



# JAGWIRE

Spring 2022 - Issue 8 - We Made It



## The End of the Return

This school year hasn't been quite like others. This year, both Jefferson Academy students and staff have navigated through our first in-person school year since the pandemic.

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## The Academy Awards

The JA tradition of honoring excellence in academics, athletics, and education continues with the annual Academy Awards.

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## Racing By

Jefferson Academy is sending 13 student-athletes to the State track meet this weekend as the Jaguars continue to race ahead of the pack showing their tenacity and unstoppable desire to win.

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## Striking Season

The Lady Jags look to add a state championship to their list of accomplishments as they continue to work through obstacles and build upon their success.

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As allergies flare up and final projects wrap up, the prospect of summer keeps students pushing through the end of yet another school year. Another four quarters and sixteen blocks have passed, just like previous years. This school year hasn't been quite like the others, however. This year, both Jefferson Academy students and staff have navigated through our first in-person school year since the pandemic.

For many students, the switch back to fully in-person school has been a welcome transition. After experience with the laid back system of remote learning, the switch to in-person school has provided much-needed structure to previously disoriented students.

“At the start of remote learning I enjoyed it,” comments junior LiLi Foss. “But after some time it got really boring and I was sick of being at home.”

Even with excitement upon returning to campus, jumping back into in-person school was not a seamless transition. Like any other transition, this shift has been accompanied by its fair share of challenges. Specifically, the new changes implemented have proven to require adjustments.

Despite some early troubles, Jefferson Academy's flexible population worked through hurdles to close out another memorable year.

“I think that we have kind of found a new normal,” shares Foss. “Obviously things won't go back to exactly the way they were but new assignments and activities point to differences from before COVID.”

This year's seniors have also expressed contentment over the switch back to in-person school. The last year of high school is often full of wild adventures and evergreen memories, and the pandemic has acted as a barrier for previous graduating classes. This year's seniors, however,

have gotten to live through the complete high school experience, from watching the sunrise on the senior hike to long nights at afterprom. The completion of an in-person school year has not only meant school days filled with interaction and discussion but also the revival of several long-standing traditions.

“I am very grateful our final year was not remote, I feel like we were given more opportunities and didn't miss out as much, compared to the class of 2021,” reflects senior Diego Saenz.

Students are not the only ones with a positive outlook on the switch back to in-person school. JA's staff has also expressed delight over the transition to normalcy.

With discussions and seminars back on the table for several classes, this school year has marked a return to familiarity. This new school system is also characterized with more digital interactions, with programs like Canvas replacing traditional paper assignments. Despite small new changes, this school year has truly been a return to the way of life in pre-pandemic times.

“The year started with a lot of uncertainty and some trepidation regarding COVID,” admits Mr. Proctor. “As the year progressed, the community got more comfortable and we seemed to gain a better understanding of what was safe for our school. The last quarter has definitely felt like a return back to ‘normal.’”

Jefferson Academy's first year back from the pandemic has been a memorable one, even with minor changes and apprehension creating obstacles in the beginning. Interactions with friends, debates in classrooms, and countless school traditions have shed light on a forgotten aspect of school. Here's to one year back and many more to come.



## The End of A Return to Normalish

by Rhea Alexander

# THE ACADEMY AWARDS

by Anna Sapron

The Academy Awards are meant to highlight students' hard work and success in school. The awards focus on academic achievements as well as athletic achievements and have become a tradition that honor superior performance at JA.

"The Academy Awards Ceremony is a time to recognize students for displaying academic excellence, a cornerstone characteristic of our community, in their classes throughout the year," explained Ms. Grantham on the subject of the importance of the awards.

The award recipients are kept secret, only a few know who actually won, up until the ceremony itself. Because of that secrecy, it can be a real surprise to those students who are recognized.

"Getting the award was really significant for me because it feels great to be recognized for the work I have done across the year. I never realized how many people actually noticed my work, so it was surprising but also really gratifying to see that it was acknowledged," said Anna Brenneman, who was the recipient of



the Principal's award.

