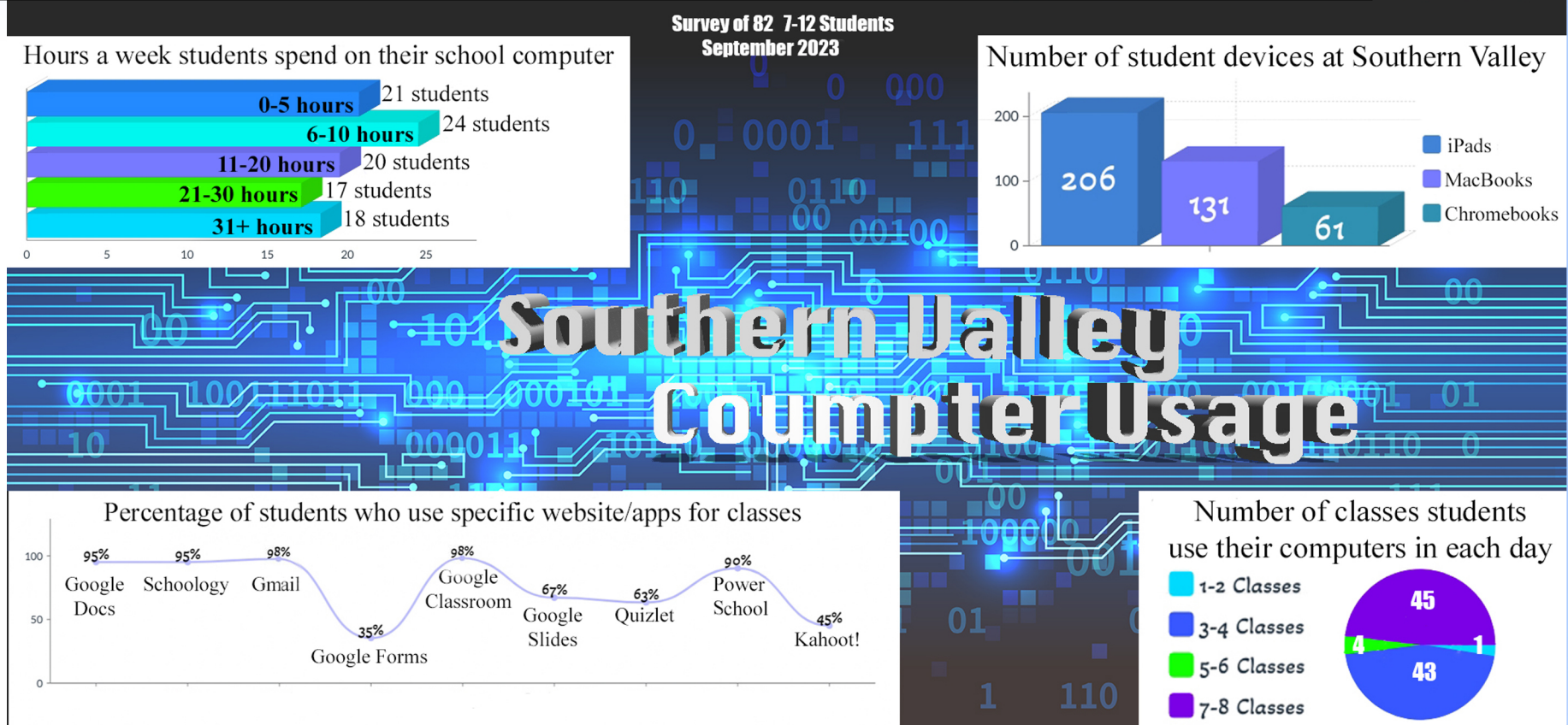
The job of a technology manager can be complicated. "Planning projects for the next few school years and foreseeing what the needs of the district will

be, like if servers or computers, or networking equipment might need to be replaced is challenging," said Fausch. Because technology changes daily, "there's a lot of balancing and prioritizing between future projects, helping with day-to-day minor issues, and taking time to find new solutions." Because things can go wrong at any time, Fausch is always there to help. Students and staff can contact him through email or a Google Chat which allows him to be available when problems arise. If Fausch doesn't know how to fix something, he finds out.

Fausch is always learning something new. One moment that he recalls was, "When I first started working for the district, the high school had a computer lab for a typing class. All the desk chairs were metal framed except for one that had a wooden chair. It was explained to me that a girl in the class had a 'grounding' issue--that anything electronic she touched would stop working. The last two computers in the lab she was using stopped working. I had to look it up later. It is called 'The Slider phenomenon,' said Fausch.

There is currently a high demand of jobs in the IT industry, and it will most likely continue as our society continues to develop and rely on new technologies. To be successful in an IT job Fausch said, "I think it's important to have a good work ethic, to be dependable, to have troubleshooting skills, not to give up on a project but find out how to finish a task either on your own or to learn where to go to ask help or to get ideas."

Fausch enjoys his job at Southern Valley. Students and staff know when they have a problem, his first response is always the question, "When was the last time you reset your computer?" The Tech Guy knows that many problems can be solved with a simple restart. Although it can be challenging at times, Fausch said. "The best part of my job is being able to help others, getting them going to where they can finish their work."



Mr. Fausch runs updates on several student MacBooks at once.