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J.HOP
TIMES

John Hopkins Middle School
St. Petersburg, Florida

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HADASSAH EBORDA | JHT

A magical musical

J. Hop's spring musical offers a peach of a performance.

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CHLOE MEYERS | JHT

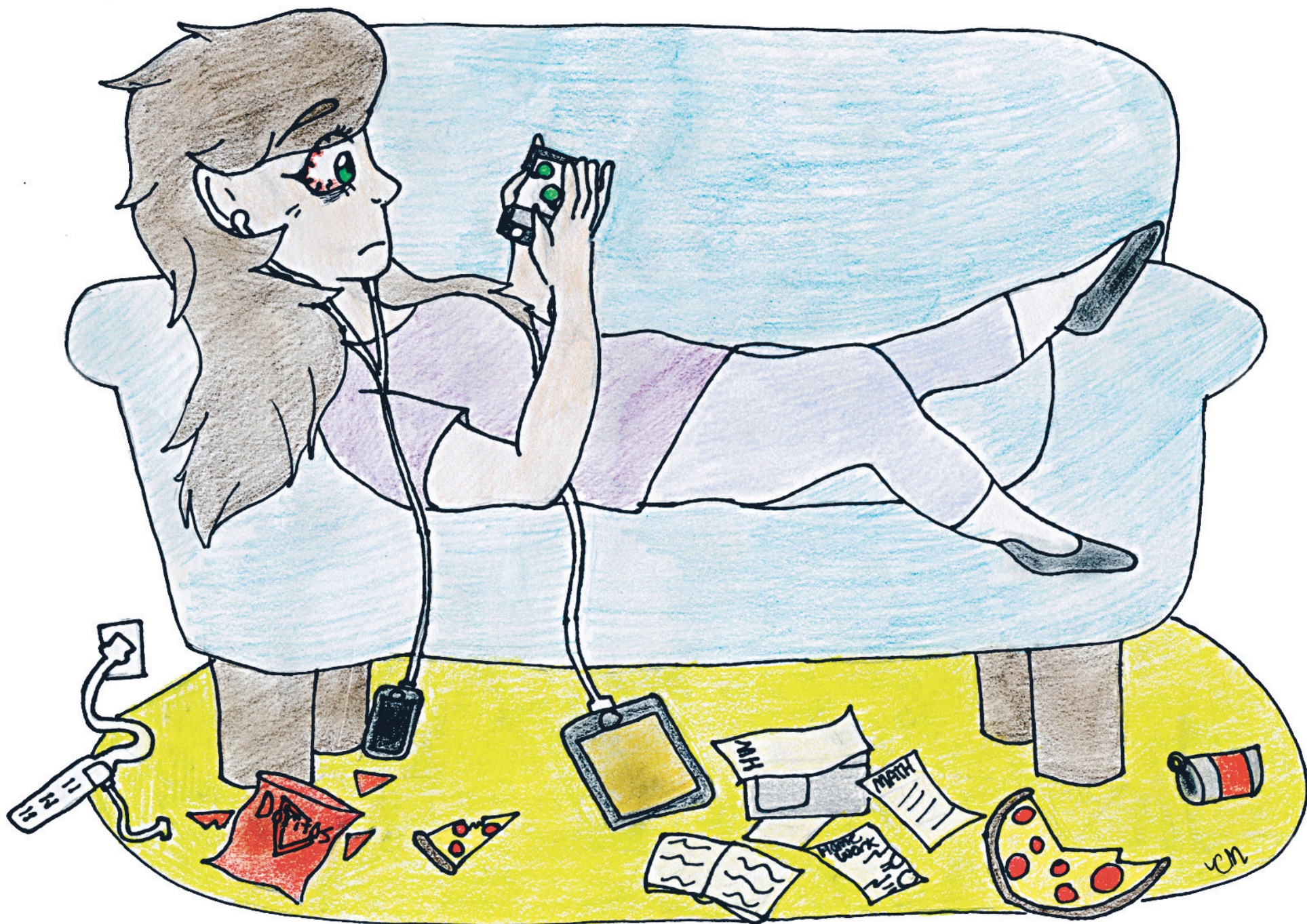
Around the world in a day

The annual Folk Festival offers fun, food and fantastic entertainment. **BACK PAGE**

Looking back and moving on

Eighth-graders share their

J. Hop memories and future plans. **PAGE 19**



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When addiction calls
Overuse of smartphones is a growing concern. **PAGE 3**

JHT staff

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The aim of the *J.Hop Times* is to fairly and honestly report the news, and to provide a forum for students, faculty and staff.

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Write a column, letter or draw a cartoon (keep it clean, no profanity or name calling.) Spell and fact-check your work. We reserve the right to correct any factual or grammatical mistakes. Sign your work and bring it to our newsroom in Building 5-113.

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First steps toward career goals

As eighth-graders prepare for their last few weeks at John Hopkins, many are moving on to separate paths. By living in Pinellas County, incoming high schoolers are provided with an array of program options to align with their future goals. For those interested in going into the medical field, there's Boca Ciega High School. Want to be a police officer? Try the criminal justice program at Pinellas Park High School. The possibilities are endless.

Of course it's sad to leave a school that you've been attending for three years, but my fellow classmates and I are excited to take the first few steps in the careers we want to pursue.

Back in February, the stress was on for many of the eighth grade students. We were all on edge to hear what



AJLA KUC
JHT
 Editor-in-Chief

programs we were accepted into. I received good news. I made it into my top two schools: Boca Ciega's medical program and St. Petersburg High School's IB program. One day I hope to become a doctor, so ultimately I decided on Boca Ciega.

But as a warning to sixth and seventh grade students, no matter what school or program you attend, you'll need to keep putting in as much effort as possible. Some colleges may think better of students who come from certain high schools, but overall GPA is going to be the main factor in their decision to admit you onto their campus.

So if you're like me and have a career in mind for when you become an adult, keep your eye on the prize and your priorities straight. If you focus on your grades and work hard in school, reaching your long-term goals will be a breeze.

Restarting with a clean slate

"Goodbyes" can be bitter-sweet. As I end the middle school chapter of my life, I look forward to what's next. For me, middle school was a rollercoaster, full of ups and downs. My eighth grade year was probably the worst year of my life. So as I move into high school, the sweet "hello" is overpowering the bitter "goodbye".

Of course I'm nervous for high school. Who isn't? But change is always good. I'm so excited to start at a new school, with new people and new teachers. The things that I was scared of in middle school are the things that will encourage me in high school. It's a clean slate for me. For all of us.

Going to a new school is scary for

everyone. You're leaving behind a school that you've come to know and understand. You are able to navigate your way around easily, you know what teachers you could talk to about things, and you had safe places around the school for you to go. But now you'll be in a new territory. You'll be fresh meat.

When you hear the word 'high school', you may think of a terrifying place with a bunch of bullies. But maybe high school isn't so bad.

High school is the place where you have to get your life together. It's the deciding factor of your future, and that's extremely scary.

Going from middle school to high school is a big step. A huge step. You have gone from a preteen to a teenager. You make the choices. You choose where you want your life to go. That's very overwhelming, but for me it's exciting at the same time.

So here's to bittersweet goodbyes, and starting fresh.



HALLE LINK
JHT Web
 Editor

John Hopkins: A great place to be?

Next year, John Hopkins Middle will become a turnaround school. I first came to J.Hop to be a part of the journalism magnet program, and since then I've definitely seen a change in how the school operates.

The school was stricter when I first arrived. The dress code was enforced more often, the work was easier, and the behavior overall was better. I really enjoyed sixth grade, and really didn't see many fights around campus.

As I moved on to seventh grade, rules started to seem less strictly enforced. Dress code was a bit looser, and people were acting out more.

But it wasn't until this year

that I noticed a lot of differences. People have been getting into a lot more fights, and we've even had several food fights. The fights don't really bother me because there have been fights at every school I've been to.

And the dress code? Forget about it. Kids seem to wear what they want with little consequence.

As J.Hop turns into a turnaround school next year, there will be lots of new teachers, a new principal and lots of other changes. I guess I understand why this school is becoming a turnaround school, but I'm not sure how long it will take for the school to make a noticeable change.

I wouldn't change my experience at this school and I wouldn't choose to have gone to Bay Point or Thurgood. This school has done a lot for me and I am extremely grateful.

Goodbye, J.Hop. And good luck.



KAYLA ANDERSON
JHT Assistant
 Editor

WHEN ADDICTION CALLS

Teens are becoming more dependent on their phones, even during school hours.

BY KAYLEE PEDIGO, GRACIELA LADERA
AND KATELYN GOHMAN
JHT Staff Writers

Eighth-grader Azaria Williams can't help but take out her cell phone during school hours at John Hopkins.

"I'm on it all day until it goes dead," she said. "I'm usually on Facebook or texting my friends."

Though the electronic device policy at JHMS prohibits the use of cell phones on campus, many students, like Azaria, risk getting into trouble with administration by pulling their phones out during class time. One reason may be that students are feeling an addictive pull to their devices throughout the day.

According to Common Sense Media, up to 50 percent of teens feel like they're addicted to their phones. But if you asked their parents, 59 percent would say their children are addicted.

Eighth-grader Makayla Schmidt admits that she might have a problem.

"In some ways I feel like it prevents me from learning skills in life," she said. "I spend most of my time on electronics."

A study done by research firm Dscout found that most people will touch their phones on average 2,617 times per day. In comparison, the top 10 percent of cell phone users are swiping or pressing buttons on their cellular devices on average 5,427 per day, or about twice as much.

"I feel like at a certain point, people start to depend on their cellphones too much," said Makayla. "And then you kind of forget how to do things by yourself when you become dependent on your phone."

Teachers have noticed students becoming dependent on their phones in their classrooms.

"I take away phones from students during breakfast, during my class, and at lunch," said eighth-grade history teacher Ms. McRobert. "Kids that are using their phones in my class tend to be ruder and more disobedient."

Common Sense Media shows that 78 percent of teens check their phones at least every hour. In other words, 78 percent of students are looking at their phones multiple times in every period of the day.

Research studies have been conducted to show that cellphone and internet use can have detrimental effects on a person. One study by Dr. Lee Hadlington from De Montford University Leicester found that the more someone uses the Internet or a cell phone, the more likely they are to have cognitive failures like not being able to pay attention during a conversation, or forgetting an appointment. In a school like John Hopkins, this might mean that the students that use their phones more may have a harder time remembering when that next assignment is due.

But, eighth-grader Morgan Davis believes using your cell phone is just too tempting for many when everybody else is doing it.

"They feel pressured by their peers to use their phones so they know what's going on online," she said.

Cur'Necia Martin and Donovan Glover contributed to this story.



KRYSTA BRAYTON | JHT

Teens stay constantly connected through social media apps on their phones.

Constantly connected

BY MARIE BAPTISTE, DAYNA HALL AND TYKERIA ISOM
JHT Staff Writers

Ding! Ding! Ding! A notification alert on your cell-phone is going off in class. Did your friend just send you a funny snap on Snapchat? Or did someone post a cool picture on Instagram?

Here at J.Hop, students use social media to communicate with friends and family throughout the day through a variety of outlets. According to a Pew survey, 71 percent of teens use more than one social media site.

Eighth-grader Nadia Walton can't imagine a day not using social media, and prefers Snapchat over all the others.

"I'm very active, because I have people depending on me for my streaks," she said.

The streaks Nadia is referring to are the Snapchat conversations she must continue within 24 hours with friends, or else lose her "streak" score.

"I also just use it to talk to people," she said. "My friends and family and everyone I know has one."

Even though Facebook is the most used social media application in the world, Snapchat is the most popular

among JHMS students. A study by Edison Research and Triton Digital found that 72 percent of Snapchat users are between ages 12 and 24.

Eighth-grader Daijanae Adams uses all of the social networks, except Facebook, and considers her use one of her main hobbies.

"My friends inspired me to get social media," she said. "I like Instagram the most because it's easier to use, in my opinion."

But not all students use social media. Eighth-grader Josue Pena said he mainly just sticks to the Internet forum Reddit to discuss video games with people.

"I barely have time for social media," he said. "It can start arguments with me and my friends."

Though eighth-grader Camila Crespo admits there's a lot of drama that can be started on social media, the good outweighs the bad.

"There are old friends I haven't talk to in a while," she said. "And with social media I can be in touch with them."

Jack Queen and Trent Lindsey contributed to this story.

A change is going to come

Faculty votes to alter two student policies for the next school year.

BY DAMYA CHARLES, GIANNA SQUILLACE, KE'NIYA BRUMADGE AND KALI COHEN

JHT Staff Writers

John Hopkins Middle School's electronic device policy and dress code policy will be changing next year, thanks to a vote conducted by the faculty. Starting next fall, students will be allowed to use electronic devices, like cell phones, during their lunch period in the cafeteria, and a more lenient dress code will align with the school district policy.

With the current electronic device policy, Mr. Williams has had to confiscate about 30 phones from

students this year.

"I think it's great that they are changing the policy next fall," he said. "There won't be any more problems with phones, and it will be less referrals we would have to write."

One of the students who had her phone taken away this year was seventh-grader Jasmine Brinson.

"I was mad when they took my phone," she said. "I want phones out at lunch because students need a break off of work once in a while."