Staff collectively go through a process of selecting students to receive the awards. Given the variety of awards, teachers are in for a lengthy process.

"Students are selected through a nomination process completed by the faculty, staff, and administration of JA. Personally, it is incredibly meaningful," commented Ms. Grantham on how students are chosen to be recognized.

"It was a nice surprise to receive the history award this year because history was probably my absolute favorite class I've taken all year," expressed Kate Rock.

In addition to students, faculty members are also recognized. The Teacher of the Year Award was bestowed upon Mr. Ketcham this year for high school. Students voted and agreed that he was a teacher who showed exemplary effort in his teaching with strong passion, not to mention his sense of humor. Ms. DeVoe was recognized as the Teacher of the Year for junior high.

"I was surprised by it honestly," said Mr. Ketcham when asked about his thoughts in regard to receiving this award. "I mean it's a fun award to win because it's voted on by the students," he added.



# SUMMER SUN

by Mackenzie Estep

From extravagant foreign vacations to simply trying to fight boredom, students are eager for their summer plans to begin. With the end of the school year creeping up on us, students are beginning to get excited for their summer plans.

Some have big vacation plans, with the goal of experiencing something new.

"I plan on going to Ireland with my family this summer. I am really excited; I will get a whole new experience out of this. I will get to try new food, explore new places, and meet new people," said sophomore Kate Rock about a big family vacation.

While some students are going on a trip of a lifetime, many Jags are planning to get down to work as soon as school gets out. Whether their goal is to get experience, get free items, or just simply make money, several are ready to start.

"I plan to work at Water World as a shallow water lifeguard this summer. I am excited to go back because I worked there last summer, and I really like being able to go there for free," said sophomore Valera Noland.

When Stori Blois, another sophomore, was asked why she wanted to get a summer job, she responded, "I wanted to get a job so that I could get money. I want to be able to pay for my car and other things I want to do this summer."

Working a job is not the only type of hard work that students at JA will be doing this summer. In the JA sports department, the grind never stops. A number of students have no plans this summer other than going to open gyms and training for their upcoming seasons.

"I am going to spend the summer working out, running, and going to the open gyms to work hard to make varsity for volleyball this year. I am



also going to try and go to some volleyball camps at local clubs to prepare for the school and club season," commented freshman Ali Smith.

Though many students are planning to go on trips, or spend the summer working, some do not have plans at all. Like countless JA students, junior Sammi Bond is planning a more relaxed and low-key summer break.

"This summer I mostly plan to work on my art, go out with friends, and maybe pick up a few Netflix shows to watch and stuff like that," said Bond. "I am very excited to finally be able to sleep in more and just have a bit more down time."

No matter what plans students have for the summer, it seems as though almost everyone is eager to get a break from school. With only a handful of days to go, students are counting down until they are able to be done with the stress of their remaining classwork and finals. They're looking forward to being able to have fun and be able to experience a different day-to-day with whatever their plans may be.

# BONDED

by Mackenzie Estep

High School is tough. Being in the stressful environment can be challenging and detrimental to students' mental health. That is why creating bonds with one's peers is extremely important. Class bonding days are a perfect opportunity for students to create new bonds with people they do not know very well and strengthen the bonds they already have.

On Monday, May 16th, JA Student Council organized a class bonding day. After the Academy Awards each respective class had a separate bonding experience. The seniors went to Standley Lake, the juniors watched a movie at school, the sophomore class went to Skate City, and the freshman played yard games on the field.

This event was schoolwide event, so the junior high students were able to have this experience as well, with the eighth-graders going to Dave and Busters and the seventh-graders going to Fat Cats.

"Each class president came up with the ideas [for the respective events], then ran it by the other people in their class, and talked to Ms. Ferb to get it put together," said next year's student body president, Sophie Renner.

This was the first class bonding event in several years that JA has had, so students were interested to see how the event was going to go. There was some uncertainty about what the event would be like.

"I think it is a good idea to get closer with our

classmates and do something outside of school that everyone can enjoy and have a good time with everyone," said sophomore Freja Hampton. Fellow sophomore Madisyn Dechant added, "We have never done this before so I am not really sure how it is going to go, but I am interested to see how it turns out."

