



# JAGWIRE

Fall 2021 - Issue 1 - Homecoming



## A Return to Normalish

Jefferson Academy makes its return to a *normalish* routine after an extended absence. The JagWire takes a look at the effects and adjustments required because of COVID-19.

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## JA Comes Home

The JagWire recaps all the wild, unpredictable, and welcome twists and turns from last week's Homecoming events at Jefferson Academy.

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## Academic Changes

From missing computers in the library, opening the Writing Center, SATs taking a backseat to other college requirements, and major curriculum changes in the junior high, JA has seen some major academic changes.

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## Memorable Seasons

The Fall Sports seasons at Jefferson Academy have been nothing if not unforgettable. The JagWire recounts the truly memorable success the athletes have accomplished so far this school year.

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Prom, sports games, drama productions, Spirit Week, and making memories is a major part of the high school experience, and COVID-19 has stolen that from the students of Jefferson Academy.

Over the past two years, the pandemic has caused the school to go from 100% remote learning to full-time school in a very short amount of time. As Jefferson Academy returns to some semblance of normalcy, many students struggle with adjusting to the new school routine.

The mere thought of school can be challenging for some, and coupled with the ever-changing routines it can become almost unbearable.

During the pandemic, many students have gotten used to staying at home and working at their own pace. With the new school year, students have had to face the hard reality of waking up bright and early every day.

“Getting up early and having to get ready for school has definitely been one of the hardest aspects of adjusting to a new school routine,” admits Postsecondary Advisor Ms. LeValley.

New routines have proven not to be the only difference with school this year. Staff members have also noticed changes in the way students interact with each other. After being stuck at home for a whole year, many students have forgotten communication skills and what it is like to have a conversation in person.

“I think some of us are still stuck back in the quarantine mindset,” explained Ms. Dasta. “A lot of people got comfortable with online learning and it’s harder to communicate face-to-face with people.”

One of the grades that has been impacted most significantly by the pandemic is seventh grade. The last time these students had a normal school routine was when they were in elementary school, and now they walk side by side with high schoolers.

Despite this dramatic change, some seventh graders are glad to be back in school and experience a semi-normal school day once again.

“I enjoy being in a school with high schoolers because I can talk to people who are older than me and talk about bigger things in life,” commented seventh-grader Isabella Meyer.

While some seventh graders have had quite an easy and pleasant transition, others have not had as much of a positive experience. One of these students is seventh grader Joshua Kaswinkel, who believes this school year has been a bit chaotic due to the ever-changing conditions of the pandemic.

“Things are definitely a bit crazy but at least we’re not where we were last year,” reflected Kaswinkel.

The freshmen attending the school are beginning their first full year of high school without ever getting a chance to really adjust to the junior high schedule and workload. Despite this, freshman Cass Carpenter feels that his education experience has been satisfactory for the last few years.

“Everyone handled it to the best of their ability, with it being out of the ordinary,” stated Carpenter when asked about his thoughts on the gap in education.

Carpenter feels ready to continue his education, and believes that online schooling has not been a disadvantage. Even with the fragility of remote school as compared to in-person learning, there was no evident collapse in his education.

While some freshmen are as prepared as ever, others have been noticing trouble with the new adjustment. Student Elijah Huang has seen a bit of pushback in the current year from having to adapt to a new learning environment.

“Online school makes it harder to learn,” stated Huang. “It lacked the social interaction and makes it harder to ask questions now.”

Yet another grade that has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic are the current eleventh grade students. These juniors are only now experiencing their first complete year of full-time high school and they are already upperclassmen. This thought has been confusing to some who are trying to make sense of their current situation.

“I know I am a junior but I don’t really feel like one,” reflects student Myriam Gonzales.

Junior year can be intimidating because of the academic workload, and some students have struggled with their course load while adjusting to full-time school.

“Junior year has been a hard year because it is the first year back,” states student Adelynn Grip. “But it has also been harder in general because I am taking more challenging courses.”

High school events are key to making memories, and many juniors feel like they missed out on this because of the pandemic.

From school dances to soccer matches, many students never got to experience these events last year. In particular, junior Finley Brunson regrets not being able to participate in theater productions during his sophomore year.

“I want to go into acting when I graduate so I’m a bit salty about missing out on drama productions last year,” admits Finley Brunson.

No matter what grade, every student has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in some way. With time and patience, Jefferson Academy and its students can create a new normal that works for everyone.





# A Return to Normalish

by Rhea Alexander & Memphis Larson



# ROMAN HOLIDAY

by **Marin Baltz and Sophia Krout**

Students brushed through beautiful crystal string curtains as they were transported back in time to Ancient Rome last Saturday, for the first JA Homecoming in two years. Bright white columns, covered in green vines awaited the student body on the patio, with dim, alluring lights and a small stage just in front of the DJ.

After holding a vote, Student Government decided this year's homecoming theme would be "A Night in Rome." Saturday night the commons and courtyard were dawned with dark green vines, hand-made Roman pillars, and other intricate decorations in preparation for the dance.

Sophomore royalty Hudson Subach crowd-surfed about halfway through the dance. "Mr. Williams came up to me and he said, do it again and you're out," said Subach. "I would have liked to do it again, but oh well."

