

Bittersweet Goodbyes at EAMS

by Kassie Garland
May 21 2020 12:11 PM



Red, white and black balloons could be seen up and down Third Street in East Alton as the staff of East Alton Middle School prepared for the arrival of the 2020 8th grade graduates. The first-ever Drive-Thru Graduation at EAMS gave the graduates a chance to be acknowledged for their hard work. The event gave families the opportunity to cheer on their students and celebrate their success.

As students arrived, they were directed into place by officers of the East Alton Police Department. Students and parents lined up decorated vehicles underneath the balloon archway and prepared for their names to be called. Family members were situated across the street in the parking lot of the First United Methodist Church where they could cheer on their graduates while practicing social distancing.

EAMS principal, Kelli Decker, began the ceremony by thanking everyone. As the first student's name was called, horns blared and families cheered as one by one each 8th grader picked up their diploma and then followed the parade of vehicles from Third Street to Kent Street.



Parents expressed their appreciation for the school staff members and the ingenuity it took to pull off the spontaneous event with such success. Students had mixed feelings about the ceremony. While some were excited and enjoyed having something different to mark their transition into high school, others felt like they missed out by not having the typical graduation ceremony.

After the students received their diplomas, teachers waved and shouted goodbyes from across the street. They wished the children that they had watched grow up over the years good luck as they start high school in the fall.

Ms. Decker expressed her hopes for a more traditional ceremony to also take place if the social distancing regulations are lifted. More information will be released if the governor and health officials deem it safe.





