



JAGWIRE

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Jags in the Jungle

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Being a Jag means more than just being a part of Jefferson Academy, it means being a part of a community that supports and drives each other to be the best they can be. As a school, we depend on each other to support and lift one another up.

“I think being a Jag is being someone with high character, high leadership skills, and great scholarship because they are dedicated to their studies but also dedicated to their community outside and inside the school,” states freshman biology teacher Mrs. Thimsen.

The students at JA work hard to achieve their goals and set high expectations for themselves. They have great leadership skills and are willing to step up to be the leader for others. A Jag is someone who isn't afraid to speak their mind who works for what they want, it's someone who works their hardest.

Freshman Aubrey Cox says, “I think that being a Jag means you are a hard-working, intelligent individual who does their best to set and reach your own goals.”

But being a Jag doesn't just mean having good grades, it means that you are doing your best in any activity whether that's being a part of a club, sports team, or just any extracurricular activity in and out of school.

History teacher Mr. Page says, “It means striving for excellence, and doing the very best you can in whatever you take part in whether that's schoolwork, class, grades, extracurriculars that are connected with the school, or even those that aren't a part of the school.”

Being able to do your best and set goals for yourself allows you to focus on what and how you want to get things done. The “meaning” of being a Jag can be interpreted as to have high expectations or being expected to have good grades. Although that's not true, it also means that you are giving your all to reach your goals. Mr. Page sets a good example because he is a freshman World History teacher and graduated from Jefferson Academy; this shows how he was dedicated to his studies and achieved his goals. By setting these goals for yourself, it helps to understand what you might want to do in the future.

“I think it is someone who is willing to work hard and put in an extra effort to everything they do. I think it is also someone who is dedicated to their community and wants to work at becoming the best version of themselves,” says Sophomore

Samantha Trujillo.

Making sure you put in the effort and work hard in everything you do allows you to go farther than you might think. Being a Jag is trying your best and exceeding your expectations to surprise yourself so you can go far. It's taking the time to study for a test, and making sure you do an assignment to the best of your capability. Trujillo also states, “Although it doesn't just mean good grades. I think it also means that you are supporting your school and the people around you to do the best they can in school or outside school.”

Being a Jag is supporting your school whether that is showing school spirit, going to support the sports teams, or even going to watch a play. Doing this helps support your classmates who are working hard to achieve their goals. These are all ways that you can show up and support your school, by just being there to help your classmates.

Sam Duncan, a senior at JA says, “Being a Jag means to be kind and compassionate, and also being willing to put others first and to take care and look out for others. I think I also have to be kind, willing, intelligent and brave to be a jaguar.”

By making sure everyone feels welcome and showing kindness to your surroundings you are helping make the school a better environment to be in. Being a Jag is about making sure everyone has the help they need and everyone is included. You have to be willing to take care of and put others first. So what does it mean to be a Jag? It means that you are trying your hardest to meet your goals in or outside of school and help set examples for those around you.

Jefferson Academy Principal, Mrs. Grantham says, “I think the common tie that we all have is a pursuit of excellence, a pursuit of personal excellence, so everybody gets to define that on their own, but I think that sense of belonging comes from the idea that we are all trying to get better and improve.”

It means that you are doing your best to understand and find your definition of being a Jag, having the determination and that pursuit of excellence for yourself. It's being willing to lead and help others even if that is just by showing the slightest bit of kindness or showing up to an event to support your classmates. By being compassionate and showing school spirit, you can help lift up the people around you.



Jags in the Jungle

By Madeline Scoggins

Two Schools One Community

by Madeline Leyba

From being separated in assemblies and hallways, to not being allowed within six feet of each other, to everyone everywhere. When Junior High and High School once had their specific places within the school, the two groups have now been experiencing everything in closer confines than years previous.

In 2019, during the freshman year of High School Class of 2023, there was a designated Junior High hallway with only a High School Spanish class. There were two separate lunches which composed of only High School and only Junior High students. There were separate assemblies - one put on by the Junior Student Council (JUCO) and the other by the High School Student Council (STUCO).

The end of the 2020 school year and into 2021 brought on a COVID learning style, meaning students were even more separated. Students were either online all year or in classes with an average of less than fifteen students, most of whom were the kids in their own grade.

With the 2022-2023 school year, students have been met with new expectations and new regulations including things such as Junior High students in High School classes and mixed lunches, which has left students with frustrations they haven't had to deal with in the past. Junior High and High School students being in the same classes is not particularly new, except for the fact that they are being combined in core classes compared to the more common elective classes.

One thing that makes JA unique is that we have 7th through 12th grade all under one roof. The original intent when building the campus was to have a Junior High-specific hallway and a High School-specific hallway. However, with attendance on the rise, there has been a higher demand for both teachers and classes meaning a lot of teachers double up on classrooms. This means that a High School teacher who usually teaches upstairs might have to teach a class downstairs due to room availability leading to the combination of both Junior and Senior High students.

Part of the new policies this year includes the chance for eighth graders to earn High School math credit for taking Algebra I in Junior High. For students who have been around for a while, the policy used to be that the advanced eighth grade math track would have their own Algebra class while the on-track freshman would have their own. This year, the classes have been combined and since it takes place during C Block, the result is Junior High students in High School lunch. Eighth grade students are also able to take Spanish I in Junior High, meaning they eat lunch alongside the High School.

"I think the frustration stems from 'Junior High is everywhere now,'" Ferb, the sponsor of STUCO, says. "They feel they have invaded their High School experience. So now not only are they eating lunch together, but having electives in and out... We no longer have a Junior High hallway, so they are upstairs and downstairs."