Homecoming royalty nominations were announced at the Homecoming Assembly, where the royalty nominees for each grade competed in various games in front of the student body. Principal Grantham announced the royalty winners at the dance after students voted via a google form.

For freshman royalty, Josh Neely and Riley McManus won Count and Countess. Sophomores

Hudson Subach and Abby Jet won Duke and Dutchess. Juniors Juda Weir and Grace Parker won Prince and Princess. Finally, seniors Sydney Spitz and Evan Shanks won Homecoming Queen and King.

While they may have had fun dancing and crowd surfing, many people were frustrated with the music choices the DJ made.

"The DJ was awful," said senior Hunter Hogsett.

Senior and royalty nominee Aanya Thapa thought that a change in music selection would have improved the ambiance of the dance.

"I think that the dance itself was set up really nice. I think the music kinda killed it though, the DJ wasn't great, and there was even a song where everyone was yelling skip and he still played it. And then he played Baby Shark" said Thapa.

Even though the music may have been questionable it did little to quell the spirit and excitement of the night. Homecoming Queen Sydney Spitz was excited to see the school community celebrating together after spending over a year apart.

"It was fun that it was outside at our school and just being with everybody, honestly, and just having a normal homecoming without masks outside," said Spitz.





# CARDBOARD AND CANDY

by Ashley Nichols

Cardboard floats and a rainstorm of candy and other treats greeted a cheering student body and crowd at the first ever Jefferson Academy Homecoming Parade last week.

Clubs at Jefferson Academy created a brand new Homecoming Parade due to the ongoing pandemic, in lieu of the popular Fall Fest. Clubs participated in this parade and even built and decorated their own floats.

The floats varied from homemade cardboard chariots, castles, and even a trojan horse, to things as simple as decorating a car or having club members just walking in the parade with signs supporting their clubs. Lots of the members also walked alongside their clubs' floats to show support.

"We wanted to do a walking presentation in costumes," remarked Ms. Grace, Performing Arts Clubs sponsor. "The theme will be more to the clubs. We may be different clubs, but we are one community."

There was a lot of creative freedom with the floats and fortunately as many clubs as possible participated in the parade. Not only did the clubs participate, but some of the fall sports teams as well. This was an opportunity to showcase the

clubs and teams of Jefferson Academy. NHS and StuCo put a lot of time and effort into this event and wanted as many people as possible to be in it and attend it.

Overall, the parade itself was in fact successful considering that it had never been done before. All the floats looked amazing and hard work was

definitely put into all of them. Not only did students and faculty members attend, but even some of the families came to watch the parade.

"I helped make floats for Debate, SLAB, and Music Honors Society. It was stressful to put together, but worth it in the end to walk with my club," remarked Emma Brazzell, participant in Parade.

The parade was a great way to prepare for Homecoming and it really showed the spirit of the school. Not only did it

showcase the clubs, but all of the people attending could have fun as well as those who actually participated in the parade.

"The parade was fun to watch, and it was really cool to see what all the different clubs did for floats," commented Skyla Rogers. "It was all very creative and fun."



## FALL FEST FALLS AWAY

by Tori Westbrook

Fall Fest was a beloved event held at Jefferson Academy. From bouncy castles to caramel apples, Fall Fest was a time for students to come together and enjoy fun activities at the school to celebrate the beginning of autumn.

After complications occurred from safety issues with COVID, Fall Fest didn't go out with a bang, but rather with a quiet fizzle. At the time of cancelation, no one knew Fall Fest would not return in later years, only to be replaced with a parade hosted by

the high school's clubs.

"The centerpiece of Fall Fest tends to be the main attractions like the bouncy-things, so without those, Fall Fest would be a little lackluster. But even still, the brilliance of Fall Fest is how all the clubs come together to create a fun event, so I think even without the big attractions, we could make a really fun event just with club activities," commented Mark Leoni, a sophomore executive in STUCO. "I think Fall Fest is a classic JA event and should be brought back."

Although some students agree

that Fall Fest should be brought back, others were simply enjoying the anticipation leading up to the parade.

Anna Brennemen, a member of Student Council, described that the absence of Fall Fest hadn't been touched on in STUCO, and instead most people just accepted that Fall Fest wasn't happening this year. "I sort of understood that the parade was a replacement for Fall Fest, but no one ever talked about it. It was just 'Fall Fest isn't happening so we need to figure out something else,'" she explained.



# BLOODIED CHEESE

by Gigi Gagliano

Chants of "Swiss Cheese" and a bloodied volleyball ref! The Jags student section was removed for taunting the opposing school's goal keeper and the volleyball ref left the game with a cut cheek in one wild night of exciting homecoming action.

The final scores to these games were no shock with the talent that both teams possess. The Girls Varsity Volleyball team won in 3 sets (set one: 25-18, set two: 25-13, set 3: 25-16) 3-0. The Varsity boys soccer team won with ease. A 10-0 mercy rule in the second half was their outcome. These victories made the athletes feel very proud of themselves and gave them a positive mindset for the games ahead.

