



JAGWIRE

Winter 2022 - Issue 5 - A Season of Change



Sourcing Strength

Jefferson Academy has introduced a new program, Sources of Strength, a comprehensive program meant to support the mental health of the students as they deal with the pressures of life.

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Change for Change

JA students donate over \$800 dollars worth of their loose change to help victims of the Marshall Fires.

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Hands-On

Students from Jefferson Academy participate in hands-on learning at Warren Tech. where they are introduced to different programs such and esthetician and complete class-work that includes non-traditional assignments...like waxing.

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Committed

Four JA students sign their letters of commitment to play their respective sports at colleges and universities.

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Waking up every day and repeating the same things over and over, feeling the weight of everything on your shoulders, and struggling to find the strength to keep going? The new zero-hour Sources of Strength is here to help!

Mental Health is an immense issue that many teens and students struggle with. The social norms surrounding mental and emotional health can make it hard to talk about, or even ask for help when needed.

A new chapter of the nationwide program Sources of Strength has opened right here at Jefferson Academy. Sources of Strength is a club whose mission is to help students with mental health, to prevent suicide, and to create a safe and welcome environment at JA.

"Sources of Strength is a strength-based, comprehensive wellness program that focuses on suicide prevention, but impacts other issues such as substance abuse and violence," said Mrs. Dasta, the teacher sponsor for Sources of Strength.

Teachers were asked to recommend students with leadership skills and a positive influence on their peers to be a part of this group. Students who were chosen were then contacted and invited to join.

"I decided to join Sources of Strength in order to try something new and I also wanted to try and help my community more. Even if only a few people listen, it can still make a big difference and help their lives," said sophomore Adriana Kahaneck.

This club focuses on main strengths that are displayed on the wheel that can be seen posted throughout the school. The wheel is a visual representation of the different sources that someone's strength can come from. The group is trying to inform students about these sources and create a safe space for those who may not feel as strong.



"We are trying to make sure people have a good support system that can help during hard times," said sophomore Marissa Martinez.

The student representatives are trying to destigmatize mental health issues and to be there for any students who are struggling. They strive to be a meeting place for people to come to so they feel safe and less alone.

"The club is trying to let everyone know that it has people they can come to during hard times. It can be hard to deal with mental issues alone, so having a club which can help people know about resources can strengthen the community," said Kahaneck.

The group is currently organizing a sticky note campaign. Students can find different colored sticky notes at the back counter at lunch. Each color corresponds to a different piece of the wheel and a different source of strength. Students are encouraged to grab a note and write something that correlates with the source they choose.

"I am a part of the arts campaign which means we create art pieces and activities that spread the message

of Sources of Strength. We currently have some interactive pieces in the commons," said Martinez.

Many other campaigns to spread word about Sources of Strength are in the works and will be around JA soon enough. Sources of Strength is quickly growing throughout JA and will be a good contributor to the betterment and growth of the Jefferson Academy community.

"We believe that many strengths are more powerful than one, and our united goal is to activate and mobilize these strengths in ways that positively change individuals and communities," said Dasta.



Sourcing Strength

by Mackenzie Estep

CHANGE FOR CHANGE

by Nick Hill

A little grassfire that started off Colorado Highway 93 and Marshall Road soon became the most destructive fire this state has ever seen, destroying what many people hold dear.

As a response to the fires, here at JA, The Change for Change charity event began January 31st and concluded on February 3rd. It encouraged all students to bring in coins, even if it was not a lot. Anything that could be spared for the event was greatly appreciated.

The school raised over \$800 that will be donated to the victims of the Marshall Fire.

The last count that was done regarding the destruction wrought by Colorado's most destructive fire on record was that it destroyed 1084 homes and affected 149 other homes. This goes to show how many people's lives were affected by the fire.

"I think we all at least know somebody who kind of had it rough with the fires and a lot of these

families lost their homes completely. So, the money is going to different middle schools and elementary schools for these families who have pretty much nothing now," commented student body president Justus Vigil when asked why they were holding this charity event.