Though phones will be allowed to be used by students during lunchtime, Mr. Williams said it can be risky for students to bring their

phones to school at all.

"The reason that we don't let phones out is because of thefts and because they are distractions," he said. "And if somebody takes someone else's phone, we are not responsible for their phones. But we try to find it."

Sixth-grader Kaleb Watson said the policy change could have negative effects.

"I don't want people to put me on their social media," he said. "And make fun of me and somebody else. Because that's not right, and there's a lot of bullies in this school."

Along with a change in the electronics policy, students will also

have more options of what to wear to J.Hop.

The current dress code requires students to wear pants, collared shirts, or an official John Hopkins Middle School t-shirt. Of the 49 staff surveyed about whether the policy should be changed, 28, or 67 percent, decided the school should go by the district policy instead.

Next year, the policy will allow students to wear a top of their choice, as long as it covers the midriff, back, sides, and shoulders. Shorts, skirts, and dresses must be mid-thigh length or longer. According to the Pinellas County School

District website "The dress and grooming of District students shall be neat and clean, promoting a positive educational environment."

Sixth-grader Samaria Tunsil really doesn't like the dress code that is in place this year.

"I think the students will go by dress code next year especially," she said. "Some students wear the same thing over and over again and that's nasty. I've only gotten in trouble for dress code two times."

The new dress code policy and the electronics device policy will be in effect on the first day of the 2017-18 school year.

A historic achievement

BY HALLE LINK AND CHLOE MEYERS

JHT Web Editor and Staff Writer

J.Hop students make history, literally. For the first time ever, a history project made in Ms. McRobert's U.S. History class is headed to the Florida History Fair competition in Tallahassee.

For this year's National History Day theme "Taking a Stand in History", eighth grade students Hadassah Eborda, Talya White, and Annika Fuller created a group performance about the Pullman Strike of 1894. The project, for which they created music, lyrics, and a script, earned first place in the preliminaries and second place at the Pinellas History Day competition. They will head to the state competition on May 7.

"It was really fun," said Annika Fuller. "I'm excited to go to states."

Ms. McRobert has been entering student projects to the Pinellas History Day for nearly a decade.

"This is the first time I've had a student win in nine years," said McRobert. "I'm really happy that they won in my last year (before retirement)."

Along with the winners, eighth-grader Makayla Schmindt's project also competed. Makayla created a website about investigative journalist Nellie Bly.

Hadassah Eborda isn't too worried about the state competition.

"Even if we don't win, it was a good experience," she said. "And I got to do it with my friends."

If the J.Hop group advances at



KRYSTA BRAYTON | JHT

National History Day winners, from left, Talya White, Hadassah Eborda, and Annika Fuller advanced to the state competition in Tallahassee for their project on the Pullman Strike of 1894.

the Florida History Day competition in May, their next stop would be the national contest in College

Park, Maryland in June. If that's the case, this year's competition will be one for the history books.

Boy Scouts of America welcomes transgender applicants

BY JAIDEN JONES AND KAYLA ANDERSON

JHT Staff Writers

In January, the Boy Scouts of America announced they will be opening membership to transgender boys.

In a statement on the organization's website, Chief Scout Executive Michael Surbaugh said, "We will accept and register youth in the Cub and Boy Scout programs based on the gender identity indicated on the application." Before now, the organization would only accept applicants based on the gender listed on their birth certificates.

Madison Cooper, an eighth-grader here at John Hopkins, believes this is a good decision. She thinks if someone chooses to change their gender, then they should be able to do anything that gender would be allowed to do.

"If you don't feel comfortable in your body and feel the need to change yourself then you can go ahead and do that," she said.

Other J.Hop students don't agree with people being able to choose what gender they are.

"It's a disgrace," said eighth-grader Hasun Wright. "If God made people the way they should be, why do you think you can change it and go in the same activities?"

The policy change, according to the Boy Scouts of America, will "bring the benefits of Scouting to the greatest number of youth possible. ... All while remaining true to our core values, outlined in the Scout Oath and Law."

The scout oath is as follows: On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout Law; to help other people at all times; to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight.

The scout law: A Scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent.

John Hopkins eighth-grader Kelly Hamil feels this will be a good chance to let transgender boys feel more comfortable in the gender that they have become.

"This is a big thing happening because people are finally starting to accept the transgender community," she said.

The Boy Scouts of America is changing their policy because they say, "communities and state laws are interpreting gender identity differently, and these laws vary widely from state to state."

"If they're transgender, they're boys," said eighth-grader Estella Banks. "It shouldn't be a big deal."

The best man for the job

Head Plant Operator Mr. Sharpe handles it all. Calmly.

BY ABBEY GUSSY AND BRIANNA MACALLUM
JHT Staff Writers

As you walk into Mr. Sharpe's office, the first thing you hear is the blare of a black walkie-talkie that sits on his desk. This time he's being alerted about a pencil that was jammed into a door lock. In his role as the Head Plant Operator, or HPO, at John Hopkins Middle, Mr. Sharpe is constantly answering calls for help around campus.

"I have to remain calm," he said. "Even when there's six, seven things going on at one time."

His ability to remain calm and handle so many tasks around campus contributed to his earning the award for Best Support Staff of the Year from the administration.

As the HPO, Sharpe's duties are vast. From mowing the lawn and spraying weeds, to picking up the trash that's left around the school.

Principal Brown believes that it was Mr. Sharpe's dedication that earned him the recognition.

"Just going the extra mile," he said. "Just working beyond his regular contracted hours, doing those extra things. Being productive, always looking for improvement, and improving our school."

Plant operator Mr. Carlos said that along with having to paint the walls and clean classrooms, one of Mr. Sharpe's main responsibilities is managing him and the other plant operators.

"There's a lot of things that he does that might be hidden, that people might not see," he said. "He's really a good worker. If you ask him to do something, you can pretty much guarantee it's going to be done."

When people first see Mr. Sharpe, they may think that he's just the janitor at JHMS. But what these people might not realize is how much of an impact he has on the daily operation of John Hopkins Middle.



HADASSAH EBORDA | JHT

Mr. Sharpe is the head plant operator at JHMS.

"I like to show that I'm the best man for the job," said Sharpe. As the words leave his mouth, the walkie-talkie starts blaring again.

WATCH IT

Mr. Sharpe talks about his job.
pcsb.org/jhoptimes



Catching up with Mr. Brown

A quarterly "state of the school" conversation with the principal

Many changes are coming to John Hopkins Middle School next year. Along with being a "turnaround school", J.Hop will also have a new principal. As Principal Brown finishes up his last few weeks at JHMS, he looks back on how the year went.

How has this year gone for you?

It's gone pretty well. As a principal I always think things can be better. There's always room for improvement.

How is FSA going so far?

I have high hopes for this year. It's difficult to predict the outcome because it's just one test. That one test makes everything. Over the year, we've gradually gotten better so I think we'll do well.

What were the highlights of this year?

The highlights of this year was being an IB candidate school, doubling the magnet students for next year, and beating the "better" schools in some testing areas. It was also really fun having the folk fair and the boys' basketball championship win.

How was this year different from past years?

I think every year I'm becoming a better principal. It's rare to actually be a perfect principal. This year's IB focus made some teachers uncomfortable but it all worked out in the end.

How has IB affected this school year?

Like I said, it made some teachers uncomfortable. But at the same time it made students focus on culture and achievement. It also provided a good experience in talking to different people from different areas.

Why are we now designated a turnaround school?

I think it still goes back to where we are as far as our school grade. I think the big picture is, for all schools, how are they performing as it relates to the standardized testing and the Florida standards assessment.

What happens now that we're a turnaround school?

We will begin to hire new teachers to fill those positions that we lost. We will continue to work towards our IB authorization. We will continue to support instruction and grow teachers. Because we know that great schools must have good teachers who are able to do good things in sometimes difficult situations.

Halle Link, JHT Staff Writer

Absences down, but still a problem

BY HALLE LINK
JHT Web Editor

Pinellas County School District has the most student absences among the state's largest districts. That's according to a report by the *Tampa Bay Times*. Though the school district leads the pack, the absentee rate at John Hopkins has actually decreased since the 2014-2015 school year.

For sixth-graders in the 14-15 school years, the average number of absences per student was about 23 absences per year. In

the 16-17 school year, it has gone down to about 15 absences. In seventh grade, what once was about 26 absences is now about 17. For the eighth grade, it was about 29 absences and it's gone down to about 22.

Although the rate of absences has steadily decreased throughout the years, teachers still feel as if they have a lot of students missing from their classes.

"Absences create a big toll in learning," said U.S. history teacher Ms. McRobert. "You can make up written work but you can't make up discussions. Some kids I

haven't seen in months."

According to the *Tampa Bay Times*, in Pinellas County 12.8 percent of students missed 21 days of school or more in 2014-2015. That's the second highest absentee rate in the Tampa Bay region, after Hernando County's 13.5 percent.

JHMS principal Mr. Brown isn't too happy with the students missing class.

"The classroom is one big puzzle," he said. "If a student isn't there, all of the pieces are affected. Absences aren't a problem, it's a dilemma needed to be managed."

Do you have a bus pass?

Late bus arrivals frustrate students and staff.

BY CUR'NECIA MARTIN
AND DONOVAN GLOVER
JHT Staff Writers

As John Hopkins eighth-grader Ernesha Harris waits at her morning camp bus stop for her ride to school, she's just not sure if she'll make it through the doors of J.Hop on time. "Being late is awful. Just awful," she said.

Ernesha rides bus 952 to school every morning, and she said the bus often doesn't make it to the school until 9:25 a.m. Once she arrives at school, she, along with other students, is required to spend 10 minutes eating breakfast, adding to her tardiness.

"Our bus has been late to school

since the first day," she said. "I think we are late because we have to pick up the other camp that's past the school."

But it's not just Ernesha's bus that arrives late to school. On days like April 3, five buses were late to school, including Ernesha's. And some days, buses arrive as much as 15 minutes after the school's 9:30 a.m. start time. Administration says a shortage of bus drivers can cause delays, especially when a substitute driver is covering and is not as familiar with the route.

The late buses aren't only hard on students, but can also be difficult for teachers to catch the students up. Eighth grade U.S. History

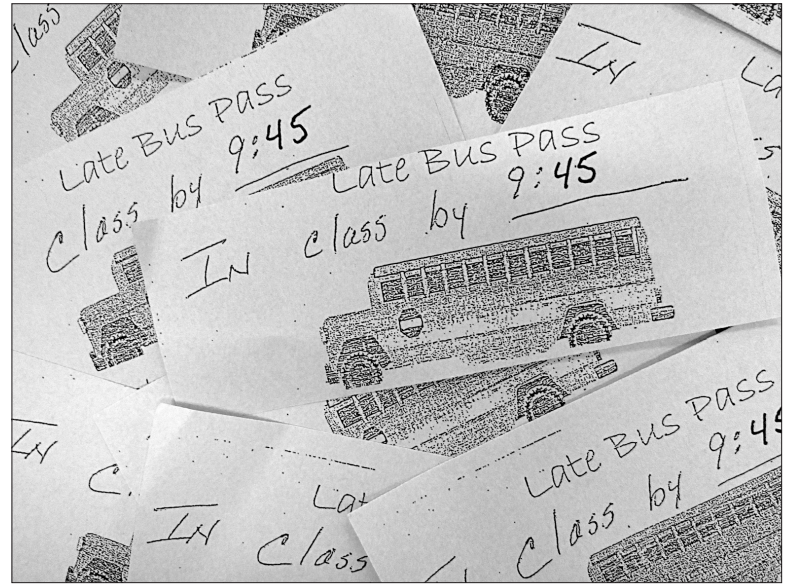
teacher Ms. McRobert has students who sometimes come in 20 minutes late to her class, and that can hurt their grades.

"They come in confused, and they are likely to have more work to take home than others because of their late start," she said.

According to Assistant Principal Dr. Chiles, an average of two of the twelve buses arrive to John Hopkins late each week.

"There isn't a solution unless you start at the district level," she said.

For now, eighth-grader Ernesha Harris can expect to keep providing her teachers with excused tardy slips unless Pinellas County School District is able to hire more drivers to cover more routes.



KRYSTA BRAYTON | JHT

Art in three dimensions

JHMS art students continue to impress and inspire.

BY ADRIANA LANDES AND LINDSEY GAVORNIK
JHT Staff Writers

St. Petersburg is quickly rising as a top arts and culture destination. One reason may be that our artists begin mastering their skills at a young age. And many of them are found right here at JHMS.

Artwork done by art focus students from JHMS was featured at the 3+Dimensions K-12 Expressive Figures Exhibition at Gibbs High School in March.

Students whose work was chosen include: Rayna Reissman, Zakhar Sennikov, Savannah Smith, Cyann Toro, Reign Fritz, Ate Porter, Samantha Neely, Madyson Mauk, Alysha James, Derrick Harrison and Christina Ni. As the title of the exhibition suggests, all submissions were three dimensional, ranging from sculptures and masks to artistic short films and 3-D drawings.

Eighth-grader Madyson Mauk created a sculpture for the exhibit. "I am happy that I can have others look at what I have improved on and what I am working on for art," she said.