"We are starting to look like contenders for state." Freja Hampton, sophomore, remarked, "I was really excited and happy that we got the win."

Although the boy's soccer team left the game with a win, the Jags student section will go down in the history books as the first student section to get kicked out of a game at JA.

The student fans got rowdy in support of their team and eventually started to catch the attention of the opposing team's goalie, who then got frustrated and stormed toward the fans very angrily. The Volleyball game ref was also struck in the face with a ball, knocking off his glasses and slicing his temple.

"The student section was heckling the other team and the goalie got mad," commented Adam Livingston, "The ref kicked the students out of the game."

Connor Scarboro, a sophomore who attended the game, remarked, "I turned around one time and I saw someone score on our team, but the other team was down by a lot so they were not the happiest, and the goalie ran out and shoved the player who scored. The student section was heckling the other team and eventually, the goalie started to speed walk towards one of the kids in the student section

as though he was going to attack him."

The two homecoming games were against the M and M duo: volleyball faced No. 3, Bishop Machebeuf while soccer faced No. 6, Manual - both 3A Metro League teams. These were two relatively tough matches for the teams; however, there were large amounts of confidence surrounding these games from the players.

Going into these two games, both teams felt the excitement rising as they prepared each day. The big crowd added exhilaration for the teams that brought up the intensity and emotion of both of the games and practices leading up to the big homecoming game-day significantly. The large crowd affected the athletes for the better, but may have also added extra pressure to the competition.

"Having the fans there brings up our intensity during the game," commented Livingston. "It gives us a reason to play. Instead of just playing for our team, we are now playing for our school."

Freja Hampton added, "I think having a large crowd definitely bring lots of excitement for me and the team but there is always a little pressure with that."

The confidence that was needed to be successful in these soccer and volleyball games was

present, however, the teams were careful not to get too overconfident, jeopardizing the results of the games and being handed an unexpected loss due to their attitudes before the matches.

"Being undefeated this year and coming off of a 9-0 win at home, our confidence should be high coming into this next game," says Livingston. "But we can't go in too cocky since we can lose to anyone."

Hampton had similar feelings about the volleyball team moving forward. "I think that as a team, including the coach, we feel pretty confident and we will try to keep that mindset throughout the season."





# TOGAS AND COWBOY HATS

by **Sophia Krout**

Last week the halls of Jefferson Academy were filled with cowboy hats, onesie pajamas, Hawaiian shirts, and homemade togas as the students dressed up for Spirit Week in anticipation of Homecoming weekend.

This year students voted via an online survey for their favorite spirit week themes. The winners were: PJ Day, Cowboy Day, College Day, Tacky Tourist/Hawaiian Day, and White-Out Day.

“I love spirit week. I mean it's all fun, but I'm really excited for Western Day and Tropical Tacky Tourist Day,” said Junior Eden Woodward.

Wednesday was College Day, which many students interpreted as a day to dress up as college students while others wore their college merchandise. Many students choose not to participate in spirit day for a number of reasons.

“Most of them [spirit days] I wouldn't really participate in myself just because, like I said before, I don't really have stuff to go along with them,” said senior Sierra Haberman.

Though some students have changed their views on school spirit throughout high school.

“I thought that I was doing something by not participating in spirit week, and then I realized that I had much more fun being a part of spirit week. Like, to the people who don't want to do it, and kind of dunk on it a little bit, I'm like, 'Well I'm having more fun than you so like, whatever,’” said Woodward.

Thursday was Tacky Tourist and Hawaiian Shirt Day, and many of the senior girls dawned white pants painted with black and gold designs in anticipation of the Homecoming Game that night. Friday was White Out Day, but many seniors wore togas made from bed sheets in order to partake in the long standing tradition.

Spirit Week is an important part of the week leading up to the Homecoming Dance. It is often a way for students to show off their school spirit or participate in fun activities, although some students feel like school spirit is lacking at Jefferson Academy.

“At least for me, it's that JA is so work intensive that I don't want to spend the time and energy it would take to participate in a lot of school spirit activities. I feel like that might be a big factor as to why a lot of people have apathy around that,” said senior Brenden Stonecypher.





# ROLE REVERSAL

by Mackenzie Estep

The popular Powderpuff and Peachfuzz games are back for the first time in 2 years. The past games were cancelled due to the pandemic and they have returned this year in preparation for Homecoming.

Powderpuff was for upperclassmen girls, and they had practices in the mornings leading up to the game. The junior and senior teams played each other on Friday and were coached by Mr. Page and Mr. Ketcham. The score was close throughout the majority of the game, but ultimately ended with a big win for the seniors.

"Powderpuff is really cool because it's like a complete reversal of gender roles, it's where you have girls playing flag football and the boys dressing up in mini skirts and cheerleading," exclaimed Sophie Renner, Student Body Vice President.

All high school boys were able to participate in the Peachfuzz volleyball tournament. The teams were coached by some of the volleyball team players. The games were not very strict with calling different fouls and illegal plays on the players. The point of the tournament was not to be accurate to the game of volleyball, but to be fun for the boys playing.