When asked about the collection of money in the first couple of days, student body president Vigil said, "We heard from a few classrooms that they filled their coin jugs in just two days."



THE CHALLENGE OF COVID

by Anna Saprón

The last two years have been full of chaos: schools converting to remote learning, forced quarantines, and limits being placed on social interactions. Schools began the year in person; however, in-person learning may be off the table.

The COVID-19 virus is starting to bring in new "what ifs" to schools all over Colorado. Remote learning may be becoming a possibility once again. Several precautions continue to be taken.

several schools across the state to revert to remote learning.

"It messes with my personal life quite a bit. My mom hasn't felt good physically since March 2020 and that stresses me out because I just want her to feel comfortable again," says junior Josh Timmins. Students are certainly feeling the personal effects of this pandemic.

"What I don't like is when I'm playing soccer or working out indoors and have to wear a mask; it

can get harder to breathe and hotter quicker," commented sophomore Kenna Hughes. Masks can certainly create several inconveniences.

"I do like that masks help us from spreading sickness and that they aren't a huge inconvenience, and they are helping keep us and others safe," says junior Avery Linton.

"I'm trying to hand out as many paper assignments as I can and reintroduce a physical inbox," says Mr. Hartmann. For teachers, normalizing classes has been a challenge.



In addition, there have been changes to mask mandates as well as quarantine procedures that bring more questions on how to proceed.

The rise of the virus has been significant. "We're seeing more positive cases in students than we ever have throughout the pandemic," commented Principal Grantham. However, she included that the shortened quarantine period is resulting in fewer absences.

"The plan is to use the larger spaces in the school to combine classes, so the students are able to work independently, but continue to attend classes of present teachers," Mrs. Grantham explained, in case of a staff shortage. Staff shortages are pressing

Teachers seem to be prepared in the event of mandated remote learning. Canvas will once again become the base of daily education.

Ms. Brackeen expressed her concerns with going back to remote learning as a new teacher. "That is something I have been really anxious about. I honestly don't have a plan as this is my first-year teaching, so I am still trying to figure it out in person, so remote would be a challenge."

The COVID-19 pandemic has put several roadblocks into everyone's lives, whether it be personally, educationally, or socially. The JA community has most certainly felt the effects of the virus.

THE AMERICANS ARE COMING

by Maddie Leyba

While COVID has hindered previous events and trips, it looks like the Europe trip has powered through, leaving everyone attending ecstatic. The trip serves as an incredible opportunity for students to learn beyond the written material and experience history firsthand.

As far as progress on the trip goes, Mr. Thimsen, one of the chaperones, says, "Plane reservations and hotel reservations have been made, so we're ready to go."

Not only students, but also staff, are excited for the kids to experience Europe at its finest. Mr. Mellott, a graduate of Jefferson Academy, went on the trip himself in his senior year in 2013. He is ecstatic for students to have the opportunity to go in the coming years.

Mellott paints a stunning picture of one of his favorite parts of his trip, Assisi, Italy: "A really small town, really beautiful. The picturesque sort of streets. Narrow streets, high buildings. The food



we got there was fantastic, having access to a bunch of the culture's food was really cool to experience. It was really cool to experience the culture through that."

This trip is incredibly impactful to everyone who attends. "I actually really enjoy seeing kids experience these things for the first time; experience new things that they can only experience through a textbook, for the first time," says Thimsen.

As far as tips and tricks for the students attending for the first time, there are many to go around. From not losing money to not losing passports, Mellott recommends students "be open to new experiences and trying new things. Don't limit yourself. Probably bring a journal. Having a journal and getting to write down my thoughts and feelings at the time would have been a really cool experience to look back on."

For all the Jags attending the trip, remember to stay safe and don't take the beauty of Europe for granted!

