

# Obituaries

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## Judith Ann (Schlegelmilch) Hastings



Judith Ann (Schlegelmilch) Hastings, 80, of Youngstown, left this earth peacefully on Aug. 27, 2023.

Judy was born Sept. 4, 1942, to Gilbert and Ann (Lenzen) Schlegelmilch in Shakopee, Minnesota. She was valedictorian of her class at Crosby-Ironton High School in 1960 and received her bachelor's degree in education from Valparaiso University in 1964. She married Richard A. Hastings the same year, and the couple moved to California, where Judy earned her master's degree in early childhood development at UC Berkeley in 1967.

Judy and Richard had two children, Michelle and Alan. In 1976, the family relocated to Saudi Arabia with Aramco, where Judy taught kindergarten for Aramco Schools, and English as a Second Language, and led her daughter's Girl Scout troop. An enthusiastic traveler, Judy loved exploring the world with her family.

After moving to Youngstown, Judy taught kindergarten, then fifth grade, at Colonial Village Elementary in Niagara Falls for 20 years. She was a regular substitute at the Stella Niagara school in Youngstown after re-

tiring, and was always pleased to run into former students around town. Judy was a voracious reader, a regular at Riverview Fitness, Silver Sneakers classes, and loved savoring a salmon burger at the Silo Restaurant in Lewiston. Her grandsons were her pride and joy.

Judy is survived by her husband, Richard Hastings, of Youngstown; children: Michelle (Dan) Hannon of Eureka Springs, Arkansas, and Alan (Valerie) Hastings of Youngstown and Aix-en-Provence, France; grandchildren: Axel Hastings of Barcelo-

na, Spain; and Theo Hastings of Warwick, U.K.; a brother, John (Renee) Schlegelmilch of Plymouth, Minnesota; and nieces Sara and Erin.

At Judy's wish, there will be no memorial service; she will be cremated and her ashes spread across lavender fields in France. Donations in her memory may be made to the Stella Niagara school at <http://stella-niagara.com/support-snep/>.

Arrangements entrusted to Hardison Funeral Homes Inc. Lewiston. Please visit [www.hardisonfuneralhomes.com](http://www.hardisonfuneralhomes.com).

## NCSO: Keeping our children safe as new school year begins

BY SHERIFF MICHAEL J. FILICETTI  
Niagara County Sheriff's Office

A new school year is about to begin, and many preparations are undertaken by parents across Niagara County. Many are out purchasing the latest in backpacks or new clothes to start the year out.

In law enforcement, we have that same excitement as a new school year is about to begin for the kiddos in our communities. Our planning and considerations revolve around keeping our school children safe. That starts the minute they walk out the door to get on their school bus or walk to school. It continues once they are at school, and then make it home safely to their loved ones at the end of the school day.

I want you to know that school safety is a top priority for law enforcement in Niagara County.

Let's talk bus safety on the first day of school. With the influx of buses hitting the road, there will be more traffic on the roadways. Please allow yourself more time to get to your destination in the morning. More traffic on the

road is going to increase your commute time. Please stop for all buses when they have flashing lights activated. This applies on two-lane roadways, multi-lane roadways and divided highways. Our buses are carrying precious cargo – follow the law to avoid tragic consequences. Patrols will be observant for bus traffic and watching for violators as school begins.

Many steps have been taken to make our schools safer here in Niagara County. Many school districts have made significant investments in technology aimed at protecting the children under their care. These advancements are an effort to detect weapons, restrict entry, and identify individuals that should not be on school grounds.

It hasn't stopped there. Law enforcement and school officials meet to discuss school safety and other related topics. A recent meeting included several tabletop exercises to increase continuity between law enforcement and school administration during an emergency.

I would say that these types of

interactions are critical, should a high-stress incident develop on a school campus. Partnerships across this county now include school resource officers at all of our public-school districts. The SRO plays an important role in maintaining security, discussing safety concerns with school officials and acting as a liaison with responding law enforcement should a critical incident take place.

Another key component is training, training, training! I need to thank our partner law enforcement agencies from the federal, state and local level for working together on some terrific training for our law enforcement. Reality-based training has been provided on several occasions using school settings with a multi-jurisdictional response from several agencies. This training is the key to being prepared, should a response be needed at one of our local schools.

One final note: You will see an expanded police presence around the schools to provide extra peace of mind that we are keeping an eye on things. I don't want our presence to cause any additional

anxiety for parents, teachers or children.

On the first day of school and throughout the school year, know that your Niagara County Law En-

forcement will be there to watch over your kids.

I hope all of your children have a great year at school!

## Playground designed for all to enjoy

Continued from Page 1 and the special turf is expected to cost an estimated \$218,000.

The new playground will have an area of 5,325 square feet and will be placed near the center of Fairmount Park. Site work has already begun, and people are welcome to check it out for themselves.

"I think this is going to give that blend and give the people exactly what they want. They get that 'shiny new toy,' that's going to highlight everything that's great about the town, and also give some of the aspects of the park that people still love," Ranalli said. "The goal was to basically provide a playground where every single resident had access to it. I think we delivered. I'm proud of the work we did. It will be the first playground in Niagara County with the turf surfacing."

He said most playgrounds have rubber or mulch surfacing.

"Ours is going to have turf that has anti-static qualities so children or adults with a cochlear device – like a hearing aid, they won't feel static, especially if they have a wheelchair going over it," Ranalli

said. The turf also has antibacterial aspects to it for greater safety and health.

"Parkitects is actually going to use our playground as a featured playground when they make their pitch to other towns and organizations, because it's going to be like a premier park," he added. "It's going to be the first inclusive playground in Niagara County that's directly adjacent to an ADA-wheelchair-accessible restroom that we had installed."

It's already on site and will be 10 feet away from the playground, Ranalli said.

The playground will have an adaptive, anti-static roller slide; double-wide, two-way ramps instead of stairs; swings; a wheelchair-accessible merry-go-round; and other special features to make it inclusive and fun.

"In the future, we hope to keep the momentum going and add a pavilion close to the site with electricity," Doktor said. "This will allow community members to host birthday parties and events at the site in a comfortable area shaded from the sun and protected from any rain."

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**North Tonawanda Youth Parks & Recreation**

**FALL PILATES 2023**

**SEPT. 13 - DEC. 13, 2023**  
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**WEDNESDAY NIGHTS AT**  
**DRAKE SCHOOL GYM - NORTH TONAWANDA**  
**7:00PM - 8:00PM**  
**11 WEEK PROGRAM**

**RESIDENTS - \$44.00 PER SESSION**  
**NON-RESIDENTS - \$55.00 PER SESSION**

Registration forms can be obtained at the N.T. Recreation Department located at 500 Wheatfield St., N. Tonawanda. You may also register on line at [NTParksrec.com](http://NTParksrec.com)

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