"It's really fun to be able to see these guys who have never touched a volleyball outside of gym class, being able to teach them how to play and do

it right, and being able to implement it in a game," commented Renner.

Their point was for the students to have fun and want to be a part of the events and the Jefferson Academy community. They are also important because in the past few years the juniors and seniors were not able to participate in normal high school events.

"The goal of these games is mainly to get people excited for Homecoming, to come together as a school, and to get people involved in the community and to participate in these events," concluded Renner.



# HOMECOMING HOPES

by Asha Stephens

As the first Homecoming dance in two years approached, excitement was high for the preparation and experience of the event.

Of course, there were the school-wide events such as Spirit Week, the Parade, Peach Fuzz, and Powder Puff, but then there were the day-of plans among friends and teammates.

Junior Emma Brazzell says that she and her friends were planning to go out to dinner before heading to the dance.

Freshman Macy Palmer and a

group of around 15 were headed to Macaroni Grill for dinner before going to their first high school dance ever.

Junior Helen Stegner says that she and a group of friends were going to get ready at her house before going to Homecoming. The group also planned to reconvene after the dance at Helen's house for movies and a sleepover.

Those on the Cross Country team, however, were in a bit of a rush pre-Homecoming, because they were participating in a meet that afternoon, from approximately 4:00 to 6:15,

depending on the athlete and the race they ran in.

Nevertheless, most were just thankful to be having a school dance at all. Sophomores Maya Ross and Lydia Crookston were very excited to go to Homecoming after not having any school dances their freshman year.

Even though there was a wide range of pre-HoCo plans, from group dinners to getting ready at houses to last minute meets, Jefferson Academy got a taste of normalcy by having the first Homecoming since the beginning of COVID.



# GLADITORIAL GLEE

by Rhea Alexander

From gladiatorial games to class-to-class competition, this year's Homecoming assembly was full of memorable moments. With the combined effort and hard work of several students and staff, Jefferson Academy was able to celebrate a notable assembly once again.

Planning an assembly is no easy feat, and no one knows this better than student body Vice President Sophie Renner. This year, the student government was challenged with the task of coordinating the first big assembly since the pandemic.

"This year's assembly is really special because it is the first time we are all going to be together in that setting again," explained Sophie Renner.

Quarantine is not the only thing that makes this assembly special. This year's assembly also marks one of the first times in recent history where the assembly is specifically geared to the Homecoming theme. Before their "Night in Rome," students got to experience a day in Rome.

"We tried our best to give the assembly a gladiatorial feel with sword fighting and some friendly competition," added Renner.

Powderpuff Cheerleading is guaranteed to be a school-wide entertainer every year, and this year was no exception. The Homecoming assembly provided students with an enticing two-minute preview to the full routine performed at the Powderpuff game later that night. While the final

routine was exciting and cohesive, the preparation beforehand was not so smooth.

"The planning was chaos," stated cheerleader Judah Weir. "We just brainstormed and random ideas came up. Eventually it all miraculously came together the day before."

The final event of the assembly was the thrilling Peach Fuzz final between the juniors and seniors. The heated rivalry between the two classes made this event even more exhilarating to watch. Going into the game, the junior team had plans to win and dye their hair orange, with only one plan coming to fruition.

"The nature of Peach Fuzz makes it really fun," noted Weir. "I think students are more engaged with the class-to-class competition."

As some students planned and participated in the assembly, other students watched it. Student spectators seemed happy and satisfied with this year's homecoming assembly, but that doesn't mean there were no worries. Several students were concerned about the COVID situation and being in a congested space once again.

Despite the worries, students were able to enjoy an amusing gathering once again after too long of a time. A number of students put in significant effort to produce something that would hype students up for the homecoming dance. The end product excited students and created a sense of community that will be remembered for years to come.





# FLOOD BRINGS CHANGE

by Maddie Leyba

No, the library wasn't robbed of all its computers, nor were there any auctions to buy more books, but students may have noticed new changes in the library. The changes include the library actually being open, the removal of student use computers, and the addition of student seating.

Where there used to be 36 computers now sit two. While the change is intense, Mrs. Buechner, the school librarian, reassures students "we do still have computers set off for printing where students are welcome to come in and print."

It is now not only a quiet space to read and check out books, but Mrs. Buechner says, "It can still be used as a class space as well," meaning teachers can still hold classes in the library if needed.

The changes made in the library have been long in the works. Before COVID, back in the good old days, Ms. Grantham and Mrs. Buechner had been brainstorming about a place where students



could have a quiet place to work and study. Several classrooms that had been dedicated to this purpose had to be removed and put back as classrooms due to classroom demand. Thus came the idea to move the space to the library.

Last year, there was flooding on the main floor of the building that caused damage to multiple bookshelves and furniture items in the library. Even though "about two-thirds of the library had about four inches of water," Mrs. B. comments, it was ultimately a reason to replace shelving and furniture that needed to be replaced anyway.

Not only students have enjoyed the reopening of the library. Mrs. Buechner has thoroughly enjoyed it as well. She has enjoyed the students checking out books, enjoying the space, and overall "bringing the lifeblood back [to the library]."