The main purpose of having class bonding events is to be able to get to know each other better. These events are planned to help students get more involved with their classmates and to overall just have a good experience.

**"The goal of class bonding is to give kids time outside of school to interact with their peers, and form new connections with each other."**

**- Sophie Renner**

"The goal of class bonding is to give kids time outside of school to interact with their peers and form new connections with each other," said Renner.

A main reason many students supported this event is that they were able to get out of school to do something fun.

Stuco is planning to make class bonding a recurring event and possibly one that will happen multiple times a year. This will give students a chance to make memories and have fun with people in their class. While it is a school-sponsored event, it is one in which students do not have to do school, which is something everyone enjoys.

"I think it should be an annual event. I really like that we will be able to skip school and get to spend time with our classmates. I think that it is something that a lot of students would want to do," said Hampton.

# SENIOR SENDOFF

by Sophia Krout

Freshman year, I had long hot pink hair and I was so shy I could barely hold a conversation. Four years later and my hair is a bit different and I can't seem to stop talking. After some chaotic years, and a pandemic, it's a miracle our graduating class made it this far. I couldn't be more proud to be graduating with this group.

I am going to use this opportunity to thank a few of my teachers for creating such a fulfilling academic experience these last few years.

I came to JA in 7th grade and I always had to work hard in school because of my learning disabilities. Mrs. Risch and Mrs. Doyle taught me to truly love writing, this is something I cannot imagine living without. Thank you.

I still remember waiting restlessly every day for Mr. Truta's eighth-grade history class. This was the first time I really enjoyed school, thank you for giving me that.

During freshman-year government, Mr. Ketcham made one of the most boring classes everyone's favorite. This is when I knew I should go into Political Science. College U.S. History is still my favorite class. Mr. Hartmann took over my sophomore English class during Covid, but I know him best as our GSA sponsor. Thank you for fostering such a unique and safe space for me, my peers, and for the middle school students.

Sophomore year is also when I started on the school newspaper. Mr. Thimsen taught me the skills that will hopefully make my career one day. Thank you for teaching me. Mr. Purcell's English class got me into college. Not to brag, but my college essays were amazing. Thank you for creating such a unique environment during the pandemic. Frankenstein is one of my favorite books. College Bio was the hardest class I have ever taken, but it is also some of the most fun I have ever had. Thank you for

creating joy in all of your classes, Mr. Kirkley.

Mrs. Garcia, I think I have spent more time in the art room this year than in my own house. Taking AP Art, and being your student, has been one of the most rewarding and terrifying experiences of my life. Thank you so much for putting up with us. And last but definitely not least, thank you, Mr. Carwin. Being a part of the newspaper this year has been such a unique experience, and I would not change it for the world. I learned so much more about my community, my peers, and how to be a journalist throughout this year. The skills I have learned through the newspaper are irreplaceable, not just for my career, but in how I interact with people every day. Thank you for helping us be creative and bold as we created each edition and for helping me find my passion.

And to my classmates: thank you for being so weird. I don't think I have had a single normal conversation with any of you, ever. I may not know all of you very well, but being a part of this class has been really good, even when it was bad. Our high school experience has been far from normal. From

the pandemic, academic burnout, and re-adjusting to school after the pandemic, we have all been through a lot. We have all changed so much since freshman year, at least I have. I am so excited to see where each of you go after graduation and the lives you will build. Thank you for reading our newspaper, or maybe just looking at the pictures. You all are going to do amazing things one day.



**Advisor's Note:** This is a new tradition for the JagWire. Graduating senior staff members are given a page in the JagWire to say goodbye to JA.

# CREATING A LEGACY

by Madeline Leyba

The time has come for junior and senior high school students to come full circle and return to the elementary school for the sixth grade Legacy Day.

This day has been a sixth grade tradition for over a decade. Students end their elementary school career with a day full of competition and bonding as one last hoorah. In more recent years, the event has included the junior and senior alumni as leaders.