Alysha James, eighth grade, was recognized for a stop-motion animation she created in Ms. Bourne's class. The project came naturally to her.

"I felt good and I'm glad I won," she said. "Although it was easy and it only took about five minutes."

Local artists, art specialists, families and teachers marveled at how young people are able to add another dimension to the thriving art scene.

LOCKED OUT

Getting around campus can be a challenge these days.

BY IOANA GAGANELOVA, LINDSEY GAVORNIK AND JAIDEN JONES
JHT Staff Writers

As J.Hop eighth-grader Makayla Schmidt rushes through the courtyard to her next class, she's stopped in her tracks. The doors to the building are locked.

"I can't get in so I have to wait for someone to unlock it," she said. "This makes us late for class, and we can get into trouble for 'skipping.'"

In March, the administration changed the Campus Security Policy to include locking the doors to the buildings 15 minutes after the class bells ring. The goal of the policy is to "restrict movement on campus during class time and send a message to our skippers that attending class daily is very important."

Campus monitor Mr. Green believes there are positives and negatives to the new policy, but overall thinks it serves a necessary purpose.

"The main reason for the locked doors is for safety," he said. "The students are in class, the students are safe, and it changes the students' idea to skip, because the doors are locked."

Mr. Green has had to help many students like Makayla who are locked out of the buildings when trying to get to class.

"Administrators like me and the other teachers, have to make adjustments, too," he said. "But our school is dynamic. There is a very small percentage of our school that forces us to secure buildings during class."

Officer Hiatt says that he has to unlock the buildings for students about every 15 minutes for those trying to get to class.

"So far it has proven to be a good system to help the school administration with students skipping," he said. "It is an alternative, it helps and it is doing what we intended."

Most of the staff at John Hopkins agree with Officer Hiatt and Mr. Green. In a survey sent to faculty, 80 percent of those polled said they like the new policy.

Maykayla Schmidt doesn't think the policy is doing much, and instead thinks it's more of a hassle than anything.

"There are skippers in every building and they still hang out there," she said. "Even if a door's locked, they find a way."



JAIDEN JONES | JHT

Doors to all buildings are locked after the tardy bell.

Walkers beware

St. Petersburg pedestrians face danger every time they cross a street.

BY KAYLEE PEDIGO
AND GRACIELA LADER
JHT Staff Writers

Every weekday morning at 7, seventh-grader Constantino Carter wakes up and prepares for a 2-mile walk to John Hopkins Middle. In his hour and a half trek, Constantino has 11 streets to cross on his route, and he knows he has to be on guard at all times.

“When I cross the street, very few cars stop to let me cross,” he said. “Most just keep going. Most cars tend to go faster than they’re supposed to on the roads.”

Constantino isn’t the only one running into danger while walking in St. Petersburg. The Tampa Bay region has been named the seventh deadliest metro area for pedestrians in the country. According to the Dangerous by Design report released by Smart Growth America, between 1994 and 2004, 821 pedestrians were killed while walking in the Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater metro area.

Florida has more pedestrian deaths than any other state.

Officer Hiatt says there’s a big reason why Florida leads the nation in pedestrian deaths.

“We have so many tourists and visitors to the state, and many of them just forget to stop,” he said. “Kids and adults should always be aware of what’s going on around them. Always assume the driver can’t see you and that they aren’t paying attention while driving.”

But Officer Hiatt doesn’t place all of the blame on drivers for the high rate of pedestrian deaths. He notices pedestrians at our school sometimes not being smart.

“A lot of kids don’t follow the rules,” he said. “I don’t see kids look around before crossing the street, and they aren’t using the crosswalks often enough.”

Constantino Carter knows better. As the clock strikes four, signaling the end of the school day, he plugs his headphones into his ears and starts his hour and a half walk home. As he crosses the many streets of St. Petersburg on his way, he stays vigilant, because otherwise he’ll just become another statistic.

Stressed out teachers

BY A.JLA KUC
JHT Editor-in-Chief

According to a report released by the Center for Education Policy (CEP) in 2016, 49 percent of teachers would leave the profession as soon as possible if they were able to find a higher paying job. They say the stress and disappointments at their schools just aren’t worth it.

More than twenty teachers will not be returning to John Hopkins next year, and stress may factor into some of their decisions.

Eighth grade math teacher Ms. Bresler is one of those teachers not returning to JHMS next year. She said the main reason she’s leaving the school is not because of stress, but because she wants to take time off to raise her daughter.

“When I see her smile, it takes my stresses from the school day away,” she said.

Though the stress isn’t forcing her to leave the profession, Ms. Bresler admits that there are stresses built into being a teacher.

“Most of my stress here comes from an inconsistency with discipline and behavioral policies,” she said.

The CEP report shows that the “most notable stressors revealed by the survey are the time devoted to testing, changing demands from outside the classroom, and teachers’ perceptions that they lack a voice in major decisions.”

When teachers are overstressed, it’s only natural that students will take notice.

Eighth-grader Sophia Weaver thinks it can affect how well her teachers do their jobs.

“When my teachers are stressed, they stop caring about the bad behavior kids have and give up on getting the class quiet,” she said. “It stops me from learning because I can’t focus as much and the teachers aren’t trying as hard.”

One teacher seems to be able to manage the stresses of the position well. Piano adjunct teacher Mr. Weaver has many demands outside of John Hopkins Middle. Along with teaching here, Weaver teaches private piano lessons at the Bringe School of Music and at people’s homes, performs at his church, and holds positions on two boards.

“The most stressful thing is having a vision for all the things I would like to see happen,” he said, “but not really having the time or position to pursue them all.”

But despite being so busy, he tries to keep a calm demeanor at all times.

“I try not to be stressed,” he said. “I try to respond rationally and right away to things so it doesn’t simmer.”

Teachers manage their stress in different ways. When Mr. Weaver’s not working, he runs, reads, and socializes with friends. Ms. Bresler uses retail therapy and time with her family to relax and take her mind off work.

As new teachers join the J.Hop staff next year, their success will be influenced by how well they can deal with the pressure that comes with the position.



KRYSTA BRAYTON | JHT

JHMS principal Mr. Brown will move to Oak Grove Middle School as principal for the 2017-18 school year. Brown has been principal at JHMS since 2010.

Principal Brown to move on

After a seven-year tenure at JHMS, Mr. Brown will become principal at Oak Grove Middle in Clearwater.

BY HALLE LINK AND KRYSTA BRAYTON
JHT Web Editor and Photo Editor

Pincipal Brown will not be returning to John Hopkins next year, and that fact has been taking its toll on him.

“The thought of going past this school and it being someone else’s makes me sick to my stomach,” he said.

The school district decided to transfer Principal Brown next school year, due to John Hopkins receiving below a C grade from the state for the past five years. Brown will be taking on the role as principal at Oak Grove Middle School in Clearwater next fall.

Though he’s excited to explore the unknown, Brown says he will not have a lot of knowledge about the new school and community like he does with J.Hop and the Midtown neighborhood where he was raised.

Many teachers were surprised by the news when Mr. Brown told the faculty in a meeting on April 11.

“I’ll miss Mr. Brown a lot,” said math teacher Ms. Bresler. “He is a great principal and a great guy.”

Assistant Principal Dr. Chiles doesn’t think J.Hop will be the same without Principal Brown.

“As an administrator, I feel as if change is inevitable,” she said. “But I know he is the right principal for John Hopkins.”

Brown believes he has made many improvements to the school while he was here, including good support systems, more tutoring, and extra-curricular activities.

“There is lots of talent at this school and lots of things to be proud of,” Brown said.

As a new principal comes to John Hopkins next school year to fill the role, Principal Brown has some advice for his successor: be a good leader, be on the lookout and always listen.

“I’ve grown to love this school and the community,” said Brown.

JHMS receives 'turnaround' status

The school has gotten low grades in the past four years.

BY AJLA KUC AND CHRISTIAN KING
JHT Editor-in-Chief

It's official. John Hopkins Middle School has been designated a "turnaround school" by the state for receiving a D or an F grade. The last time the school received a grade higher than a D was in the 2011-2012 school year when it received a C.

"It's disappointing that we're a turnaround school," said health and physical education teacher Mr. Moranec, who will not be returning next year.

The school has been classified as a Tier II or a "priority" school by the state. As part of the designation, the administration is able to ask staff to leave, and recruit new teachers

with a recruitment bonus.

"I need to do everything in my power to not be a D or an F," said Principal Brown. "We need to solidify staff and find the right fit if the teachers aren't working toward the future vision of the school."

The grades for the past four years are as follows: 2013-D, 2014-F, 2015-I, 2016-D. The "I" stands for incomplete. In other words, the 92 percent of students tested in 2015 didn't meet the 95 percent participation rate required by the state.

As a result of the school being deemed a "priority" school, Principle Brown will not be returning to JHMS next school year. The district transferred him to Oak Grove Middle School in Clearwater, taking the role as principal this fall. New principal Dallas Jackson will be filling the role here at John Hopkins.

The teachers who decide to stay next year, or transfer from

another school to John Hopkins, will receive a \$3,000 recruitment bonus. Despite the bonus, there are teachers deciding not to come back. According to Mr. Brown, 23 teachers will not be returning next year, and 15 positions will need to be filled. Mr. Brown says the Science, Reading and Language Arts departments were hit the hardest.

Seventh-grader Schrissee Smarwt thinks that new teachers would be able to help the school.

"I think this school is very bad," she said. "Because of the teachers not giving the effort to discipline the children. I feel like the state should have gotten involved years ago so the school wouldn't be like it is now."

But besides a change in staff, Principal Brown says students and teachers shouldn't expect too many other changes.

"Teachers may have thought, 'Oh

my god, we're a turnaround school. Now we have to do all these extra things,'" said Principal Brown. "They're right. Turnaround schools have to do a lot of extra things. They have to follow an eight period bell schedule. They have to have some form of common planning... But those practices are things that we already do here at J.Hop without thinking about it."

Eighth-grader Nick Babcock thinks that teachers choosing to leave aren't interested in helping the school improve.

"Most of the (current) teachers don't like this school," he said. "If they did like this school, they would have stayed. But they don't care. I think it's good that we'll get teachers that care about us being a turnaround school."

But even though some teachers are leaving, it's not just because they don't like teaching at John

Hopkins. Language Arts teacher Ms. Serne has been at J.Hop for 13 years, but will be moving to Dixie Hollins High School next school year.

"I'm sad to leave because there are some great students," she said. "And I love the arts program."

Ms. Serne believes that the next principal should just continue what Mr. Brown has been doing, and keep up the positive reinforcement.

For John Hopkins to fully lose its turnaround status, the school must receive a C grade or higher for two years in a row. Mr. Brown is confident that our grade will rise, due to the fact that we have been close to a C in previous years.

The school will have several years to bring its grade up to a C. If that doesn't happen, the state has the option to either close the school, convert it into a charter school, or bring in an outside operator.

Talented Trojans

JHMS students strut their stuff in the fun-filled evening.

BY HADASSAH EBORDA AND CHLOE MEYERS
JHT Staff Writers

J.Hop students' talents were on full display one night this spring.

John Hopkins student government presented the Night of Talents on March 8, the first talent show for the school in several years. This is the first of what they hope to be many times hosting the annual event.

Students showcased their talents in 12 separate acts that ranged from dancing to dramatic monologues, with all grade levels represented.

The night kicked off with a hip hop dance group decked out in glowing costumes that wowed the audience. The group consisted of six seventh-graders: De'Jai Williams, Sarah Baydoun, Kareem Alexander, Eliese Long, Sanaria Mckinzie and Tavion Myrick.

The show took a turn for the theatrical when drama focus seventh-grader Tristan Bahr performed a dramatic and intense monologue called *Dad*. Her



KRYSTA BRAYTON | JHT

Brianna Pair, left, and Chavelle Denard perform *Poison* during the Student Council talent show.

monologue left the audience on the edge of their seats.

But the mood was soon brought back up when sixth-graders Faith Pierce, Alina Phetsadasack, Justin McCracken and Grace Bruner took to the stage. The group performed an entertaining, comedic dance and rap combo called *Carl Poppa*.

Standout performers in the show were siblings eighth-grader Annika and seventh-grader Adam Fuller. The two were featured twice during the show, including a performance of a song they

wrote called *Compass*, in which Annika played the piano and sang, and Adam played the bass.

In the final performance of the night, the Fullers were joined on stage by seventh-grade guitarist Cooper Madden and eighth-grade pianist Adrian Lopez. The band closed the night by performing the song *Oceans* by Hillsong United.

Though it was JHMS student government's first attempt at hosting a talent show, the applause and cheers from the audience at the end of the night indicated the show's success.

Out of this world

A recent discovery suggests Earth-like planets may exist.

BY JACK QUEEN
AND TRENT LINDSEY
JHT Staff Writers

Earth may not be as unique as we once thought. In February, Belgian astronomers discovered seven Earth-sized planets circling a nearby star. Scientists say some of the planets may even be habitable.

The planets are orbiting a dwarf star called TRAPPIST-1, about 40 lightyears away. Three of the planets, known as TRAPPIST-1e, f and g, are located in the habitable zone of the star. They are speculated to contain oceans and other large sources of water.

In a statement on NASA's website, the organization states that, "The discovery sets a new record for greatest number of habitable-zone planets found around a single star outside our solar system."