With the library being open, it is important to note when students can access it. The ideal time to access the space is in the morning before school. After school, it is also available, but on a slightly more limited basis.

# POWER OF THE PEN

by Sophia Krout

Imagine you have your term paper due this Friday, you've been procrastinating for weeks and the due date is creeping up on you. Your paper is riddled with run-on sentences, disconnected paragraphs, and you don't know where to start your revisions.

Now imagine that instead of struggling on your own, you could have someone else go through your paper with you.

The Writing Center is set to reopen at the start of the second quarter for all students to receive this kind of help. Because the split high school lunch changed the times available for after school services and clubs, the writing center will be open during the school day. Tutors will volunteer during their off blocks,

and students will get permission to leave class to receive tutoring services.

The Writing Center is a resource for middle and high school students that provides help from their peers and upperclassmen on writing assignments and papers.

As Mr. Purcell, the Writing Center sponsor, states, "First and foremost, I hope that the students who use it can gain a little bit more insight into who they are as writers."

Many students struggle with writing-based assignments, and the writing center offers them an opportunity to seek help from their peers who have taken these classes before.

"I feel like JA doesn't have enough resources available to students, nor do they teach them

how to write properly. With my experience in the past, my parents going through my papers and them kind of teaching me mistakes that I've made and how to work through those and different ways to make your paper better, I would like to help JA students with that as well," said senior and future Writing Center tutor Emma Raeburn.

The new format of the Writing Center is intended to make its resources more accessible to all students.

"I think long term and maybe more realistically, I hope that it could encourage a culture of writing and talking about writing because what I tell the tutors is that you actually get better at writing your own writing through helping other people write and talking about other people's writing," said Mr. Purcell.



# SATS

## THE DECLINING IMPORTANCE OF THE DREADED STANDARDIZED TESTS

by Rhea Alexander

The notorious standardized test known by the name of the SATs has been losing the gravitas it once had. With the declining importance of the SATs, other aspects such as personal essays are playing a more crucial role than ever before in college applications.

Ever since the 1920s, the SATs have been an important benchmark for college applications across the country; however, the importance of standardized tests has been decreasing in college applications over the past few years.

The steady decline of the importance of SAT scores has occurred gradually over the last few years, with a few factors really expediting this process. One of these factors is the current COVID-19 pandemic, which has lowered the amount of testing opportunities over the past two years.

In addition to the pandemic, a Colorado bill passed over the summer has also sped things up. The bill states that all Colorado public universities are now required to be test-optional.

“Colleges now place more emphasis on GPA and evaluating students holistically,” states college counselor Ms. LeValley. “This includes considering leadership positions and time management skills.”

As the importance of SAT scores decreases, many other aspects such as personal essays take on a bigger role. Through personal essays, college admissions officers are able to get to know students and their personalities on a more intimate level.

“Not everybody is a good test-taker, whereas you can really share your knowledge and experience through an essay,” notes Ms. Doyle. “The whole point of teaching English is to provide you with the tools you need to express yourself.”

Senior Diego Saenz is one of many seniors who is currently going through the college application

process, and he has witnessed the entire process firsthand as he applies to schools such as Stanford and MIT, both of which are test optional. Diego is glad that personal essays are taking on a more important role since they require reflection and analysis. In his own personal essay, Diego discusses the importance of stepping back and taking a deep breath instead of rushing through life.

“While SAT scores are good at benchmarking, they are not the greatest at showing what a student is like academically or personally,” commented Saenz.

Along with her fellow senior Saenz, Alexandra Walker is yet another student going through the infamous college application process. Walker is applying to universities such as CU Boulder and Columbia, and the majority of the colleges she is applying to are test-optional.



However, just because SAT scores are optional does not mean they are not encouraged. At many schools, SAT scores are required in order to apply for scholarships, and this in turn means that many students still feel the need to include and perform well on the SATs.

“I feel like certain achievements stand out more on my application than SAT scores but I still feel pressure to have a good SAT score because of

the scholarship requirements,” admits Walker.

Over the last century, millions of students have had to partake in the SATs because it has been necessary for college applications. Gradually, however, the necessity for SAT scores has decreased and is decreasing more every single day.

SAT scores, personal essays, and college applications can be very stressful but it is important for students to step back and look at the bigger picture.

“Don’t give up if your first school is not the one,” advises Ms. Doyle. “Just because you didn’t get in doesn’t mean your story isn’t valid.”



# G.O.A.L IS GONE

## A NEW CURRICULUM CHANGE HAS DONE AWAY WITH THE PAPER AND PRESENTATION

by Gigi Gianna

The feared G.O.A.L Fair paper is no longer. Curriculum changes in the middle school English program result in doing away with the dreaded paper and presentation that students, up until the 2019-2020 eighth graders, spent the majority of their year preparing for along with the recurring book reports.

Abigail Doyle, a seventh and eighth-grade English teacher who has taught at Jefferson Academy for six years, talks about the curriculum changes from previous years and what this year will look like for the middle school students.

“We are working really hard to do more paper than technology this year,” states middle school English teacher Mrs. Doyle. “We are doing short stories right now, we did grammar pretty intensely at the start of the year just as a base, we are going to do some poetry and they are going to experience some writing units, and then they are going to do a research writing and an informative piece, then we are going to finish up the year with *The Giver*.”