JA ON THE JOB

by Rhea Alexander

High school: a time to make friends and memories that last a lifetime. Despite living your best life and staying in the present, high school is also a time for students to consider their future and what they want it to look like. While hour-long lectures and deep dives on the internet can prepare students to a certain extent, there is no substitute for experience. This is why Jefferson Academy started a brand-new course, On the Job Experience, to provide students with much-needed insight and exposure to professional life.

"This class is a work-based learning opportunity for students," comments Ms. DeFiore.

After sixteen years of teaching, Ms. DeFiore saw the need for students to gather the skills they learned in the classroom

and apply them to real-life situations. This observation led to the establishment of the new elective offered to juniors and seniors at Jefferson Academy. Through placing students with local companies and businesses, this course attempts to prepare students for the professional world and foster career relationships that last far longer than the duration of the course.

"What I love about this course is that students get to learn outside of the traditional classroom setting while also acquiring skills that are essential in the workplace," reflects Ms. DeFiore.

With a starting goal of placing five student interns, Ms. DeFiore has exceeded her own expectations and placed thirteen students. Her next goal? Ms. DeFiore hopes to double the number of internships secured every year, in order to provide more and more students the

opportunity to interact with businesses. Looking to the future, Ms. DeFiore plans to let students take more initiative and responsibility when it comes to finding and managing their own internships. She also hopes to develop a course, Tenacity, that will preface On the Job Experience.

"My goal with Tenacity is to provide students with valuable insight that will help them throughout their internships," adds Ms. DeFiore.

While the professional world can seem intimidating and daunting, opportunities like On the Job Experience help students understand the inner workings of this complex system. Through her new course, Ms. DeFiore aims to help students gather all their academic skills and translate them into the workforce and real-life applications.

COLLEGE CHOICE

by Sophia Krout

College applications are undeniably stressful. From studying for the SATs to narrowing down a list of colleges to apply to, the college application process is extensive. As the seniors at Jefferson Academy begin to hear back from colleges, the juniors are preparing to apply next year.

"I signed up for an online official Colorado-registered SAT prep course, I guess. So I did that, and then also I have visited three colleges, like done actual tours," says junior Carolyn Ennis. "I think my biggest concern would be that I'm not super, like, over-involved in a lot of stuff at school and I know that a lot, like, a lot of schools don't accept the SATs or ACTs."

Figuring out the college application process and learning how to apply to college is an entirely different beast than high school. Luckily this year's senior class has a word of advice to hand down.

Senior Lilly Roth thoroughly organized her application process.

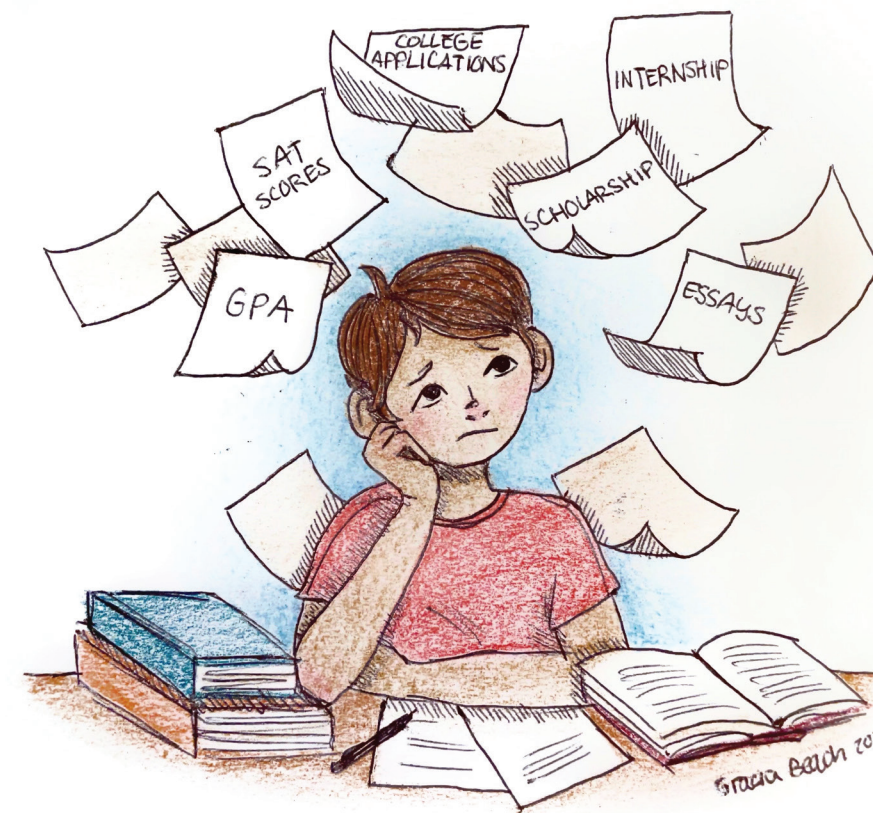
"I made a whole spreadsheet. I looked into the size of the town because I needed a decent-sized town to be able to accommodate my celiac. I looked into the politics of the area to feel like I would be happy there."