Seventh-grader Mirgie Belance is excited about the discovery.

"This will further our knowledge about the universe," she said.

J.Hop science teacher Ms. Encinias agrees that the discovery is significant, but is afraid of how people will react to the news.

"I hope people don't get the idea to just trash our planet and just move onto the next one," she said.

According to NPR, "Astronomers could get an even better sense (of the planets) after 2018, when the next-generation James Webb Space Telescope is expected to launch. It could provide an in-depth look at the atmospheres of all these planets."

Aiden Stern, a seventh-grader at J.Hop, worries what astronomers will find out.

"Some people would freak out probably because they would fear the idea of other life," he said.

Even if the planets are discovered to be habitable, the technology needed to travel there may not be discovered in the near future.

Christian King contributed this report.



JHT Staff

The top academic eighth-graders for the 2016-17 school year are, from left, seated: Theresa Pham, Hadassah Eborda, Angelina Saenka and Halle Link; rear: Adrian Perez-Lopez, Raven Anderson, Makayla Schmidt, Josue Pena and Sophia Weaver. Not pictured: Domanic Hockman.

Perfect ten

BY IOANA GAGNELOVA
AND LINDSEY GAVORNIK
Jhop Times Staff Writers

Ten eighth grade students will be leaving John Hopkins with a perfect academic record. The top students all earned a perfect 4.0 GPA.

The students include: Raven Anderson, Hadassah Eborda, Domanic Hockman, Halle Link, Adrian Perez Lopez, Josue Pena, Theresa Pham, Angelina Saenka, Makayla Schmidt, and Sophia Weaver.

Makayla Schmidt pushes herself really hard to succeed in school.

"It is important for me to get good grades because it makes me feel proud of myself and accomplished," she said. "Better grades, better classes, and better jobs.

Along with earning top grades, Makayla finds time to practice the violin and perform in shows throughout the year. Though she

can get overwhelmed sometimes with all of the work she has, her parents are supportive and are able to calm her down.

Halle Link is also on the list. She doesn't have any extracurricular activities besides academics.

"On average I receive quite a bit of homework due to math, Spanish and English 1," she said. "I like the satisfaction of getting good grades."

But Halle doesn't do it alone. Her mom and grandparents are always there to help, and take her to tutoring if she needs it.

"It is important for me to get good grades because of the future," she said. "Everything impacts the future. If you get good grades, it will help."

Adrian Perez Lopez received most of his motivation from his parents.

"I try my best," he said. "It shows that you work hard if you get good grades."

Gun deaths strike close to home

BY HADASSAH EBORDA
AND CHLOE MEYERS
JHT Staff Writers

Every 17 hours, a child is shot in Florida. That's according to a recent analysis of data between 2010 and 2015 by the *Tampa Bay Times*. According to the report, the number of kids killed in gun-related incidents rose nearly 20 percent. Most of the incidents were categorized as self-injuries, assaults, and accidents.

"There's too many guns in the street," said JHMS violence prevention specialist Ms. Rudd. "Many guns are in the black-market where they sell guns illegally. The middle school child's mind is not developed and they do not understand the consequences."

MTSS specialist Ms. Macintosh was directly affected by guns. Her stepson was shot and killed earlier this year.

"They lack a purpose," she said. "The kids aren't having

empathy and critical thinking skills."

The rise in gun deaths isn't only affecting teenagers. Young children are also getting ahold of their parents' guns and causing harm to themselves or others.

"Adults need to be mindful and we need to do more to make sure teens don't resort to guns," said Ms. Rudd.

The *Tampa Bay Times* reports that gun deaths have exceeded deaths caused by diseases like respiratory, cardiovascular, and infectious diseases. Dr. Judy Schaechter of the pediatrics department of the University of Miami Health system calls gun deaths "America's most preventable disease."

Ms. Macintosh said that parents must step in to prevent more injuries to children caused by guns.

"Adults must talk to children," she said. "Take time to think, probe, and make sure they have no weapons."

After 32 years, Ms. McRobert leaves JHMS on a high note

BY HALLE LINK
AND CHLOE MEYERS
JHT Web Editor and Staff Writer

John Hopkin's eighth grade US History teacher Ms. McRobert is retiring after 32 years of teaching. She said she just doesn't have the mental or physical energy to do the job anymore.

"I don't want to do what I love if it's not at my best," she said.

For the past 18 years, Ms. McRobert has called JHMS home. In her time here, she has been recognized many times for her outstanding teaching ability. This year, she was picked as the Pinellas County History Day Teacher of the Year.

"I'm proud and really honored," she said. "I'm just shocked and so grateful because my colleagues nominated me for this award."

Although she will miss

teaching, Ms. McRobert is very excited to just live her life without having to worry about work. She plans to travel, learn new skills, and fix up her house.

What she'll miss the most are her coworkers and students. The feeling is mutual.

"It's challenging to replace a teacher with so much experience and instional knowledge," said seventh grade Civics teacher Mr. Dickter.

"She was a great teacher and taught me a lot," said eighth-grader Salma Mahjoubi.

Ms. McRobert has some advice for the teacher who will take her place.

"Remember kids are kids," she said. "Collaborate with other US History teachers because they're a great group. Also make use of the numerous resources that are supplied."



KRYSTA BRAYTON | JHT

U.S. History teacher Ms. McRobert is retiring this month after 32 years of teaching, the last 18 at JHMS.

school news



JHT Staff

Winners of the PRIDE Award for 2016-17 received medals from Mr. Brown. From left, Kailyn Rosenthal (foreign language), Annika Fuller (social studies), Ajla Kuc (writing), Makayla Schmidt (science) and Christina Ni (math).

Trojan's 'PRIDE'

BY ANGELINA SAENKA AND MARIE BAPTISTE
JHT Staff Writers

Principal Brown honored five J.Hop students for their ability to succeed in a specific subject area. The five eighth-graders received PRIDE awards for excellence in math, science, social studies, writing or world languages.

Makayla Schmit (science), Christina Ni (math), Ajla Kuc (writing), Annika Fuller (social studies), and Kailyn Rosenthal (world languages) earned medals and tickets for a ceremony at Ruth Eckerd Hall on April 6 to honor Pinellas County School PRIDE winners. The Program to Recognize Initiative and Distinction in Education Award, or PRIDE, is awarded to eighth-graders who excel in one of the academic areas.

Students were eligible to win the

award if they earned an A average in their subject area, had a positive attitude, and scored high on the subject area test.

"I feel excited and happy to win the social studies award," said Annika.

Christina Ni wasn't expecting to win the award in her subject, math. "I was totally surprised because math is tricky and confusing," said Christina.

Along with having a 3.5 average in the subject area, eighth-graders need to be involved in a subject-related club and demonstrate good citizenship. Ajla Kuc, who won for writing and is the editor-in-chief of the *J.Hop Times*, noticed that all of this year's winners were female.

"I'm not surprised because girls mature faster than boys," she said.

Lunchtime war zone

BY IOANA GAGANELOVA
AND LINDSEY GAVORNIK
Jhop Times Staff Writers

Splat! A food fight breaks out in the cafeteria at John Hopkins Middle School, and eighth-grader Sebastian Castillo is caught in the line of fire while he's trying to run out of the room.

"I was very mad when I got hit with the sauce," he said. "My shirt had sauce, inside and out. I had to change shirts."

This semester, several food fights erupted during the lunch periods at J.Hop with many, like Sebastian, leaving the cafeteria covered in food.

Mr. Green has had to dole out suspensions to help prevent further food fights.

"People in and outside of the United States don't even have food," he said. "And here at J.Hop, students are throwing food instead of eating it. And it is just terrible behavior."

Along with suspen-

sions, punishment for participating in the food fight include time in ABS and a change in food options. For example, students can only choose from a peanut butter and jelly sandwich or a salad instead of any of the hot food options.

"They want attention," said Mr. Green about a possible motive for students to start a food fight. "The students also start these food fights because they want to see if they can get other kids and students to join in."

Mr. Green thinks that they've finally been able to put an end to the fights by providing consequences to those that partake.

"When you put your time into something," he said. "You get something back."

Even though Sebastian was mad that his shirt was ruined during one of the food fights, he isn't too mad.

"It was intense and scary," he said. "But also fun."

Baby love

Ms. Bresler leaves teaching to focus on motherhood.



KRYSTA BRAYTON | JHT

Math teacher Ms. Bresler is leaving J. Hop to spend more time with her daughter.

BY HALLE LINK
AND KRYSTA BRAYTON
JHT Web Editor and Photo Editor

Eighth-grade math teacher Ms. Bresler had a hard decision to make: keep teaching at John Hopkins next year or spend more time with her baby.

"I love teaching but you can't get the first couple years of kids' lives back," she said.

Ms. Bresler will not be returning to J.Hop in the fall, and instead wants to focus on being a full-time mother for her 17-month-old daughter Autumn.

After teaching at John Hopkins for five years, Ms. Bresler's presence at the school will be missed not only by the students but also administration and staff. For her exceptional performance, the school's administration awarded Ms. Bresler teacher of the year in January.

"She's a really great

teacher," said eighth-grader Talya White. "She's easy to understand and I'm glad I had her for a teacher."

Though Bresler isn't coming back next year, her plan is to return to teaching once all of her kids are in school. If a position is available at John Hopkins at that time, she may apply.

Drama teacher Ms. Hosey understands Ms. Bresler's decision to leave.

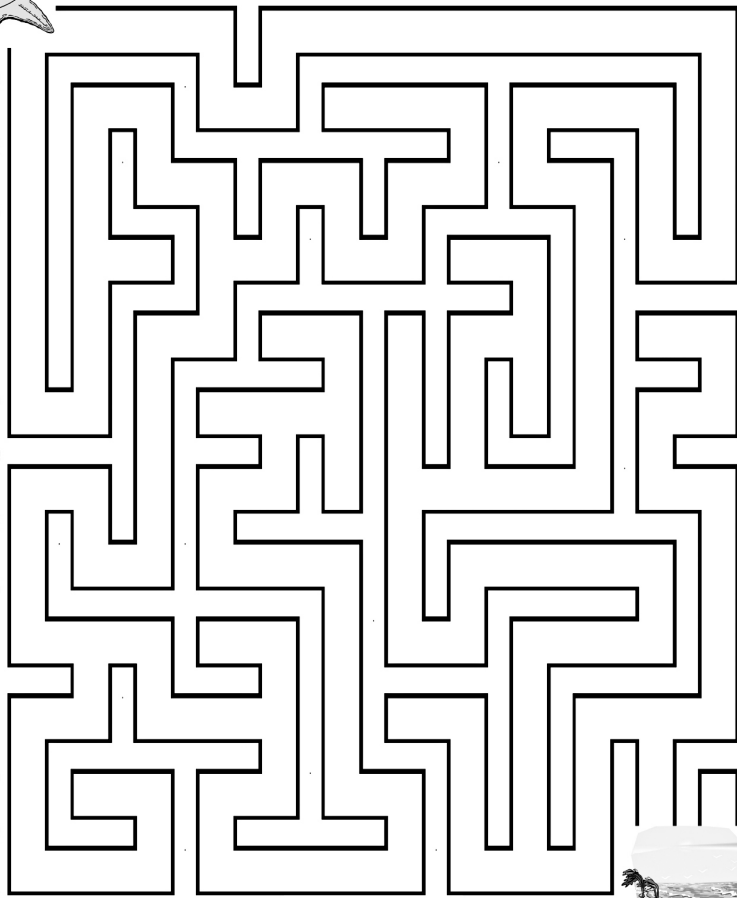
"I'm sad that she's leaving because she's an awesome teacher," she said. "But at the same time I'm really happy for her."

For Ms. Bresler, the first few years of a child's life are important for shaping them into the person they will become. She doesn't want to miss out on any of those milestones.

"I want to be able to raise my daughter and grow up with her," she said.

puzzles

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Summer Search

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ice cream

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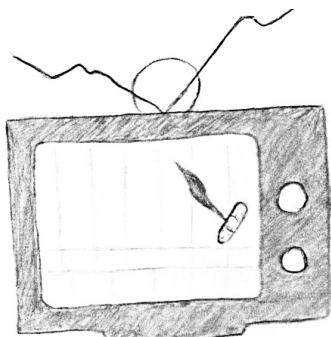
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SARAH OLIVER | JHT

Joke Corner

Why do bananas use sunscreen?

Because they peel.

When do you GO at red and STOP at green?

When you're eating a slice of watermelon.

What did the ocean say to the sailboat?

Nothing. It just waved.

The Owls Advice Column



How do I cope with letting go and moving on?

Moving on is hard sometimes. It's that time of the school year when eighth-graders have finally come to the end of middle school and they're ready to leave, but it can also be a time of uncertainty. You probably have a lot of anxiety about what things will be like in high school, and you are probably thinking what happens next?

Just know that everything will be okay. Sometimes, change is for the better.

Inevitably, life moves on and you cannot do anything to change that. You may be worried that you will never see your friends again, or maybe you are just nervous for new things. However, there are many ways to keep in touch. Like we said, life goes on and there is nothing that can be done to change that.

If you are worried that you will no longer be able to keep in touch with your friends, with this day and age, there are many social media and platforms you can use. No need to stress too much, there are always new friends to

make and new people to meet.