This kind of curriculum differs significantly from the previous years, however. The new way of teaching is significantly more interactive with the students and assures the teachers that the students are understanding and retaining what they are learning to aid them in their future endeavors in the next grade levels.

“We are definitely focusing more on kind of like a spiral,” states Mrs. Doyle. “In education, you don’t just cover one thing once and you’re just like ‘great they get it’ and never touch it again. The whole point is you build on stuff and touch on it again later. This year I’ve noticed us being like ‘ok, we didn’t get that,’ then going back immediately, in hopes of building a stronger structure.”

Students, however, seem to love the curriculum change in the English class. They consider it beneficial to their learning and it helps lessen the workload in different ways while helping them keep

up their grades and enjoy learning and being in the English environment.

“I like Mrs. Doyle because she’s super understanding and she gives us the days where we can get caught up with all our work,” states seventh-grade student, Marlo Gibbons. “I like that I can sit by my friends and I like my teacher a lot. She also lets us listen to music.”

However, any class on any given day can lead to added stress. Students may feel overwhelmed by the overarching pressure of constant tests and assignments that are due and the expectation that they do their work thoroughly and well.

“The thing I dislike is the quizzes,” says Gibbons.

“We have one, like, every other day, and sometimes it can get overwhelming.”

The speculation and question of discontinuing the book reports and GOAL Fair can be attributed to the fact that the seventh and eighth-grade students are only seen by the English and Social Studies departments for one semester rather than all year.

“We changed the structure of the classes because it used to be we would have seventh and eighth grade

all year, now it’s just seventh grade one semester and eighth grade one semester,” says Mrs. Doyle. “We aren’t doing GOAL Fair because originally that was supposed to be cross-curricular, so half the information was supposed to be coming from social studies, and then the social studies curriculum changed and evolved, so that didn’t really work anymore, so we were trying to teach social studies while also teaching writing, and that is what really was making it overwhelming.”

“I kind of miss that longer period of time because I see the seventh graders straight out of sixth grade basically, then I don’t see them again until the last semester of their eighth-grade year,” states Mrs. Doyle. “I kind of miss out on almost a year of seeing how they grow and change, then we have to get reacquainted in eighth grade, so that’s the biggest thing I miss.”





# CLUBS



by Maddie Leyba

## Club Highlight: Gaming Club.

From taking the queen in chess to dying of dysentery in Oregon Trail, the Gaming Club has it all. Mr. Ketcham hosts a gaming club that meets in his classroom (Room 240) on Thursdays from 3:30 to 5:30. Gaming Club is a great club for students who are passionate about board games, card games, role-playing games, and anything in between. Students and staff will spend hours and even days playing games such as Town of Salem, Haunting on the House on the Hill, Magic the Gathering, and even chess. "Gaming club is awesome!" exclaimed Tyler Hawes, "It's two hours where everyone hangs out after school." As far as games go, Hawes remarked "we play games anyone brings, there is no limit on the type of games. Sometimes Kirkley brings consoles!" One fun thing about the club is that it is not only open to students in both high school and junior high, but also staff. The mix of personalities makes for a fun club meeting.

## Babcock - Community Club Jr. High

The Junior High Community Club serves as a mix of JUCO (Junior High Student Government), National Junior Honor Society, and Builders Club. They plan events for Junior High and volunteer within the school and community. Meetings are held twice a month on Wednesdays in Room 137.

## Sharpley & Page - Before and After School Weight Training

This club meets before school on Mondays through Fridays from 7:15-8:15 & after school on Mondays through Thursdays from 3:30-5:00, all students are welcome no matter experience level. The club's sponsors serve as instructors and supervisors. The weight training room is open for personal use and for the use of guided programs.

## Garcia - NAHS - National Art Honors Society

NAHS is a community of students with a passion for art. They participate in outreach programs and build connections with places such as retirement homes and our elementary school. NAHS takes those passionate for any form of art from photography to painting. Not only do they participate in art at school, they also go on field trips to places both in state and out. To join, email [agarcia@jajags.com](mailto:agarcia@jajags.com); meetings are held on the third Wednesday of the month at 7:30 am. Open to high school students with a passion for art.

## Mr. Hartmann - GSA - Gender and Sexuality Alliance

GSA is a place to go to safely learn about gender and sexuality and spread that knowledge to the student body. While Mr. Hartmann says, "it is not a support group," the club is available and in support of anyone. The club meets on Wednesdays in room 236 from 3:30-4:15.

## Doyle - Debate

Debate is a club that competes against other schools in debates. During the meetings, they learn how to debate and prepare for competitions. High school students are available to participate in said competitions, but junior high students are not. However, they are still allowed to attend the meetings to better develop their debate skills. The Debate Club meets after school in Room 234 from 3:30-4:15.

## Buechner - SLAB - Student Library Advisory Board

The Student Library Advisory Board takes charge of the general upkeep of the library. Students work to keep the library functional, plan library events such as read ins, and help Mrs. Buechner with the odds and ends of the library. SLAB is a high school club that meets the fourth Wednesday of the month from 7:50 am to 8:20 am.

