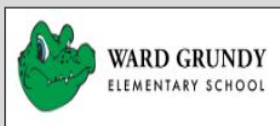


Potter Pride Newsletter

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Students and Staff Help Others Across the Community

By Olivia Huff (7th-grade reporter), Rachel Kaspar (8th-grade reporter), and Hannah Strubhar (7th-grade reporter)

Help-a-thon, a community service event, was held on October 2nd. Help-a-thon teaches kids about their community and ways to give back to the world with kindness.

Mr. Hoffman, MJHS principal, said, "Help-a-thon is a fundraiser to raise money for school. Students have an opportunity to volunteer in the community and help others. It's educational for kids, like getting an understanding of the jobs in the area."

Some MJHS students volunteered at the elementary schools while other students helped out at Goodwill, Westwood Park, and many other places, some of which are listed to the left.

After the original Help-a-thon, a second field trip was available to students who raised \$200 or more. One of these students was Marissa Troxell, an 8th-grader. She, along with a few other students, went to TAPS (Tazewell Animal Protection Agency). She went to TAPS because she loves animals.

Troxell said, "The best part about going to TAPS was being able to see the animals. We got my dog from TAPS before I was born, so I was glad to find out how it worked."

Mr. Hoffman pointed out that there are many benefits that come from Help-a-thon. He said,

"My favorite part would have to be the educational aspect of the trip. Getting to learn more about the community and hearing about places you may not have known about is the beauty of this occasion."

Another obvious upside to the Help-a-thon fundraiser is the money gained from it to support academics and activities at MJHS. This year's amount raised by students was \$38,255.81, and the total amount raised by students over the years has been \$233,668.15.

Overall, there are many benefits and takeaways from Help-a-thon that people can enjoy. The annual event brings us all together and strengthens our bond in the community.



Clay even volunteered during Help-a-thon, too!

Upcoming Events

ACTIVITIES

Jan. 8: Leadership Academy/Early Dismissal (11:00 A.M.)

Jan. 31-Feb. 2: Aladdin Jr. @ BFPAC (Fri.-Sat., 7 P.M.; Sun., 2 P.M.)

Feb. 4: District Spelling Bee, 3:30-6:30 P.M.

ATHLETICS

Dec. 19: Boys Basketball @ Olympia, 5 P.M.

Jan. 11: Volleyball Game @ Farmington, 10 A.M.-noon

Jan. 13: Boys Basketball vs. Canton @ MJHS, 4:30 P.M.

GENERAL

Dec. 20: Early Dismissal (11:00 A.M.)

Dec. 23-Jan. 3: No School (Winter Break)

Jan. 20: No School (Martin Luther King, Jr. Day)

Students and Staff

Student Spotlight

By Alena Lu, 7th-grade reporter

Kevin Vo, a White Team student here at MJHS, agreed to be interviewed for the Student Spotlight this month!

When asked what his favorite classes are, he answered, "Math because I like math and Project Lead the Way because it involves computers and coding."

He said that his favorite non-school-related activity would either be playing video games or hanging out with friends.

Vo's favorite book is "*The Hunger Games*" because it has lots of violence and was interesting to read. I also like *Harry Potter* because it has lots of magic."

He is currently considering different career choices for his future. Vo stated that he is considering ideas such as a programmer, a doctor, a streamer, or a professional soccer player.

If you ever see Kevin Vo in the hallway, say hello!



Kevin Vo, MJHS 7th-grader

Faculty Feature

By Lainie Kurtz, 8th-grade reporter

Mrs. Breaux heard good things about the students, teachers, and the environment here at MJHS, and those are just some of the many reasons that she was driven to work here. Mrs. Breaux is the new MJHS Spanish teacher. She's married to Mr. Breaux, the White Team math teacher. Mrs. Breaux previously taught at Metamora, Limestone, and Morton High School, so she has lots of experience.

She said that the most influential person in her life is her pastor's wife because she lives with great integrity. Mrs. Breaux loves to talk to and do good for the community, and her favorite quote happens to be by a great world influencer, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. -- "Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that."



Mrs. Breaux, Spanish Teacher

Another fact about Mrs. Breaux is that she is very musical -- she plays guitar and loves to sing and dance.

Most of all, she says the most important thing at the end of the day is that she wants students to know that she loves and cares about them when they walk out of the classroom.

Thanks to Mrs. Breaux for all you do for MJHS!

Counseling Corner

By Danielle VanMeenen and Beth Spaniol, MJHS Counselors

Adopted from Middle Years, Resources for Educators, a division of CCH Incorporated, 2019

Q: I recently overheard my daughter and her friend making mean remarks about another girl. How can I encourage my child to be kinder?

A: Being kind has benefits that matter to teens, like helping them make and keep friends and feel good about themselves. The best way to make friends is to be a good friend to someone else. Suggest that your daughter challenge herself to do at least one kind act each day. Maybe she could smile and say good morning to the bus driver or custodian, or invite someone who's sitting alone in the cafeteria to eat lunch with her. When you ask your child about school at the end of the day, be sure to include, "Who were you kind to today?" and "Who was kind to you?" Tell her what you did that was kind, too—you'll give each other ideas to try another day. MJHS has been encouraging this concept with the first-ever Kindness Campaign sponsored by our Student Council. Their mission is to spread kindness throughout MJHS and celebrate the great things students do each and every day! The week of December 6th, there was a Spirit Week with fun dress-up days, a Toys for Tot campaign, and other positive activities throughout the week.