And you can always meet up at a movie or activity. That takes more planning, but if you really want to see your close friends, it's worth it.

Things will definitely change a lot for all of the eighth-graders who are moving up and moving on, but sometimes that can be a good change. Just think optimistically, and try to have a more positive viewpoint.

**Until next time,
The Owls**

features

James (Amira Metcalf), center, talks to Aunts Spiker (Aria Reynolds), far left, and Sponge (Madison Cooper) as Matron Nurse (Indea DeVore) looks on.



CHLOE MEYERS | JHT

JHMS drama department brings new life to *James and the Giant Peach Jr.*

BY AJLA KUC AND KAYLA ANDERSON
JHT Editor-in-Chief, Assistant Editor

This year's musical was a peach of a production. The JHMS drama department presented *James and the Giant Peach Jr.*, a musical based on the Roald Dahl children's book of the same name.

It's the story of James Henry Trotter (Adam Fuller/Amira Metcalf), an orphan who was thrown into the arms of his evil aunts Spiker (Kailyn Rosenthal/Aria Reynolds) and Sponge (Savannah Nasworthy/Madison Cooper). When they send him to cut down an old peach tree, he discovers a magic potion that grows a tremendous peach. James finds his way inside the giant fruit, befriends various singing insects, and journeys with them across the ocean to escape his evil aunts.

The musical was narrated by Ladahlord (Annika Fuller/Alexandra Neely), a mysterious creature who guides us through the story. Ladahlord seems to have a hand in the magic that happens.

The cast rehearsed for about two and a half months, and the time and dedication has definitely paid off during the performances.

Amira Metcalf (James/B Cast) had a lot of confidence in her fellow cast members. "We have been practicing a lot. Everyone has their stuff together," she said.

"At first, I was nervous because I'd never been in a school production, but the cast was very supportive. It was like being in a family, so you could come to school and see your second family," said eighth-grader Jaiden Jones (Grasshopper).

Drama teacher and assistant director Ms. Hosey says that it went extremely well, and both A and B casts did a great job.

"I thought it was fabulous! They worked hard and it paid off," said the show's director Ms. Wills. Her favorite part of directing the students was "watching the magic unfold."



HADASSAH EBORDA | JHT

Sound tech Rose Berardinelli checks the board before a matinee performance.



CHLOE MEYERS | JHT

James (Amira Metcalf), center left, and Ladahlord (Alexandra Neely) sing Shake It Up with the ensemble cast during a matinee performance.

A magical musical



CHLOE MEYERS | JHT

Grasshopper (Jaiden Jones) plays the violin as Earthworm (Stasia Green) worries how the peach will get to France.



KRYSTA BRAYTON | JHT

Cast members Kailyn Rosenthal (Aunt Spiker), front, and Annika Fuller (Ladahlord) prepare their makeup and costumes before an evening performance.



CHLOE MEYERS | JHT

Aunts Sponge (Madison Cooper), left, and Spiker (Aria Reynolds) wonder about the giant peach that has appeared. James (Amira Metcalf) looks on.



CHLOE MEYERS | JHT

The cast of *James and the Giant Peach Jr.* takes a bow.



HADASSAH EBORDA | JHT

Aunt Spiker (Aria Reynolds) pinches James's (Amira Metcalf) cheek as Aunt Sponge (Madison Cooper), left, and Spider (Samantha Neely), right, look on.

Amira and the Giant Peach

BY JAIDEN JONES
AND IOANA GAGANELOVA
JHT Staff Writers

It's not every year that a student's debut on the John Hopkins stage is also the most important role in the musical. That was the case this year when sixth-grader Amira Metcalf starred in the leading role of *James and the Giant Peach*.

Though Amira has been acting since the third grade, she wasn't expecting to earn the lead role after her audition.

"I was surprised and happy at

the same time," said Amira.

Amira came to the drama program at JHMS because of her passion for acting.

To prepare for the musical, Amira practiced for at least three hours a day. She went over her lines and then recited them without her book. When she is rehearsing, she doesn't feel stressed but feels like she is in a place where she can be herself and express her emotions freely.

"It's a whole other world," she said, "where I get to be a different person."

Amira has plenty of support in class, including from her drama teacher Ms. Wills.

"She has a very positive outlook on life," said Ms. Wills. "Amira would absolutely be able to have a career in acting."

Amira plans on continuing acting throughout her time at John Hopkins, and after she graduates. Her passion has only increased since joining the drama magnet program. With the support of her parents and J.Hop faculty, she will continue to excel as an actress and singer.

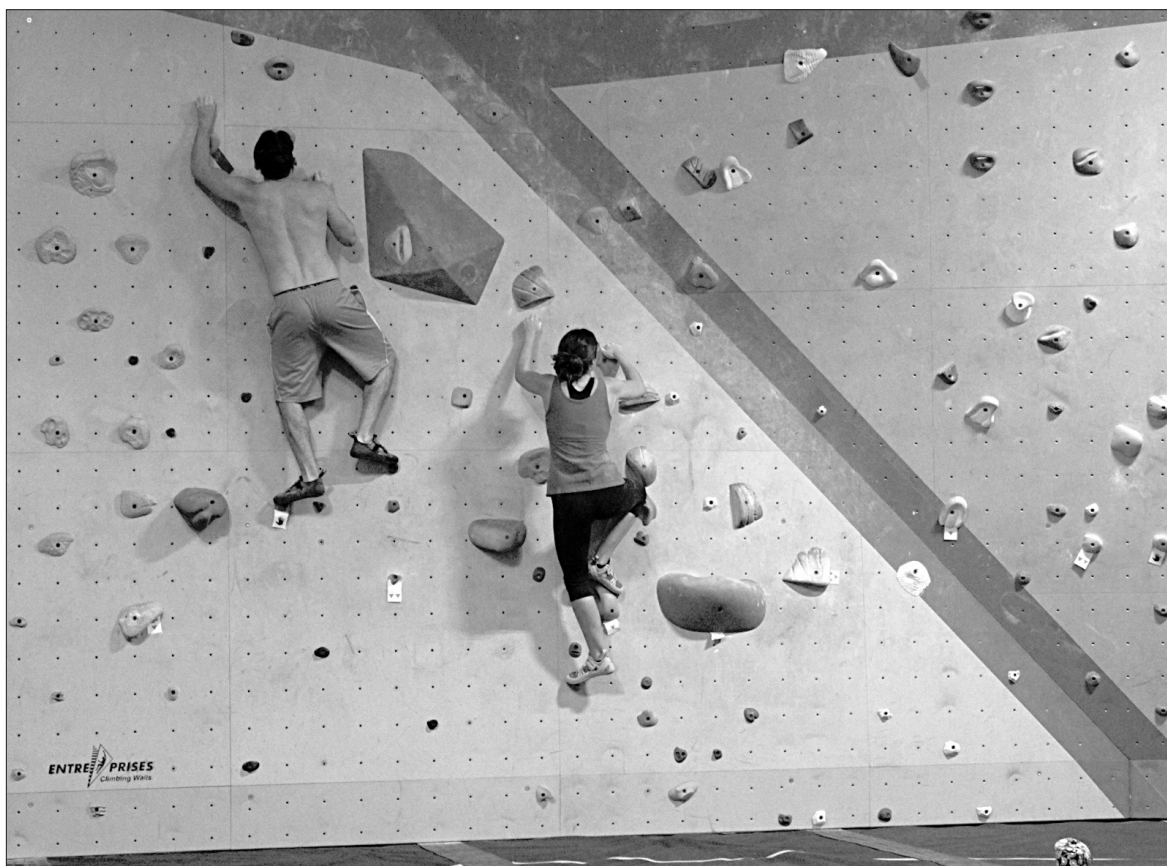


KRYSTA BRAYTON | JHT

Sixth-grader Amira Metcalf rehearses her role as James for the spring musical *James and the Giant Peach Jr.*

REACHING FOR THE TOP

We experience indoor rock climbing at Vertical Ventures St. Pete.



BY CUR'NECIA MARTIN
AND DONOVAN GLOVER
JHT Staff Writers

From the outside, Vertical Ventures St. Pete is unassuming; a passerby would probably just keep walking, thinking it's an average warehouse building. But once inside, the space is crawling with activity. Literally. Walls are teeming with people climbing like monkeys from one colored peg to the next, in order to reach the top.

Vertical Ventures St. Pete, an indoor climbing gym, opened just a few blocks from JHMS in 2015. The gym includes three sections for wall climbing, yoga classes and a weight area for members.

"We have a wide variety of people in the area that have really caught on to climbing," said manager Brian Dieterich. "We got everyone who uses it for just yoga classes or coming in for exercise climbing, and then also getting ready to prepare themselves for outdoors."

John McKinnon has been climbing for five years and often comes to Vertical Ventures St. Pete.

"It's super fun," he said. "Once you climb one time, you're going to be a climber for life."

WATCH IT

Get a glimpse inside Vertical Ventures St. Pete. pcsb.org/jhoptimes

McKinnon's favorite type of climbing at the gym is called bouldering, which involves climbing without a rope or a harness. The other type the gym offers is lead climbing, in which a person is in a harness and attached to a rope that is held by a partner below who can catch the person if they fall.

For climbers who don't have as much experience as McKinnon, manager Brian Dieterich tells them not to worry.

"The community here is great," he said. "We're a very friendly and welcoming community. We're always willing to give people tips on how to get through the routes that they're working on."

New climbers at Vertical Ventures are required to take an introductory class before they can begin climbing.

For climbers like John McKinnon, climbing is just another way to stay in shape. For others, such as Sean Kupper, climbing challenges his brain.

"The wall is like a puzzle," he said. "And you have to use a lot of technique if you want to climb high."

CHLOE MEYERS | JHT

Climbers practice their skills on a "bouldering" wall at Vertical Ventures St. Pete.

Summer Shangri-La

Getting a tan on a sunny beach? How about jumping into a cool pool? Maybe traveling across the country or going to Disney World is more your style. But if you could do anything or go anywhere over summer break, what would you do? What is your perfect summer?

Amelia Beatty, Maya Patanow, Hanah Snyder and Maya Patanow, JHT Photo Staff



Science teacher Ms. Guzzetta would spend her perfect vacation in Sicily with her husband. “There is lots of culture there. And I would like to see the ancient things,” she said.



“I’d like to spend the summer in Trinidad and Tobago with my best friend Darcy,” **seventh-grader Bailey White** said. “It’s very tropical and that’s where the steel pan originated.”



Seventh-grader Jameel Grimes wants to be near the water for his perfect summer. “I’d like a house on the beach with a pool because it’s calm.”



Ja’nyla Charles, sixth grade, says her perfect summer vacation would be “going to Hawaii because I think it’s gonna be beautiful out there.”



Science teacher Ms. Encinias would “probably go to Southeast Asia” for the perfect summer getaway. “The food and culture are really different than what we have here,” she said.



Campus monitor Mr. Green’s perfect vacation would be “to pack my family up in an RV and head north to New York, Niagara Falls, New Jersey and Toronto, Canada. Flying, you fly over stuff and don’t get to see everything. In an RV, you get to stop and get out to take in the scenery.”



Seventh-grader Jamon Garrett says his perfect summer would be to “go on a cruise to the Bahamas and then go to summer camp.”



The perfect summer vacation for **sixth-grader Mia Renfro** would include traveling. “I would go to Hawaii and visit the beaches and swim.”

Dog-in-training

Josie learns the ropes of being a service pup.

BY AJLA KUC
JHT Editor-in-Chief

Life for a service dog-in-training can be rough. Add middle school students to the equation and you've got a pretty hectic life. Such is the life for Josie, a foster dog Ms. Delgado has been bringing to John Hopkins as part of the dog's training.

Ms. Delgado asked Principal Brown if bringing Josie to school would be a good idea, and they both agreed that it would be a fun learning experience for students. Many have taken notice of her and her four-legged friend.

Eighth-grader Annabelle Cannon was confused the first time she saw Josie.

"My first thought was, 'Why is

there a dog at school?'" she said. "Every time I see the dog I just want to run up and pet it."

But while Josie is wearing her blue training vest, students are not allowed to pet her because it can interfere with her training.

Ms. Delgado was paired up with Josie by Southeastern Guide Dogs, an organization that provides service dogs to people with visual impairments or suffering from PTSD. Ms. Delgado thinks the 6-month-old black lab is "exceptional."

"She's great with commands like 'sit,' 'down' and 'kennel,'" she said. "In six months, she will be taken to her assessment in Bradenton where she will find out where she goes next."

Besides becoming a guide dog for the blind, Josie could also be cho-

sen to be a breeder for future guide dogs, or have a "career change" and be used in law enforcement. In either path, Josie will receive more specialized training.

Though Josie has been exceptional in most areas, like most puppies, she still has some learning to do.

"She hasn't learned good leash manners, yet," said Ms. Delgado. "She uses her nose a lot, especially after lunch at school. When hot fries and peanut butter and jelly sandwiches are out, she walks with her feet out and her nose right to the ground. She also pulls on the leash a lot, which can be dangerous on the stairs."

So next time you see Ms. Delgado with Josie walking by her side, try not to get in their way, because Josie has a job to do.