She researched schools that fit with her academic,

financial, and career goals.

"I also looked into a lot of WUE programs, which is Western Undergraduate Exchange, and it's basically just a program within these western states where you can get reduced or in-state tuition at certain schools."

Senior Maren Harding worked hard to find a passion to pursue in college.



"If you think you know something, like if you think you want to study something, find a lot of opportunities to do that outside of school. That way you can live it for a little bit and really decide if that is something that you want to do or if that is something that could just become a hobby."

Senior Jordan Neely focused on seeing everything firsthand, touring her university, and interacting with her future peers.

"Go see people, get in touch with people, go to meet and greets, those types of things," says Neely.

Choosing a college is a major life and financial decision. Wherever students end up attending will impact much more than the next four years of their lives.

"You should be happy with all of the colleges on your list, regardless of which one you go to. You shouldn't have a college on your list just because it's there," says Roth.

ALUMNI ART



by Maddie Leyba

From floating bubbles to vibrant bees, many of you have most likely recognized the stunning artwork displayed for the Art Gala. Many of the entrancing pieces are showcased, but you may not have recognized the artists behind the art. That's because all artists with individual artwork are actually Jefferson Academy's own alumni!

Several of these students include Telan Hawk, Noah Kolodzik, Sarina Nichols, Sydnee Flotron, Rachel Moreno, Isabel Montano, and Taylor Navarette. Alumni students graduating from as far back as eight years ago participated in the show.

This is the first year Mrs. Garcia has invited alumni to display their artwork for the gala in the new art wing. Many of the former students showing their art have never even seen the art wing, seeing as it is a relatively new addition. This makes the Alumni Art Gala all the more special.

"I originally thought this was a one-time deal and we would get a bunch of artists ... and maybe not do

it again for a couple of years .. but because we had such a small turnout, I actually like this as a yearly thing," said Mrs. Garcia.

It is her hope that in years to come there can be more than 2D works, such as sculptures and even fashion designs.

"I am very excited to do an alumni night on February 25th and we're going to partner with the improv show and invite people to come back and participate," continued Garcia.

This event is a night where alumni and students are invited to come and participate in the theater department's improv night. There will be live music performances as well as traditional improv performances.

"Imagine walking through the doors from the gym, that used to be an exit, and being able to just walk through." This is an incredible opportunity for generations of students to come together for one night to celebrate where the graduates have been and where they are going.

HANDS-ON HARD-WORK

by Sophia Krout

A handful of Jefferson Academy students are studying technical skills at Warren Tech. They can learn anything from computer science to culinary arts. Students spend half of their school day on the Warren Tech campuses, and the other half they spend at their high school.

Senior Daisy Kramer is currently taking part in the esthetician program.

"We do a lot of facials, a lot of waxing. Lately we've been doing a lot of makeup practice. So yeah, it's a pretty wide variety, but it's super fun and we get to try it all, like, hands-on which is awesome."