Book Love

Book Recs

By Ava Ciocca, 8th-grade reporter

The Land Of Stories Book 1: The Wishing Spell by Chris Colfer: There are many magic fiction books out there, but this series is the best in my opinion. It has many historical characters and facts throughout the book. The main characters are Alex and her brother, Conner Bailey. They are twins who are very special -- they have magic in their blood and they don't even know it.

The Chronicles of Narnia Book 1: The Magician's Nephew by C.S. Lewis: In this book, two kids, Polly and Digory, are running around in their attics. They decide to go into a secret tunnel, which leads them to Digory's crazy magician uncle. They get in trouble for being up there, but the uncle gives them two colored rings, yellow and green. You will have to read to find out what happens next!



Creating a Habit of Reading

By Melissa Kruse, MJHS Instructional Coach

Life is busy. Finding time to read can easily be pushed aside. Yet, reading is good for the brain. It introduces us to new ideas, makes us better writers, improves our conversational skills, and builds our background knowledge. For these reasons and more, it's worth the effort to establish a habit of reading. *But how?*

1. **Set times.** Decide when you are going to read, and – if possible – make it the same time each day. Right after school? On the bus? Before bed? While waiting for dinner?
2. **Be prepared.** Wherever you go, take a book! It's so easy to spend all our free minutes on a phone. But, if you have a book, those boring minutes spent waiting in the doctor's office or riding on the bus can be spent reading.
3. **Make a list.** When you come across a book that sounds good, add it to a running list! Add it to a note on your phone so that you always have it with you.
4. **Reduce distractions.** If you establish a certain part of the day that you'd like to spend reading, try to eliminate distractions during that time frame. Put your phone away, turn off the television, and find a quiet, relaxing place to read.
5. **Find books you like.** No one develops a habit of reading by continually picking up books they detest. The goal is to find books you don't want to put down! Visit libraries and bookstores. Talk with your teacher or librarian. When you find a book you like, search for similar books to read next. Google "If you liked [insert book title, like *Harry Potter*]".
6. **Set a goal.** Make it reasonable, but push yourself. For example, "This month, I am going to finish a book." Or, "This year, I want to read 12 books." The [MJHS Reading Challenge](#) is a great place to start!
7. **Read with friends.** Reading with others is sometimes more enjoyable than reading alone. Ask your friends if they'd like to read the same book as you. Talk with your family about what you are reading. Connect with friends on Goodreads.

Basically, find a book you are interested in, read it, think about it, and talk about it. To develop a habit of reading, we need to fall in love with it.

Word Power

Compiled by Valerie Smith, MJHS Secretary

Word: concinnity

Pronunciation: \kən-'si-nə-tē\

Part of speech: noun

Definition

Harmony or elegance of design, especially of literary style in adaptation of parts to a whole or to each other

Examples

The dancers' fluid costumes added to the concinnity of *The Nutcracker Suite* production.

The unique personalities in our friend group come together with a concinnity that makes us better together.

Sports

Should Band Be Considered a Sport?

By Rachel Kaspar, 8th-grade reporter

There is currently an ongoing debate on whether or not band is a sport. Many people say it's not because it "does not require physical exertion."

Lizzie Mallinson, 8th-grader, said that she believes band is a sport "because it takes breathing, a lot of focus, there are a lot of practices, and it's most likely if you don't practice you will lose some of your talent just like other sports." Mallinson is a trombone player for the 8th-grade band and does an extra add-on to it called Jazz Band.

"I do horseback riding as a pastime, and just like band, I believe it's a sport because you are moving, it takes a lot of energy, and just one slip up can mess with your whole rhythm with the horse, just like an instrument," Mallinson said.

8th-grader Abby Unger does not participate in band. She said, "I do appreciate band, but I do not believe it is a sport. I consider a sport to be an activity that gets your heart rate up, which I don't believe band does."

"I am in both softball and volleyball as extracurricular activities," Unger continues. "I do consider those to be sports because those require that you get your heart rate up and that you show visible effort. Band is more of a fun activity than a sport."

Now that you've heard both of their definitions of what a sport is, here is the dictionary definition: "an activity involving physical exertion and skill in which an individual or team competes against another or others for entertainment." What do you think? Is or isn't band a sport? What other activities can you think of might be questioned as a sport?



The MJHS Band marched at the Pumpkin Fest parade.



The 7th-grade girls won their regional game at Kingsley Junior High School.

Basketball Team Strives to Constantly Improve

By Ella Vannaken, 7th-grade reporter

This season, the 7th-grade girls basketball team had a great victory winning their regional game. Sadly, they lost sectionals 31-30, but the team still ended the season with a 21-4 record. The girls had a great season with a winning record. The team loved playing the game!