ANGELINA SAENKA | JHT

Violence Prevention Specialist Ms. Delgado gives a treat to Josie, a guide dog in training. Josie will return to Southeastern Guide Dogs headquarters this summer for further training.

WATCH IT

Ms. Delgado talks about her experience and Josie performs commands.

pcsb.org/jhoiptimes

Programmed for success

Joffy the robot dances his way to a national competition.

BY SARA THORNLEY
JHT Staff Writer

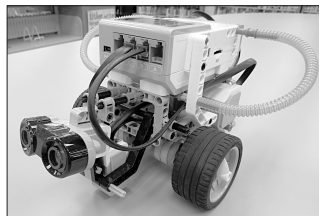
Joffy has only one purpose on this Earth and that is to follow a black line on a plastic mat. When Joffy does this, it kind of looks like he's dancing.

No, Joffy isn't a weird person, he's actually a robot.

The EV 3 robot, affectionately named "Joffy," was programmed and constructed by J. Hop students as part of the STEM program. Four teams from John Hopkins, including the group that made Joffy, attended the statewide Robotics Competition in Oldsmar in April, and will be competing for the national prize in St. Pete Beach this June.

The team that made Joffy includes seventh-graders Ocean Connors, Savannah Smith, Hanah Snyder, Marissa Baney, and sixth-grader Jonathan Owens. Joffy won the Critic's Choice Award and the People's Choice Award at the state-wide competition.

The team's goal was to design a robot to help disabled people express themselves through the art of dancing.



HANAH SNYDER | JHT

The EV 3 robot "Joffy" is ready to go to the Worldwide Robotics Competition on June 2 in St. Pete Beach, Fla.

But giving Joffy the right moves wasn't always easy. There were some difficulties and challenges along the way, according to team member Marissa Baney.

"The difficulties of building Joffy was that we couldn't get the right length of the motor block and we couldn't get it to where it wouldn't stop falling off the table. That was annoying."

Joffy was built using a kit called Lego Mind Storms EV 3. Students used a manual that helped them with putting the motor block inside the robot to make it move on its own.

As anyone who's seen Dancing with the Stars knows, every

good dance routine also needs a great costume. And Joffy is no exception. The team used dress fabric to make translucent blue streamers that he wears as a scarf.

Team member Jonathan Owens had some thoughts about the scarf. "At first I thought it did not look good on Joffy specifically, but then I thought it made him look cooler because it stuck out of him on the sides."

STEM coordinator Ms. Golden enjoyed the challenges of putting the robot together. "Some parts of building the robot were hard," she said, "but one of the difficulties of putting Joffy together was planning him."

"It was wonderful watching the kids build those robots and program them. They are so smart and inspiring," she added.

Originally, Joffy was only programmed to move along a black line on a plastic mat, but now his new purpose is to attend the national competition in St. Pete Beach and take home the winning prize.

Easy A electives?

Students find that these classes now have more oversight.

BY LINDSEY GAVORNIK AND ADRIANA LANDES
JHT Staff Writers

When new students begin signing up for elective classes next year, they'll have a wide variety of choices: theater, visual arts, music, and many others. But along with having fun and experiencing new ideas, the school district requires that students who take elective classes meet certain learning standards.

All subjects at John Hopkins Middle require an "end-of-course" exam, or EOC, including the elective classes. The only course that doesn't require an EOC is language arts, which instead tests students with an essay.

Eighth-grade assistant principal Mr. Francois said that the nature of education has changed and districts are expecting more oversight.

"EOCs in electives are very important," he said, "because you want to make sure the students are learning what they should be learning."

If a student doesn't do well on the exam, Francois believes the "fault" lies with the teacher. As long as teachers stick to the standards that they are required to teach, students shouldn't be worried.

"Teachers need to encourage students not to be so concerned with the test and instead be excited with the experience they

are taking part in," said Francois. "We're very lucky. A student can experience a lot in the magnet program."

There are two types of EOCs that a teacher can administer: a district designed end-of-course exam or a teacher-designed end-of-course exam.

Theater teacher Ms. Hosey designed her own EOC for her eighth grade class. One reason she created her own is because the district hasn't designed an EOC for advanced drama. For the EOC she designed, Ms. Hosey assigned a performance to be done as a project, with students setting up the show all on their own, including lighting, direction, costumes, and more.

"It is better than sitting and writing for hours," she said.

But not all teachers are able to make their own EOCs. Physical education teacher Ms. Forte doesn't think the district-made test for her class is a good representation of the students' learning.

"The pros of having an EOC in an elective class is it is an easy A," she said. "And then the cons are, it doesn't reveal relevant information."

For Ms. Hosey, having the students put on their own performance as an EOC directly shows students putting their standards-based learning into action.

Anxiety grips test takers

BY KEYLA FRANKLIN AND SAMANTHA NEELY
JHT Staff Writers

Cramming your head with facts. Wishing you could've studied for just a bit longer. Pulling out your hair and praying that you don't fail.

These are the thoughts that can go through the mind of a student at J.Hop during the intense testing schedule. For more than a month, students are required to participate in the Florida Standards Assessments, or FSA, which can cause testing stress and anxiety.

According to the Florida Department of Education, the FSA serves Florida students by measuring education gains and progress. A study by the Council of the Great City Schools finds that a typical student takes 112 mandated standardized tests between pre-kindergarten classes and 12th grade.

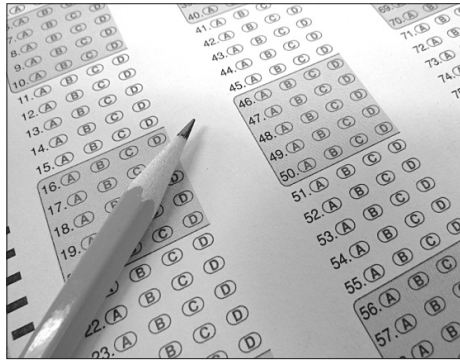
Seventh-grade math teacher Ms. Jones believes that the testing has become pretty excessive.

"I don't think that it needs to be every year," she said. "I think that we could do just the common assessments for certain grades."

Eighth-grader Zoei Trunzo said on a scale of one to 10, her stress during testing is at a seven.

"I stay up later to study, so I get less sleep," she said. "I used to have straight As in elementary school, but then everything went downhill."

Zoei thinks that many students have a



KRYSTA BRAYTON | JHT

fear of failing, which gives them testing anxiety.

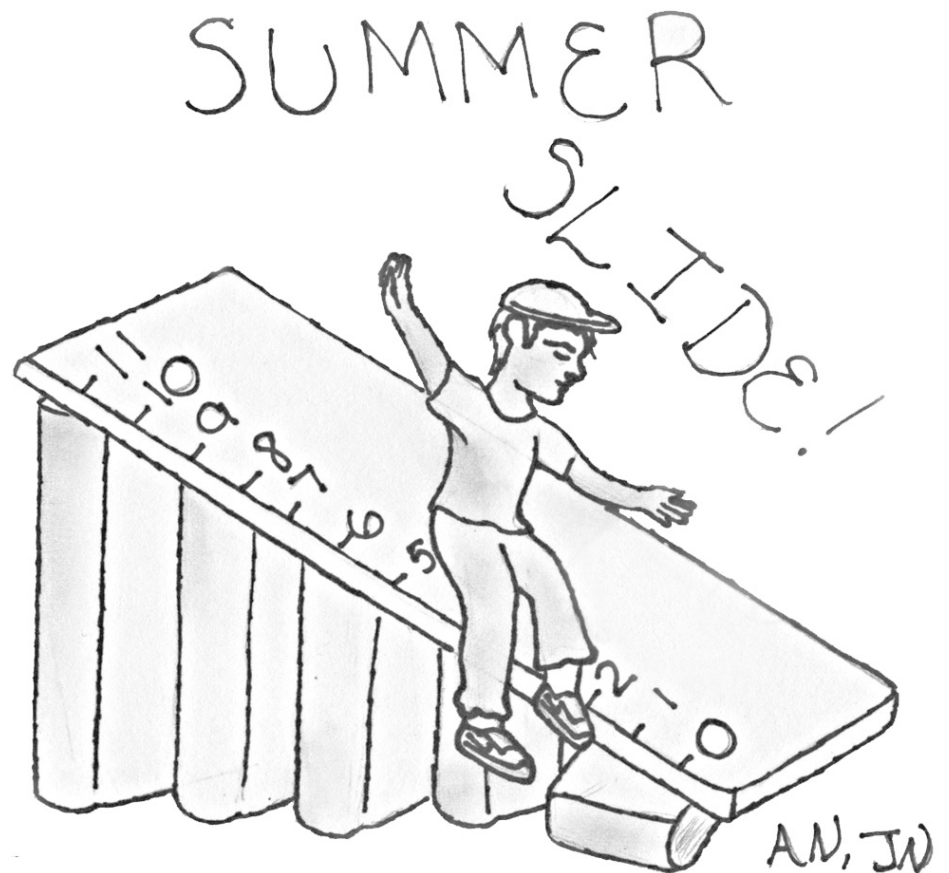
To combat the anxiety, some students are proactive when testing begins.

"I have to go to tutoring after school," said eighth-grader Christina Ni. She finds that one-on-one tutoring is the most beneficial way for her to review the content that will be on the assessments.

Sixth-grader Joan Bach tries to study as much as possible leading up to the test.

"When I get help from teachers," she said, "I feel more confident and it relieves some of my stress."

Though this time can be stressful for both students and teacher, assistant principal Dr. Chiles thinks the test helps keep schools accountable for what they're supposed to be teaching the students, and that students are staying on track.



ALEX NEELY and JOAN BACH | JHT

STAYING SHARP ON ACADEMIC SKILLS MAY PAY OFF WHEN SCHOOL RESUMES.

BY ALEXANDRA NEELY AND JOAN BACH
JHT Staff Writers

After spending more than nine months in the classroom, students are eager for the summer break. However, much of the learning gained during the school year may be lost over the two months off.

The dramatic learning loss over the summer is known as the "Summer Slide," and it's a potential problem for students at John Hopkins.

Sixth-grade social studies teacher Ms. Lynch sees students coming into her class not knowing the material they should have learned in previous grades.

"It's often disappointing when my fifth-graders don't get the basics," she said. "For instance, knowing a country versus a continent."

The "Summer Slide" can also affect teaching curriculums. The National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) released a survey confirming that 66 percent of teachers spend an average of three to four weeks re-teaching curricu-

lums from the previous year.

John Hopkins sixth-grader Maravel Schum forgot some of the content she learned in fifth grade.

"(After summer vacation) I couldn't remember definitions correctly," she said. "And I got confused and had to relearn a lot of math."

Often times, kids are absorbed in their summer activities and don't take advantage of learning resources. There are some benefits of continuous learning growth over the summer. For instance, according to the *New York Times*, 64 percent of students who participated in summer advancement courses performed successfully on the required tests.

Avoiding the "Summer Slide" can be difficult for sixth-grader Ramona Mitchell.

"I feel terrible (about the "Summer Slide")," she said. "I hate not remembering things."

However, Ms. Lynch believes there are ways to avoid getting caught in the downward spiral.

"My advice?" she said. "To take one hour a day to research online practices, and stay stimulated throughout the summer."

Movie Review

'The LEGO Batman Movie'

The LEGO Batman Movie is one of the best kids' movies I have ever seen. Not only was it funny and filled with sarcastic humor, but it also had a touching story. That's right, an action movie that actually tells a good story.

Don't get me wrong; *LEGO Batman* did include fun action-packed sequences, but they were limited to just a few minutes of screen time. Though the story has been tried before in other movies and TV shows, *LEGO Batman* does it the best.

The film follows a LEGO-version of Batman, who audiences were introduced to in *The LEGO Movie* a few years ago. But in this movie, the emotional backstory of the winged crusader is revealed. After losing his parents as a young boy, Batman is now afraid of having a family again because of the fear of losing them. Will Arnett voices Batman, and he does a great job of revealing the ever-changing emotions of the character without even seeing his face. Though the movie has a



KAYLEE PEDIGO
JHT Movie Critic

playful tone, it also tugs at the heartstrings.

But it's not only Batman who we see struggling in his personal life. We even see the Joker in times of weakness. The Joker desperately wants to be Batman's arch-enemy, but Batman barely gives him the time of day. *The LEGO Batman Movie* is able to push through the standard story of Batman and instead reveal a deeper view into who Bruce Wayne is as a person.

The other characters like Robin, Barbara and Alfred were just as funny and dynamic. Alfred played the part of the adopted father, the one who took Batman under his wing when he had no one to go to. Robin is the orphan son, who Bruce adopts accidentally. Lastly, Barbara is the girlfriend character, the one Batman wants to be with but who doesn't want to be with him.

In the end, I give *The LEGO Batman Movie* an easy 9/10. It had some flaws, including having Batman be a little too unlikeable and cutting off emotional moments just to tell a joke. But the movie does something that only a handful of action movies have been able to do: wow the audience more with emotional content than with flashy action filler.

Accomplishing My Dream | A regular series

From American stage to the Chinese film screen

BY HADASSAH EBORDA
JHT Staff Writer

From a country of 1.4 billion people to a country of 320 million, sixth-grader Siyoan Yin traveled 7,252 miles from Shanghai, China, to live with her mom here in St. Petersburg, Fla. Siyoan now joins her three brothers and two sisters who already lived with their mother.