She attends Warren Tech Monday through Wednesday and completes an internship with an esthetician on Thursdays.

"I get high school credit, college credit, and then credit to take my state board exam and become certified at the end of the year."

Senior Ray Hoon has participated in the computer

science program since his junior year.

"Keep an open mind. It's a great program, but you definitely have to be willing to work for it because it doesn't just come through to you. You have to put in the time and effort."

Students are able to pursue college credits concurrent with high school credits and technical training all during regular school hours.

"I'm actually going to be graduating with, like, 20 college credits from Warren Tech," explains Hoon.

Students throughout Colorado have access to Warren Tech during their junior and senior years as a resource to get ahead in their future career field.

"There's just a tremendous opportunity to really hone some specific skills within an industry. It's also awesome to be able to get connected with folks who are in that industry," says Ms. LeValley.

Current juniors and sophomores should check their email for resources on the program.



TRACK ON TRACK

by Jacob Brackney

As the Jaguar track team is drawing nearer to their first meet of the year, as they push through multiple challenges to get prepared for the upcoming season.

The team is trying something new this season and decided to split up the practice into thirds. "Normal practices are probably 1/3 stretch and warm-up, 1/3 running workout, and 1/3 lifting, depending upon the event you participate in. Running workouts for sprints are often quick bursts and repeats then getting athletes back to full recovery before we do it again," explained Coach Thimsen.

One of the newest additions to the team's preparations is the track that JA now has.

"Training will be a lot more sprint-based because we actually have a completed track. Last season we would run to the park where there was a loop and do most workouts there, but now we will be a lot more centered on the track," commented to distance runner Sean Beasley.

There has been a spike in

the camaraderie of the track team and their friends.

Connor Berg notes that part of the excitement for the season is, "running with friends and getting really fast and strong."

There is a lot of anticipation and excitement within the team as to what the season may hold

"I am excited to meet the new people on the team, help others work toward being better, and seeing a lot of records being broken," remarked sprinter Diego Saenz.



OUTSIDE THE JUNGLE

by Hannah Rivera

New friends, new opportunities, and a multitude of new exciting sports, sports like skiing and swimming which are not offered at JA, are what motivate some students to pursue partnerships with other schools. Student athletes like sophomore Adriana Kahaneke and senior Emily Lighthart take advantage of these sports opportunities at other high schools.

Playing for another school is an opportunity for students to meet new people and explore life beyond JA. "It's nice to meet new people and try something that the school doesn't give you," Kahaneke said.

Kahaneke ski races for JeffCo High School. She competes with other students from high schools in the area. While Emily Lighthart swims for Standley Lake High School. Both sports require a lot of hard work and dedication.

Some students feel that athletes who play outside

of JA do not get as much credit as they deserve. "It's hard to manage it. Especially as an advantage athlete, we don't get enough credit. We don't get nearly as much credit as the soccer team or the basketball team. We put in just as much work and we work just as hard," remarked senior Emily Lighthart.



When asked about juggling sports and JA's rigorous academics, Kahaneke said, "I just work on the weekend as much as I can."

"I swim ten to twelve hours a week and I'm still expected to put in the same amount of work in school, and I get none of the credit the other athletes get," Lighthart explained.

"I'm very open about the fact that I struggle too because I feel like you get help when you ask for it," Lighthart said about balancing school and sports.

Student athletes outside of JA put a lot of time and effort into competing in their sports, which sometimes is not recognized by the JA community.

COMMITTED

by Gianna Gagliano

The stage, the clapping, the students, the auditorium, the pen and the paper all await the future elite athletes while they prepare to sign and make a commitment to their colleges after obviously excelling at their sport. Just recently, February 3, four stellar student athletes, Noah Douglas, Ben Schwartz, Vivian Sinclair and Nicole Sinclair made their own commitment to continue their athletic and academic careers while receiving a higher education.

Receiving that offer from the college coach and accepting is a big part of this committing process, however, none of that counts until the athlete signs the national letter of intent, officially claiming the spot on that roster. There are many different times to partake in these signing-designated dates, which have become celebrated because of the athletes' hard work.