One thing that has made this event special in the past was that upperclassmen who had been through sixth grade at JA and were given a chance to go back and relive their elementary school years through a new lens as a volunteer. This gave the students opportunities to see how their school had grown and the chance to give back to their community.

This year the volunteer opportunity was opened to any upperclassman (no longer just alumni) who showed an enthusiasm and desire to provide a great ending to elementary school and the beginning of high school for JA's sixth graders. This offered a



unique opportunity for students who didn't attend the JA elementary school to connect with the incoming seventh graders and get a feel for the community of the school's other campus.

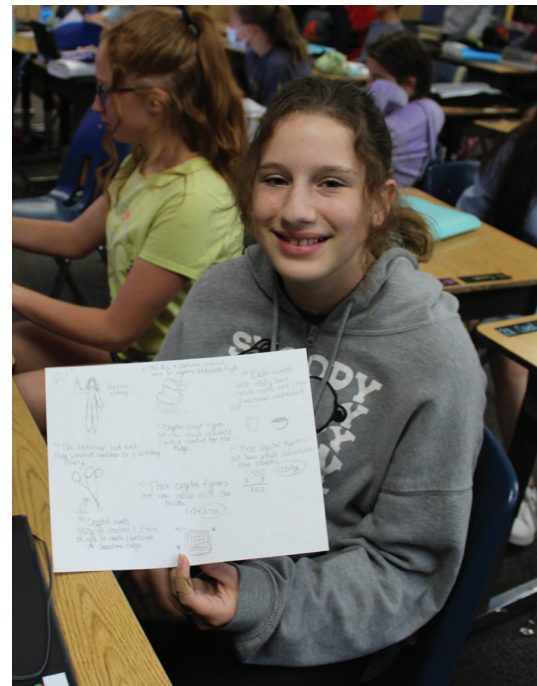
"It sounded like fun! I don't really go to the elementary school that often, and I feel like I should. We did something like a legacy day at my elementary school. I don't know if it will be anything similar, but if it is similar, it would be fun to help," remarked junior volunteer Carolyn Ennis.

Legacy Day goes hand-in-hand with the sixth grade continuation, signifying the end of their elementary school careers. This year's sixth graders have persevered and finally made it to junior high.

Rylee Cox, a rising seventh grader, is most excited about "all the activities and clubs you get to do in high school. There are a lot more options than elementary school."

Next year's clubs and classes at JA will welcome a new class of students eager to learn and participate.

Rising seventh grader Cullan Wright summed up the potential of going to JA with what he found to be the most exciting: "I think it's all the opportunities and college credit. It's all the classes that are unavailable anywhere else. I'm looking forward to mythology, biology, and physics."



# RACING BY

by Gianna Gagliano

The rush of the crowd cheering as the wind flies through your hair while you race to the finish line. Your team cheering you on, while your legs continue to push you through to the end at record speed. These are just a few of the sights, sounds, and experiences that this year's track team has had the luxury of experiencing after dominating meet after meet.

On the girls' side of the program, they continue to lead the rest of the pack that is high school track. After winning multiple meets, they seem to be unstoppable, even defeating 5-A schools. This all can be accredited to their tenacity and willingness to win.

"I think that the girls' track program has been so strong this year due to the fact that every single girl on the team is constantly raising the bar and working their butts off every day at practice," says sophomore Ava Chung. "Their overall energy together and individually is amazing and I think having that sense of community within the girls is also helping them to be so successful."

Following closely in the girl's tracks, the boys have been proving to be very successful as well. This can be attributed to their training, as well as their mentality.

"I think that it has a big effect on how well I do at meets (talking about mentality)," says senior Diego Saenz. "For me personally, I tend to push my body's physical limit during practice, but keep my mind relaxed, while having fun."

With racing comes routines. Like all sports and athletes, track athletes have superstitions and regimens that they strictly follow to allow them to be sure that they are performing their best.

"Right before we race during practice, I push my mind into the mindset of staying fluid as well as getting competitive," states Saenz. "And I would have the same routine at a meet as well, which allows me to get used to it."

The team continued to train on a regular basis throughout the season which aided in their success. Their very highly regarded coaches played a key role in the athletes' journey to success.