But one day, Siyoan hopes to move back to China and star in the movies. “My dream is to be an actress in China,” she said.

Siyoan’s favorite class at John Hopkins is drama. She’s been able to exercise her acting skills, while

also making new friends and expressing herself.

“I believe she can do anything she puts her mind to,” said Siyoan’s theatre teacher Ms. Wills. “She’s every inch a risk taker.”

What Siyoan thought was going to be a nerve wracking and difficult move to America, turned out to be a lot less scary. Fortunately for Siyoan,



Sixth-grader Siyoan Yin came to JHMS in 2016 from Shanghai, China.

the language barrier wasn’t too much of an issue. Prior to coming to America, she took English classes while living in China. Even though adjusting to a new country was easy for Siyoan, she had trouble saying goodbye to her loved ones.

“I miss my friends and family the most,” she said. Siyoan left behind her two aunts and her cousins. She’s looking forward to getting to know her new family better, and making new friends in St. Petersburg.

But if all goes according to plan, her family members back home will be able to see her any day on the big screen for the price of a movie theater ticket.



HADASSAH EBORDA | JHT

Rhyming risk-taker

BY HALLE LINK
JHT Web Editor

On any given morning before the bell rings at JHMS, you will hear rap and hip hop music blaring from someone’s cellphone or headphones. At our school, students’ lives revolve around the music they enjoy.

School for many, on the other hand, is boring and not enjoyable. But one teacher at J.Hop came up with an idea to combine the two.

Piano instructor Mr. Weaver challenged students to write a rap song using the IB learner profiles. His goal was to teach the values in a fun way. The winner of the competition was given the opportunity to record the track in a professional studio.

Eighth-grader Salma Mahjoubi isn’t surprised that not many raps were submitted into the competition. It was a really hard challenge.

“You have to be smart and creative enough to come up with good and catchy lyrics,” she said.

Apparently eighth-grader Davion Cummings had what it took. Along with winning a recording session, Davion also won a hat and a \$50 gift card to Olive Garden. Eighth-grader Collis McKenzie took second place and earned a \$50 gift card to Carraba’s Italian Grill and a cologne set.

Davion performed his rap at the JHMS International Folk Fair in front of all of his peers. His lyrics extolled the virtues of being a communicator, being balanced and being a



Courtesy of Cal Brown

JHMS eighth-grader Davion Cummings records his winning rap at a studio at St. Petersburg College.

risk-taker among other IB values.

“I was nervous,” said Davion. “At first I was scared, but like if nobody wanted to do it, I could do it.”

After performing it at the Folk Fair, Davion was accompanied by Mr. Weaver, eighth-grader Adrian Lopez and seventh-grader Jamon Garrett to the St. Petersburg College recording studio to record the rap. Adrian played the piano and bass for the song while Jamon played the drums.

“It was fun,” said Davion about recording in a studio. “I had done it before. It was just a new experience to do it at a college.”

Fellow students can learn from the affirmation in the song’s hook written by Davion: “I gotta be great.”

J.Hop + Mr. Lee = student success

BY KRISTA BRAYTON
AND HADASSAH EBORDA
JHT Staff Writers

New seventh grade intensive math teacher Mr. Lee isn’t a huge fan of the subject he teaches.

“I don’t really like math,” he said. “But I just want to help the students to succeed.”

Even though he isn’t a fan of the subject, Mr. Lee knows firsthand how useful math is in the real world. Before becoming a teacher, Mr. Lee served for six years in the U.S. Navy as a nuclear engineer. As a Nuclear Power Reactor Operator aboard USS Theodore Roosevelt CVN 71, Mr. Lee was constantly using math.

But after his time in the Navy, Mr. Lee was more interested in working with young people instead of pursuing a career in engineering.

“I was always a coach and a trainer in my professions,



ANGELINA SAENKA | JHT

Math teacher Mr. Lee helps De’Mario Murphy during class.

so it was more of a best fit for me,” said Mr. Lee.

Before coming to John Hopkins, Mr. Lee taught math at Largo Middle School for six years. Most recently, he taught in a high school recovery dropout prevention program in Hillsborough County.

Students here appreciate the patience Mr. Lee

has shown when teaching a concept.

“Mr. Lee will come and help us step-by-step through the problems,” said seventh-grader Asiaana McKinnes. “If we don’t get it on our own, he will help us even more.”

Mr. Lee replaced Mr. Coffin at the beginning of the second semester as the intensive math teacher.

“I really like his teaching style,” said seventh-grader Bailey White. “He takes the time to make sure you actually understand the work.”

In the short time that Mr. Lee has been here, he has been able to make many connections with the students.

“I try to engage every student in the classroom and make real world connections with math,” he said.

The student’s education and their success are what matter to him most.

“They may not care, but I still care,” he said.

Looking back

It happens every May. Eighth-graders who have looked forward to graduation day since they were

J. Hop newbies suddenly look around and get nostalgic. Sure, moving up and moving on is exciting, fun, and full of possibilities. But what about leaving the familiar feel of the courtyard or the cafeteria?

Or hanging out with friends at the car circle?

Some eighth-graders share what J. Hop has meant to them and what the future may hold.

Story and photos by Brody Barley, Amelia Beatty, Ocean Connors, Lezley Hoffman, Maya Patanow, Cereniti Shedrick, Hanah Snyder and Meena Snyder.

JHMS eighth-graders share their memories.



INDEA DEVORE describes her J. Hop experience as crazy, "like a rollercoaster." Her favorite J. Hop memory is "the plays that I've been in," including *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, *Godspell* and *James and the Giant Peach*. Indea will miss all of the teachers she's become comfortable with, and she will also miss dance class. Indea is going to Gibbs High School for dance because, "I'm in love with dancing," she said.



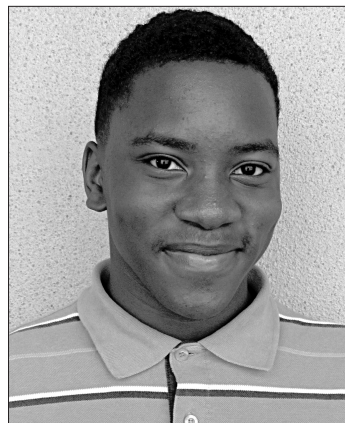
ANA MARIA CORREA says her favorite memories from her years at J. Hop are "being in the musicals like *James and the Giant Peach* and *Godspell* because it was fun." Ana will miss French class the most because she had the class for three years and established a connection with French teacher Madame Griet. She is going into the medical program at Boca Ciega because "I want to have a career in the medical field," she said.



ERIC WILSON describes his J. Hop experience as "unforgettable." He will miss the arts magnet and Ms. Chambers the most. Eric is going to Gibbs High School for the PCCA program. "I'll take with me the memory of my friends and the fun things that happened in lunch," he said.



ANNIKA FULLER says that her classes at John Hopkins were challenging, but "it pushed me to do better than I thought." The thing Annika will miss most of all about J. Hop is performing on stage. And the class she will miss is chorus with Mr. Butts. Annika will be attending Gibbs High School PCCA program for chorus. "My favorite memory I will take with me is performing in *Godspell Jr., the Musical*," she added.



DERIOYUN FOWLERS will miss his best friend Janea Cooper. The teacher he will miss the most is Ms. Croce. "She likes to lead you in the right direction." Derioyun is going to Gibbs PCCA for the dance program.



For **DARRYL MITCHELL**, the thing he enjoyed the most about J. Hop was getting into the dance program. Darryl likes dance because, "You can express yourself without words." His favorite teachers are Ms. Fiordimondo, Mr. Butts, and Ms. Trapani. He will be attending Gibbs High School for PCCA's dance program. The memory Darryl will take with him will be the kindness his teachers and friends have shown him.



TAYLOR MONTGOMERY describes her middle school life as "crazy". "It's hard not to get into the drama," she said. Out of all the classes at J. Hop, her favorite is dance. She enjoys spending time with her "second family," the dance students. Taylor's favorite teacher is Ms. Fiordimondo, and she loves practicing and performing with her. Taylor will be going to Dixie Hollins High School for their film and photography program. She will miss performing and preparing for the dance performances, but will take these memories to high school with her.



DWAIN DAVIS describes his time at J. Hop as "fun and exciting." He will miss Ms. Parson's math class. "She's a nice and fun teacher, and I like doing fun projects," he said. Dwain is headed to Gibbs High School for the BETA program.

COLD HARD TRUTH



Popsicles tasted in the test include **Chloe's Pops**, **Publix brand ice pops**, **Philly Swirls Jungle Swirls**, and **Publix brand fudge bars**.

Faculty taste tests popsicle brands.



Photos by CHLOE MEYERS | JHT

The panel puts popsicles to the test. From left: guidance counselor Ms. Williams, eighth-grade clerk Ms. Wolf and AP Mr. Mills try the tasty treats.

BY HALLE LINK
JHT Web Editor

As the temperature rises, there's nothing better than a cold treat after a hard day of work. One of the best summer treats to combat a hot day is a cold popsicle. The *J.Hop Times* staff performed a taste test with members of the John Hopkins faculty to determine which is the best popsicle to unwrap this summer.

Our judges were seventh-grade assistant principal Mr. Mills, eighth-grade guidance counselor Ms. Williams and eighth grade office secretary Ms. Wolf. The four varieties the judges tried were all-natural **Chloe's Pops**, artificially flavored **Publix brand Ice Pops**, **Publix brand Fudge Bars** and **Jungle Swirls fruit sorbet bars**.

Up first, the judges tried Chloe's Pops. Ms. Wolf and Ms. Williams weren't impressed.

"It's very bitter," said Ms. Wolf.

"I definitely wouldn't buy this," said Ms. Williams.

Mr. Mills liked it.

"It's natural and crispy," he said.

Next up were the Ice Pops, which came in

orange, grape, and cherry flavors.

"This one has a really bad wrapper," Mr. Mills said.

"This is so much better," said Ms. Wolf.

"It's delicious," agreed Ms. Williams. "This reminds me of when the ice cream truck would come around."

Then came the Jungle Swirls, which were unanimously disliked by the panel.

"I don't like this one at all," said Ms. Williams.

"It's kind of gross, I don't like the flavor," said Ms. Wolf.

Mr. Mills did find one positive.

"I do like the clear wrapper so you know what flavor you're getting," he said.

With the final selection, a fudge pop, feelings were mixed.

"This one's my favorite," said Ms. Wolf.

"It's melty, smooth and creamy," said Mr. Mills. "When I was a kid I always had these."

Ms. Williams on the other hand didn't like it at all.

"Eww," she said in disgust.

On your next trip to the grocery store, take a stroll down the freezer aisle and keep these suggestions in mind before you choose a box to enjoy.

WATCH IT

Experience the taste test along with our panel of judges. pcsb.org/jhoptimes

We Tried It Escape St. Pete

BY KAYLEE PEDIGO, KAYLA ANDERSON
AND AJLA KUC
JHT Staff Writers

By going to school in St. Petersburg, students at John Hopkins are lucky enough to be surrounded by a variety of fun cultural destinations. In a new series for the *J. Hop Times* called "We Tried It," members of our staff will experience some of the local sites and describe what they thought of them.

What we tried

KAYLEE: We went to Escape St. Pete, just a few blocks from J.Hop in downtown St. Petersburg. The idea of an escape room is that you have to solve puzzles through clues given to you and information you find in the room. As someone who loves solving puzzles and figuring out riddles in order to get to the next step, this has been something I've wanted to do for a while.

AJLA: As part of an escape room, participants are given a story line for why they are being trapped in a room, and are then told to figure out clues to get out. Each group only has 60 minutes to complete the assignment. But it's not that easy.

KAYLA: It seems a lot easier than it actually is, and you have to work quickly. Since we were going to be doing this as a group, it was important that we communicated with each other.

How it went

KAYLA: So the storyline goes that we're assistants to a mad scientist named Dr. Abe Normal who is attempting to illegally clone humans. He traps us in the science lab to prevent us from going to the police, giving him time to make his escape.

KAYLEE: The room wasn't very big, and we didn't have to move very far to get from puzzle to puzzle.

I was expecting it to go from one room to the next with a whole new set of puzzles, but it all took place in one room. I didn't hesitate, or even wait for the rest of the explanation from the clues we were given. I just began working as if I had done it before.

AJLA: I was pretty sure that we weren't going to get through at first, but when I saw that the room was average-sized and not a huge gymnasium type room, I gained hope. We got through everything using teamwork, and ended up escaping with 13 minutes to spare.

The verdict

KAYLEE: If I had to choose two words to describe the escape room I would use "short" and "sweet." Though it didn't take much time, it was fun and challenging at the same time. I knew from the very beginning that going slowly wasn't a good idea, but going too fast would be just as bad. The best way to figure it all out and beat the timer was to go at a steady pace. I'd recommend this to any groups looking for a great experience.

AJLA: The escape room really had me thinking outside of the box, and collaborating with my teammates. Working with others helped with things that I just couldn't notice on my own. My final thought is that everyone should experience one at least once in their life. Be sure you go with a group that is good at solving puzzles.