Anja Ruxlow, a 7th-grade basketball player, said, "The best part of being on the team is having such a great relationship with so many people. Everyone on the team is best friends, and we are such a fun group. We like having fun and staying loose, and we've won lots of games."

Everyone on the team loves to play and strived to get better every game and practice. Home games were a lot of fun for them, too.

"During home games, it's really hyped up and all the students get really into it," Ruxlow said.

Even though the sport looks easy, it took a lot of work to get to where the team is now. The girls had practice every day except Sundays. Although it's a lot of work, the 15-player team loves working together and playing basketball.

Clubs and Activities

A Whole New World Coming This Winter!

By Emma Belsly and Sharon Chen, 7th-grade reporters

Ever since late October, Morton Junior High School has started their musical program yet again, this time for the musical Aladdin Jr. All of their hard work will be displayed for the public the weekend of January 31st through February 2nd, 2020.

A 7th-grader, Charlotte Potts, got the part of Jasmine. Potts said, "I wanted to play Jasmine because I think Jasmine is a very interesting and challenging character to play since she's very independent and adventurous."

Potts wanted to try out because acting has always been a passion of hers. She said, "It's been a hobby and passion of mine since I was little and something that can always make me feel better on a rough day." Potts encourages everyone to try out, whether they think that they are going to make it or not.

For some of the students, this will be a whole new world of acting. Potts can't wait for the chance to perform with the rest of the cast on the opening night. Potts is very thankful that our school has the opportunity to do a musical.



She said, "I think we are very lucky to go to a school that supports music and acting so much, and is willing to do this for the many students who enjoy performing."

Another aspect that is included in the musical is taking place behind the scenes.

The Morton Junior High White Team ELA teacher, Miss Millburg, is one of the directors of the musical for this year. She is in charge of production design.

It was an extremely difficult process to cast all of the members of the musical. It was very overwhelming due to the amount of talent here at MJHS.

Miss Millburg said, "I was relieved to know that all of the students will work hard in their roles to shine." Surely, everyone involved in the musical this year is full of potential and will do great with the many performances throughout the weekend.

Behind the scenes, there are also many fun activities for students to do. She said, "There are so many exciting steps in the process -- I love the auditions, I can't wait to start putting costumes together, and I adore watching the whole show come together in the end."

Miss Millburg also said, "I feel a world of emotions being a co-director for Aladdin Jr. I'm nervous, excited, and genuinely honored to be working with so much talent."

Offstage of the musical, many people will be in charge of specific things. The stage crew will be working to help paint the background and construct the magic carpet and other effects.

Miss Millburg and the tech crew will be putting costumes together, finding props, and choosing students to help backstage during the performances.

Don't forget to clear your calendar for the weekend of January 31st through February 2nd for the Morton Junior High School musical performance, Aladdin Jr.!

Spreading Pep at Basketball Games

By Allie McClure, 7th-grade reporter

Joey Julich decided to join pep band because he found the hobby of playing in band enjoyable. He loves it because you get to play for an audience frequently and spend time with friends.

"My favorite part is getting to play popular songs that people in the audience would know and enjoy listening to," he said.

Pep band is a fun way to show spirit during basketball or volleyball games. The musicians always make sure that the games are fired up and energetic!

Julich plays baritone in pep band. A baritone has three valves like a trumpet but has the same level of low pitch as a trombone. It is a low brass instrument. "Pep band has been a great learning experience for me; I have had the chance to get better at my instrument and have had so much fun in the process," Julich explained.

He added, "Last year as a 7th-grader, pep band was a good chance for me to meet the 8th-graders in band, and I established many friendships from it. This year, I've had the opportunity to get to know the 7th-graders in pep band also."

Games

Compiled by Olivia Huff (7th-grade reporter), Gen Reinhart (7th-grade reporter), and Marissa Troxell (8th-grade reporter)

Celebrity Look Alikes



↑ Mr. Bunting looks like Prince Eric from The Little Mermaid!



↑ Miss Millburg looks like Queen Elsa from Frozen!

Interesting Fears

- Genuphobia = fear of knees
- Phobophobia = fear of phobias
- Sesquipedalophobia = fear of long words
- Panophobia = fear of everything
- Coulrophobia = fear of clowns
- Blennophobia = fear of slime

Funny National Holidays

December 17 - National Maple Syrup Day
December 28 - National Chocolate Candy Day
December 30 - National Bacon Day
January 7 - National Bobblehead Day
January 10 - National Houseplant Appreciation Day

Jokes

Q: What's the difference between the bird flu and swine flu?

A: One requires tweetment and the other an oinkment.

Q: Why did the clydesdale give the pony a glass of water?

A: Because he was a little horse.

Word Scramble

See if you can unscramble the following winter-themed words!

- | | |
|-------------|--------------|
| 1. WNMSAON | 4. ONLKWSEFA |
| 2. LOCD | 5. CIE KASTE |
| 3. CREDMEBE | 6. DGIDLNES |

Answer Key: 1. Snowman; 2. Cold; 3. December; 4. Snowflake; 5. Ice skate; 6. Sledding