Talking about the coaches and coaching style, sophomore Sarah Welsch states, "They give me advice on how to pace breath and when to accelerate at the right time during the race, and that helps me a lot."

Jefferson Academy is being represented at the State Track meet by the following student-athletes: Chrissy Kelly-Cannon in the 100, 200, long jump, and triple jump; Evan Mills in the 800, 1600, and 3200; Asha Stephens in the 100, 200, 4x100, and 4x200; Sierra Buzick in the 100, 4x100, and 4x200; Emilee Harding and Jessica Schaffer in the 100 hurdles and 300 hurdles; Hallie Williams in the 300 hurdles and high jump; Sierra Haberman in the high jump; Maya Ross, Tessa Stadler, Grace Tomasko, and Isabella Villegas-Sisneros in the 4x800; Tatum Boyles in the 4x100 and 4x200; and Elsa Nygren in the 4x100.



# STRIKING SEASON

by Gianna Gagliano

Dribbling down the field, turf flying, fans cheering and playoffs being made are all how you can very easily decipher that the girls' soccer season is moving right along very successfully.

All athletes have a favorite part of the season. Whether it's the success, the friendships, or even just the sheer love for the sport.

However, there seems to be a very prevalent theme amongst the girls' soccer team in regards to their favorite part of the season: the dance sessions before each game. The team creates a dance circle and pumps everyone up by dancing prior to

difficult matchups.

"My favorite part was when we had all the dances before our games and how we always got pumped up," says sophomore soccer player Sarah Welsch.

The team has faced some challenges this season. They lost 3 games, two of them conference games. However, these hurdles helped the team and provided new learning and developmental opportunities for all players.

"The season has been good so far," commented Welsch. "We have had many challenges, and at points it has been very difficult. But, I believe that these challenges made us stronger as a team because we were able to learn from them."

Now that the regular season is over for the team, the real work begins as they have made it to playoffs, as the second seed after Kent Denver. They have already played two rounds and will move on to the Elite 8 where they will face Prospect Ridge. The team has been preparing for this moment, in and out of their practices.

"We are practicing working together as a unit," states Welsch. "We are practicing different techniques that will help us in the playoffs, such as fundamentals like first touches. We also have put a lot of effort into perfecting penalty kicks and getting our penalty kick lineup sorted out, as well as practicing numerous freekicks and corners."

The team played the semi-finals on Thursday at the University of Colorado-Colorado Springs, and will play the finals at DICK'S Sporting Goods Park if they advance. This schedule causes a lot of excitement for the team.

"I am so excited for the upcoming games," says Welsch. "We have so much to play for and we have worked for where we are right now all season long. All we can do is play our best, and leave it all out on the field. In my opinion, if we all put in all the effort we have, there is no doubt in my mind that we can win the championship this year. We just have to take it one game at a time."



# SWINGING FOR STATE

by Jacob Brackney

With the final strike called on the regular season of Jags baseball, the team has started to look ahead to regional seeding as well as what is next for the team. The boys still have winning the state championship and adding another trophy to the school trophy case as their top priorities.

As sophomore Dustin Reidy put it, "I feel good. We are a very competitive team and I think if we keep

the energy up and we put the ball in play a lot, we have a solid shot at making it far in the playoffs."

Showing up with the proper attitude and energy as they work for the same goal is key as they head into the playoffs. But just as important to winning is supporting each other, on and off the field, which has really helped them throughout the season.

"I would say Jarrod, by being the loudest one there and keeping our hopes up. Other than that, I would say Justus," commented sophomore Hudson Subach about fellow players who keep up morale the most. "I feel like Justus also brings the team together as he works with the coaches and understands the needs that the team has."

With the next teams being the hardest that they face all season, it goes without saying that the Jags will have to dig deep and really play as a team to win that championship. JA will face Classic Academy at Lutheran on Friday, May 20, for the first round of playoffs.

"I feel good but we should be ranked higher," remarked sophomore Cody Boone. "We lost games we should have won and it's honestly heartbreaking. My biggest fear is not playing to our full potential in any game."