KAYLA: I really enjoyed Escape St. Pete and would definitely go again. It would be really fun with a group of people as a competition or something. It required a lot of teamwork to be successful. I think that if we hadn't worked together as much, we wouldn't have gotten out on time. I am looking forward to when the next room is revealed and I can try to escape that one, too.



Ajla Kuc answers questions in order to exit the room at Escape St. Pete.

KRYSTA BRAYTON | JHT

Restaurant review | Panera Bread

RISING TO THE OCCASION

BY GRACIELA LADERA • JHT Restaurant Critic

With so many restaurants to choose from in Pinellas County, it's always nice to be able to rely on a familiar favorite. I'm consistently impressed by all Panera Bread has to offer, with not just great food but also a comfortable setup.

SIGHT: When you first walk into the café, you'll see a dining area bustling with activity. College students are socializing and working on homework, businessmen are holding meetings, and of course, people are eating and talking. As the name suggests, you're sure to see shelves loaded with a variety of baked goods behind the counter. When you see the cookies, pastries, bagels and loaves of bread, don't be surprised if your mouth starts to water.

SMELL: The key word here is "bread." The aroma of freshly baked loaves pulled from the oven float through the café. But when you actually receive your meal, the sweet and savory scents overtake your senses and beckon you to take a bite.

TOUCH: One thing that makes the experience of eating at Panera Bread so enjoyable is its cleanliness. The employees are constantly wiping down the smooth tables, creating a comfortable atmosphere for

Panera's serves a variety of breakfast and lunch entrees, including mac and cheese.



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Freshly baked cookies fill a display case at Panera Bread in Pinellas Park.

their customers. The food's texture really depends on what you order — crunchy potato chips, fluffy white bread, heat emanating from the soup, or soft and crisp pastries.

SOUND/HEARING: Panera Bread is a lively restaurant and makes eating there a fun experience. Around your table, groups of people will be socializing, and you may even hear bits of conversations or the occasional laugh. The jazz music that plays softly in the background acts as a soundtrack to your meal.

TASTE: And most important of all, this is what you came for ... the taste! What you order really depends on your own opinion, but

I can tell you that whatever you choose will be a flavorful experience for your taste buds. There are just so many food choices and combinations that you're sure to find something you enjoy. My little brother and I always order the macaroni and cheese. Whether you order a panini sandwich, a soup or a salad, your meal will be complete with a side of either potato chips or yogurt, a desert and a drink.

RATING: My final rating for Panera Bread is 5 out of 5 baguettes. The delicious comfort food and the warm setting should make this a go-to stop for any student desiring a satisfying meal.

Slime oozes through J.Hop

BY MARKAYA WILSON AND AZAVIE CALHOUN
JHT Staff Writers

When you hear the word "slime," you probably think of the *Ghostbusters* or Nickelodeon. But believe it or not, there's slime oozing through the halls of John Hopkins every day. Students here are taking part in a slime craze that's spread around the world by making their own gooey substances and selling them on campus.

There are many different ways to make slime. J.Hop sixth-grader Gianna Squillace makes hers with laundry detergent and glue.

"I made it because I was bored," she said. "It's very sticky and squishy, and sometimes colorful."

Seventh-grader Kali Cohen makes her slime with shaving cream, glue and contact solution.

"Slime can be super messy and

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We mix up a batch of slime.
pcsb.org/jhoptimes

can stick to your clothes," she said. "But I enjoy slime because it's something to do, something to play with."

According to NBC News, the latest trend has created a shortage of glue for some retailers.

"Walmart has seen a rise in glue sales, and we are rolling out a plan to respond to the increase to make sure kids and parents can find the glue they need to have fun," said Walmart spokesperson Michelle Malashock to NBC News.

While some students like Kali and Gianna just make the slime for their own enjoyment, others are creating a business out of it. Sev-

enth-grader Maddy Chartier prices her slime by size, ranging from 50 cents to \$5 per container.

"There were things I wanted to buy that I had to pay for myself, so I needed to make money," she said. Since she began selling the slimy stuff, Maddy has earned about \$47 in sales.

While many in the school love the slime, there are some who want nothing to do with it.

"It's disgusting, icky and weird," said eighth-grader Marnica Hancock. "Even though it's nasty, I could see how it helps calm people's nerves."

If your nerves need to be calmed, or you just want something fun to play with, you can choose from a wide variety of recipes on the Internet for your next batch of homemade slime.



JHT Staff

Homemade slime is a popular product at JHMS.

A favorite place

The JHMS campus is filled with courtyards, gardens, fields, and corridors. Some *J. Hop Times* Newsroom One photographers share their favorite places on campus.



RILEY ALVIS: "When I'm in the main courtyard I smell all the different plants that are there. Sometimes it's peaceful in the courtyard. You can see the clear blue sky and the clouds overhead."

STEVEN WEAVER: "I like to be in the main courtyard at JHMS. I see beautiful birds, flowers and trees there. I also like the openness of the courtyard and how everyone in the school is there every day."



ADAM SAMSEL: "My favorite place at J. Hop is the garden. It's quiet and calm out there, and the fruits and vegetables smell really good. I like to see the food that's growing."



ISAIAH THOMAS: "My favorite place at J. Hop is the garden. It smells really good. I like the plants and flowers that grow there, especially the vegetables. The garden calms me down."

STEPHEN DIAZ: "My favorite place at J. Hop is the art courtyard. When I'm there, I hear music playing and smell the fresh grass. The yard is so colorful with all of the art totems that line the walls. I like walking through it on my way to class."



sports



ANGELINA SAENKA | JHT

Trojan Ray Perry (10) takes a shot during a home game against Tyrone.



HADASSAH EBORDA | JHT

Griffin Tenore digs a ball in a game against Pinellas Park.

SPORTS ROUNDUP

BY ANGELINA SAENKA AND CUR'NECIA MARTIN
JHT Sports Writers

This was their year. The Trojans boys' basketball team came on strong early and kept the pressure on. Through December. Through January. All of that effort paid off with a South District Championship win, the first in more than a decade, and the first for third-year coach Mr. Williams. The Trojans' record stands at 9-1 for the 2016-17 season.

"I'm really proud of them," said Coach Williams. "They have mentally improved, and they've learned a lot," he added.

Williams credits hard work and a little bit of luck that took them so far. But the players know that the coach was central to their success.

"I think he has pushed us harder and motivated us," said eighth-grader Collis McKenzie.

As for the Lady Trojans, the girls'

basketball team ended their season with a 5-5 record. Leading the team were eighth-graders Jariya Lewis, Nadia Lewis, and Cur'Necia Martin.

After three consecutive district championship wins, Coach Forte recognized that the team was in a rebuilding year, bringing on many new players for this season.

"This season was more of a building year to improve the skills of the younger players so the team could win more in championships in years to come," she said.

The season was mixed as well for Trojan volleyball. The boys' team improved to a 6-4 winning season, after struggling the few previous seasons, while the Lady Trojans came away with a 2-8 record.

"We improved throughout the season, and will continue next year," said captain Griff Tenore.

The girls' team struggled to rebuild the team after losing many of their

strongest eighth grade players at the end of last year's season. Standout players for the Lady Trojans included Kai Moore, and seventh-graders Jayme Konja and Eledia Pena.

"We gave it our all, but we feel like we could have done better," said team captain Kai Moore.

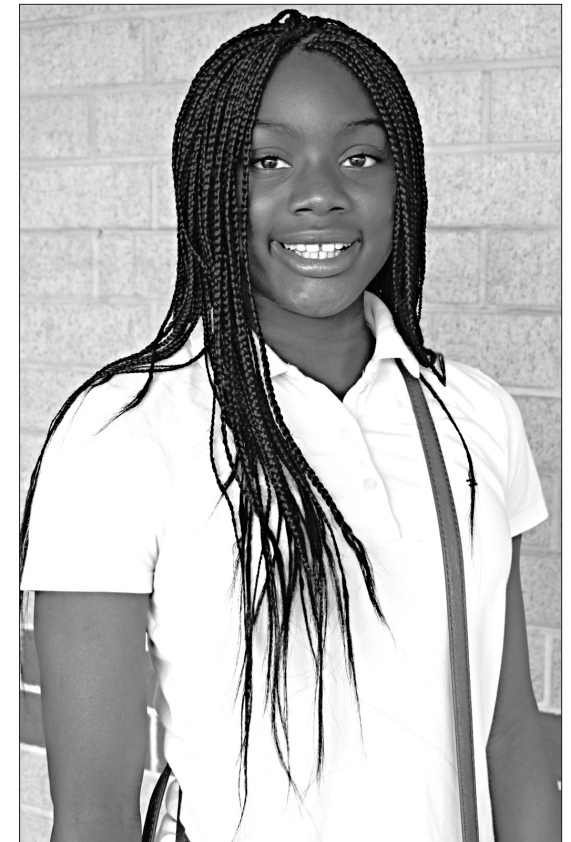
Track season started off slow, but the runners soon gained confidence from the coaches' pep talks in daily practices.

Seventh-graders Ke'niya Brumadge and TJ Adams were the standouts this season. Ke'niya won the championship medal in the 200 M at the district championship meet.

"Track is interesting and fun because you do many things," said eighth-grade runner Christian Davis.

Trojans track is looking forward to a strong season next year.

"This group of kids are very hard working and focused," said Coach Rashad.



ANGELINA SAENKA | JHT

Seventh-grader Ke'niya Brumadge first started running track in third grade for the Lightning Bolt Track Club.

Like mother, like daughter

BY ANGELINA SAENKA
JHT Staff Writer

Nothing can stop J.Hop seventh-grader Ke'niya Brumadge when she's on the running track.

"I could run all day if I had to," she said.

At a young age, Ke'niya's mother inspired her to run track. It was in third grade when Ke'niya first started running track for the Lightning Bolt Track Club. Following in her mom's footsteps, Ke'niya earned the title as the fastest girl on the team.

Ke'niya's mom ran track for 12 years, and received many awards in her running career. Her mom's dedication and accomplishment encourages Ke'niya to hustle just as hard. Along with being the star member of the track team, Ke'niya has been on honor roll and the principal's list. She hopes to one day receive a scholarship to run track in college.

"One day I know I will make it into the Olympics," said Ke'niya.

This was Ke'niya's first year running for J.Hop. The team placed third in the district. As an eighth-grader next year, she plans to help lead the Trojan girls track team to the first place spot.

"Track is really fun," she said. "But it's hard work."

Ke'niya's main events she participates in are disc, the 4x100 relay, and the 100 and 200 yards. Other than headaches and migraines, she's never faced an injury that took her away from track.

If she doesn't end up making it to the Olympics for track, Ke'niya plans on becoming a lawyer, because she loves working with people.



ANGELINA SAENKA | JHT

Ky'lia Musgrove competes in the long jump during a meet at St. Petersburg High School.



DONOVAN GLOVER | JHT

Lady Trojan Jariyah Lewis pushes past Bay Point defenders.

Around the world IN A DAY

BY LINDSEY GAVORNIK
JHT Staff Writer

Macarons from France. Mango sorbet from Jamaica. Chicken Lo Mein from China. As part of J.Hop's second annual International Folk Fair Extravaganza, students were treated to the foods and the cultural traditions from countries around the world.

Flags from all over the world crisscrossed the courtyard as students and staff walked from one country's booth to the next. Everyone was encouraged to wear ethnic attire to represent their heritage. The countries showcased were Cuba, Jamaica, Vietnam, China, Laos, Japan, Cambodia, France, Greece, Russia, Congo, Zambia, and lastly Uganda.

Principal Brown views the day as a celebration of diverse backgrounds.

"The purpose of having the Folk Fair Festival every year is to give opportunities which align with IB focus," he said. "And also to experience things outside of their own culture."

Eighth-grader Makayla Schmidt was most interested in taking a break from school work.

WATCH IT

Experience the sights and sounds of the fair. pcsb.org/jhoptimes

"I like the performances and seeing some of my friends," she said. "Although I am not as interested in the food as I am with the cultures represented."

Spanish teacher Ms. Jasinski was happy to see how involved all of the students were in learning about other countries.

"The Folk Fair has been absolutely wonderful," she said. "My favorite part was seeing all of the students so interested. It helps students realize they're a citizen of the world."

Many students performed in front of their classmates on the courtyard stage. Eighth grade student Indea Devore joined a group in dancing the salsa, which hails from Cuba.

"We want to show different cultures in a fun way," she said.

As an International Baccalaureate candidate, John Hopkins strives to prepare students to be citizens of the international community. The International Folk Fair Extravaganza provides a view of the world beyond our school walls.



HANAH SNYDER | JHT

THE JHMS Steel Pan Band performs with band director Mr. Vickrey, far right.



ZION BING | JHT

Eighth-grader Kameron Butler studies the chess board during the folk fair.



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Cafe staffer Veronica Fowler offers sixth-grader Damien Messen some plantains to try.

ON THE COVER: Dance focus students dance a salsa. From left are Eleida Pena, Indea Devore, Zoei Trunzo, Marissa Baney and Anja Johnson-Brown.



ZION BING | JHT

Art focus student Aimee Olson paints hearts on Jasmyrn Barnes' face.



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Gibbs High School marching band entertains the courtyard crowd during the JHMS folk fair.



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Eighth-graders Talya White, left, and Annika Fuller perform *Wade in the Water* for the folk fair crowd.