## Grace - Tri-M - Modern Music Masters

Tri-M is a group of students who are passionate and dedicated to music and sharing it with the community. Auditions will be held on October 1<sup>st</sup> so come prepared with a song of your choosing. Providing the backing with your own talent is preferred, but backing tracks are accepted. Reach out to Ms. Grace at [agrace@jajags.com](mailto:agrace@jajags.com) if you are interested.

## Davis - E-Sports

E-Sports is a team that meets and competes against other schools in a ten-week season. Currently, we have two Valorant teams but there are about five other games options depending on the team's preference. This team is open to high schoolers and meets Monday through Wednesday after school.

## Davis - Computer Science Honor Society

The Computer Science Honor Society is a community service-based club that strives to grow interest in computer science. They plan on putting together an interest night for elementary students at our elementary school. A B average and a semester of computer science courses are required to join.

## Bilinski - Climbing Club

The Climbing Club is a team club that competitively rock climbs. During meetings, they practice different climbing techniques and progress in difficulty. Meetings are held at the Spot Boulder Gym in Louisville. Rides to and from the gym are required as well as a fee that will be determined based on the number of members on the team. No previous skill is required and all students are welcome.

## Thacker - Coding Club

The Coding Club is open to all students who would like to practice coding and better their skills. Currently, the club

is practicing SQL coding. Anyone is welcome to join on Thursdays after school from 3:30 - 4:30 in Room 138.

## Truta - Brain Bowl

Brain Bowl is a buzzer-based team academic competition. It is kind of similar to Jeopardy. The club is open to junior high students and meets on Thursdays during Junior High lunch.

## Defiore - Key Club

Key Club meets the first Wednesday of every month from 7:55 to 8:20am in Room 204. Our next meeting is Wednesday, Oct. 6. All high school students are welcome. The motto of our club is: Caring: Our way of life. We are an international student-led organization that provides its members with opportunities to provide service, build character and develop leadership.

## Stadler - JHAHS - Junior High Art Honors Society

JHAHS will be starting up after Thanksgiving Break (once Cross Country is over). At this time, they plan on meeting once a week after school. The exact day is TBD. It is open to 7th, 8th, and 9th graders. It's for anyone interested in Art!

## Proctor/Clark - Destination Imagination

Destination Imagination (DI) is a chance for students to work in teams and compete in challenges. There are different disciplines, from improv to engineering. The challenges allow students to use teamwork, critical thinking, problem-solving, and their imagination as they work together towards competing in the JeffCo tournament. The club is open to all middle schoolers and will meet on Tuesdays at 3:30 in room 141.

## Ferb - STUCO - Student Council (H.S.)

STUCO's goal is to promote a positive school culture by putting on different activities like Homecoming week and dances. They try to do other activities throughout the year like Trick-or-Treat Street, and Winter Wonderland. They are a very active group. Also, during zero hour kids will learn leadership skills and philosophies. The club meets every day during zero hour in Ferb's classroom.



# SMASHING THE SEASON

by Mackenzie Estep

The volleyball season is underway and the players are trying to adjust after the changes to the team caused by COVID. The players are finally able to play together, have more games, and bigger crowds. So far, the Varsity and C teams have both had 1 win and 1 loss while the JV team has 2 wins and 2 losses.

The season last year was pushed back multiple times and was incredibly short compared to past seasons. The number of players has also decreased, so the teams have had to adjust to this season. The number of girls allowed on the team contributed to the decrease in players. Due to the COVID restrictions, they were only allowed to have 30 people on the team for indoor sports.

“COVID has impacted the number of girls in our program, which has added some struggle to supporting a good number of players on each squad,” commented Kyrie Adams, Head Volleyball Coach.

The team has not had a typical season in about two years, so the players are excited to be able to be back in the gym and playing together. The practices are less separated, and the team is hoping to be more cohesive and have a more consistent season.

Last season was cut short and most of the games

were postponed or cancelled for the teams. This year they have more games and events planned, and they are excited for the chance to participate in all of them. One of the best parts about a volleyball game is the crowd and being able to have people cheer the players on. This season, the spectators in the gym are now at full capacity, as compared to last season during which only two people per player were allowed in the gym as spectators.

“At the end of the season, we played six back-to-back games to try to make up for those missed games. It was an exhausting season, but we were grateful for any time we got on the court,” remarked Adams.

The team is hoping for a fairly normal season, as long as there are not too many quarantines or positive COVID cases. Masks are required during all practices and home games, and there has only been one team quarantine so far this season.

As long as quarantines do not affect the team too much this season, the players will be able to enjoy their first “normal” season in two years. This season, the locker rooms have been reopened and the team is able to be together and bond more than they were able to last year. The volleyball players are also able to participate in tournaments this season, including the annual JA tournament, the Eaton Tournament, and the Metro league tournament.

“My favorite thing about the volleyball team is probably the people I get to play with and being in the locker rooms before and after and being able to talk to everyone,” remarked Aanya Thapa about the sisterhood being on the team creates.