"It felt really nice, and it was

fun to have my friends and family there when I got to sign to a college," remarked Cornell College lacrosse commit Ben Schwartz, "my favorite part was hearing what my coach had to say about me, along with signing with a few of my friends."

However, the crowd can also get to these athletes while signing can be a very nerve-wracking thing. There is always the fear of the unknown. Sometimes committing can be a scary thing because these athletes will be away from their families and friends, completely changing their lifestyle for the next few years.

"I honestly was happy to sign my name, but I felt nervous because I am worried about next year at college," admitted Simpson College soccer commit Vivian Sinclair, "I am worried though, about not being with my friends and family."

Committing to college comes from hard work and dedication,

which all of these athletes possess, however, it all comes down to the love for the sport. With this passion, there is no doubt that all of these athletes have a drive to compete and will grow significantly while playing at the next level.

"I have been playing lacrosse for almost ten years now," says Schwartz, "It means the world to me, if I was not playing lacrosse, I don't know what I would be doing."

Signing day was very special for the four commits. It meant a lot as they can officially say that they are moving on to a brand new chapter in their life, with their sport remaining by their side. Nicole Sinclair will be attending Central College in Iowa to play soccer, while Vivian will be attending Simpson College, also in Iowa, for soccer. Ben Schwartz will be heading to Cornell College for lacrosse and Noah Douglas will be heading to Fort Lewis for cross country and track & field.

HOOPING UP HOPE

by Gianna Gagliano

The sound of fans cheering, shoes squeaking on the court, and basket after basket is how to know that the girls and boys basketball season is in full swing. With a chance at state, the teams push through to the end as their seasons begin to come to a close.

Both the boys and girls teams have come so far in regards to development and team work. Due to this bonding and new skill set from the experience the season has brought, both teams have been very successful.

More specifically, the girls have remained undefeated so far this season, and all the credit could be given to the tremendous amounts of preparation, talent and “sisterhood” that the team possesses.

“Through the team, I got a lot closer to people that I otherwise wouldn’t have connected with, so that has been really enjoyable,” says sophomore girls basketball player Sonia Mathai. “The team has a lot of laughs and we have a fun time together.”

So far, according to the players there has been one word to describe this season. This word would be “growth.” All around, the players have come together with their skills and strength; however, there is always room to improve. Surrounding yourself with players that are willing to be hardworking and improve their skills always allows an athlete to push themselves further than they can imagine. This is exactly what the girls and boys basketball teams do. Through this, the athletes work as a team and get better as a team, embodying that descriptive term of “growth.”

“Everyone came into the season with their own skill set and I think that over the past couple of months, we have spent a lot of time growing our abilities and really discovering that we are good, not just



individually, but as a team,” states Mathai. Sarah Welsch, girls varsity basketball player adds, “When I play throughout the season, I grow through practicing shooting every day, running every day and believing in myself every time that I go to practice.”

The constant running and catching up with the opponent can really take a toll on the athletes’ mindset toward the game and themselves. To

separate the good athletes from the great athletes, mindset is the key factor, especially for these basketball teams.

“Honestly it’s the cheer of your team that motivates you the most to keep doing your best and to keep playing as hard as you can,” states sophomore boys basketball



player Mario Andreev. “I can also tell myself that at the end of the day, I won’t be tired anymore and the only thing that would have mattered is if we won the game, and if we gave our 100% effort.”

Heading into the rest of the season, the girls varsity basketball team is currently sitting on a very high winning streak, undefeated to be exact, while the boys continue to push through to the end. These successes are due to the teams’ hard work and dedication, which makes these accomplishments feel even better.

Andreev states, “We learned from our mistakes and got better because of them,” proving that the boys team will push to the end. When asked how she feels about being undefeated so far this season, Welsch states, “It feels amazing!”

The next home games are coming up, and the teams need our support to continue their push to the state championships!