# X-COUNTRY'S SPECIAL SAUCE

by Asha Stephens

Over the last few years, JA's Cross Country teams have been racing toward the top. The school records for the highest State meet finishes, with boys earning sixth and girls earning tenth, were set just last year!

Understandably, Head Coach Benjamin Hershelman is especially eager for this year's possibilities. "Both of our teams have a shot to win the League Championship." With the boys' team currently placed first in the league and our girls just shy of first by four points, based off times, Hershelman hopes that placing in the Regionals meet is within reach, too.

Not only that, but our boys team is currently fourth in the state's 3A Division; our girls are eighth, as listed on coaches' polls and time rankings. So Hershelman believes that "we're on a great trajectory" for the teams' "best State finish ever!"

The team mainly trains on the Big Dry Creek Trails, just west of the Jefferson Academy Elementary. The coaches say that the trail's dynamic nature resembles some of what the team will face in the three championship meets later in the season: hills and gravel trails.

The "secret sauce" of these trails, as the team calls it, provides intense, effective training for our team to rapidly improve.



Two team captains, Tessa Stadler and Maren Harding, feel optimistic about the Cross Country team's prospects at the State meet. "It's incredible to see how we've grown as a team," Stadler says. And how our coaches have been working to make us the best that we can be."

An important new addition to the Cross Country team this year is Coach Stadler. "We have needed a third coach for years," Coach Hershelman states, "just to help us keep things fresh and offer us a new perspective. Coach Stadler has been an incredible blessing to our team."

As the season progresses, Coach Hershelman says that the Cross-Country team needs to "compete well, run smart and battle for our teammates." With possible championships in the future, runners need to continue to work hard and give everything they have for the team.

When the season ends, Hershelman would like to know that the team "did everything [they] could when everything was on the line."

With all the current success of our Cross Country team, Hershelman extends an invitation for more students to join the team next year; "Or at very least, know we exist. We are eccentric but fun, and we work our tails off."

## SWINGING ALONG

by Maddie Leyba

The boys golf team is nearing the final swing of their season as the JV team plays their last matches. While the team has not won many matches, the players have had a blast working together and developing their skills.

While wins have not been consistent, the team has had a lot of fun competing together this year. Sophomore Eli Brandow remarked, "It doesn't matter if you have a bad game, just have fun!"

The team has seen a lot of changes this year, specifically the number of players on the team. The number of players increased considerably compared to previous years. They now have more varsity players as well as junior varsity. In previous years there have only been a handful of players, while this year has brought 14 total golfers.

This has been a season of growth for the players. Since it was Brandow's first season playing golf

for Jefferson Academy, he said he worked a lot on "changing [his] swing and distance accuracy." His hard work led him to compete in the JV Invitational recently. While the team itself didn't do as well as hoped, they still had a lot of fun.

Alongside JV tournaments are regionals. Several of the players on JA's team are competing and "are sure to do well," predicted freshman Jackson Tomalak. Those games will be taking place this week.

Tomalak hopes to "stay determined and get better at the sport."

"I plan on playing for the team again next year. I enjoyed the community, the events, and the sport," remarked Tomalak.

The program is poised to build upon its success this year and take advantage of the growth and excitement the new golfers have brought to the team.

# JAGS CLAW THEIR WAY TO TOP

by **Sophia Krout**

The home crowd cheers, as the soccer ball slams into the net for the 9th time that evening, “Let’s go Jaguars, let’s go Jaguars.” There are still 20 minutes left on the clock and the team is one point away from the referee calling the mercy rule, again. This scene has played out more than once for the JA Varsity Boys Soccer team this season and they hope it does again.

After winning their first nine games, making this the best start of the season in Jefferson Academy history, the boys are ranked number one in the 3-A Denver Metro League and 80th in the nation.

The team has worked hard to transition into the new season and build camaraderie after graduating 11 seniors last year.

“Something that I would like people to know is that we aren’t just friends, we are more like brothers willing to put in everything for the common goal,” said junior Chrisly Kelly-Cannon.

The boys are up for a challenge for the rest of the season, but it is difficult to explain just how remarkable the start of this season has been.

“The hardest thing to do in Colorado high school soccer is to win the Metro League. The most challenging game is the ‘next one,’ then the next one after that,” explained Varsity Head Coach Matt Cassell.

The team is under pressure to keep up with their impressive record so far this season.

“We have fewer players dedicated to varsity [12] than we ever have, so there’s a lot of pressure put on them to represent the school. Our goal is to do that well, on and off the field. I am not sure all understand the burden and weight our athletes feel to represent all the great students and faculty at JA, as well as those that have come before them,” said Coach Cassell.

The team has a few important games this week. On Tuesday the 28th they played the number two team, Faith Christian, at Faith Christian’s campus. On Thursday the 30th they play a home game against Prospect Ridge at Jefferson Academy.

The team is prepared to play their hearts out this

week and keep their already impressive record for the rest of the season.

“So far this team has shown great maturity and leadership while remaining very competitive with each other. Nothing has been given to this group, and they are working hard to make the most of each opportunity,” said Coach Cassell. “It is one of the most dynamic attacking teams I have experienced, so please come and support them.”