As the year begins to settle down, The Junior High Community Club is now officially up and running, meaning Junior High will have more specific events. "We actually divided up into several different teams... and so every week the different teams meet at different times," states Ms. Babcock, the club sponsor. "I think we have four or five teams going right now."

The club has set up several committees, all with different tasks including planning socials, dances, and teacher appreciation events, making paper flower bouquets for nursing homes, adopting a street, and even helping Senior Sophia Hiller with the hydroponic garden. These committees will be in charge of planning specific Junior High events, giving STUCO more time to focus on their High School-sanctioned events.

After hearing the frustrations of students during the first quarter of the school year, STUCO has made an effort to plan events that are High School-specific to help ease the tension. Such an event includes the post-Trick-or-Treat Street movie night. Even though there were both a PG and R rated movie, only High School students were allowed to participate.

"The reason it was just High School was because the kids wanted to do a scary movie and they wanted to do a higher rated movie... I think there are some Junior High kids who feel like they should have been able to come if they got a parent's permission, but we would never show a rated R movie to a Junior High kid, even if their parents said okay because we don't know what kind of communication is happening with their parents," Ferb commented. "High Schoolers wanted it to be scarier... more mature. That's why we didn't let them come. I kicked some of them out myself because they were in Junior High and it was a High School event. Even though that movie was okay, we're just trying to set that boundary."

Regarding the separation during the movie night, Ms. Babcock comments, "Scream was especially too old for them... and we do need to do some separate things. Not everything has to be 7th - 12th. We're going to have our own movie night where no High Schoolers are allowed. Some things need to be apart, and some things that have to do with school spirit have to be together. If it's school spirit related, together. If it's just events... no."

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Prospective Possibilities

by Mackenzie Estep

Hordes of families gather in the cafeteria, conversing with one another as impatience creeps in while they wait for their student tour guide to arrive.

From new photos hung in the hall to the club fair, JA faculty and students went all out for Prospective Family Night. Everyone worked hard and did their best to showcase the greatest parts of JA. The night consisted of guided tours throughout the school, where each room or area of the school highlighted a specific class, club, or interesting part of JA.

When asked what she thought the purpose of the



night was, Junior Valyn Highley commented, "I think the point of prospective parents' night is partly for parents to learn about some of the awesome stuff we offer and to see our school. But I also think a lot of kids from elementary school come to look around and learn where things are."

Fellow Junior Kate Rock added, "The goal is to show prospective students and families all the good and cool things about the school in hopes that they will come to JA."

This event was meant to be primarily student-run. Some students set up booths in the commons for their clubs, while others were the tour guides. Dressed in their JA One shirts, student tour guides took family after family around the school and shared their JA experiences.

One of these tour guides was Junior Anna Brenneman, who commented on what it was

like giving tours: "It was pretty fun. I think I was worried initially that I wasn't going to talk enough, or that there would be awkward silences, but once it started going, I started reflecting on my experience and I didn't run out of things to say. They were all good listeners and I feel like I was able to include a lot of information."

Highley also commented on her night: "I gave a tour to a mother and her son from Woodrow, and I think I might have convinced them to come to JA. The mom was really surprised by how much we had to offer."

Even though the main focus of Prospective Family Night is to showcase all that Jefferson Academy has



to offer to those considering attending our school, some tour guides found that they, too, were discovering new things about JA.

"It was cool to go into all the different

rooms and learn about different clubs and classes that I didn't know much about. I feel like I was learning just as much as the people I was giving tours to, which was cool," said Rock.



Jefferson Academy has a lot to provide, offering something for everyone. With the number of clubs and student groups, it is almost guaranteed that students will be able

to find something they enjoy or somewhere they feel they can belong.

"I kind of realized how lucky I am to have a school that offers free college classes, a whole arts wing, lots of technology, great equipment, and really kind teachers and students. The night made me think about all the amazing friends I've made at this school who are pretty much the only reason I've gotten through high school. I'm really not a big fan of school, but as far as schools go, JA is pretty awesome," said Highley.

Turkey Time

by Mckenzie Estep

The indistinct chatter flowing across the room along with the delicious smell of warm turkey coming right out of the oven and the inviting feeling of family reunions.

Just like every year, when the clock strikes 12 on Halloween, Thanksgiving season has come around. Though it is not everybody's favorite and most enjoyable holiday, many of the jags are getting excited and beginning their preparation for the day.

With the week off, many families have trips planned for the holiday. Junior Eva Lavenhegan's family is the perfect example of that; "Every year for Thanksgiving I go down to Florida with my aunt, my uncle, and my cousins. We go to this place in Florida called Siesta Key, it's a really cool place that has all white beaches. I always enjoy my time with my family there," said Lavenhagen.

Thanksgiving at its core is a social holiday meant to be spent with those closest to you.

Even if many students do not have specific traditions or plans, many of them simply plan to spend the day with friends and family.

Junior Gracie Navas Lillie said, "We usually stay at my house, all of my family that lives nearby comes and we usually have a good time," in regard to how she often spends the day.

Other than Thanksgiving being a family day, the

holiday is also centered around extremely delicious foods. Some jags have extravagant traditions and specific things they do every year, while others just enjoy some really good food.

"My family doesn't really have any special traditions, we literally just eat food. My family is vegetarian so we usually eat tofurkey, but other than that our Thanksgiving is pretty basic," said Navas Lille.

Junior Jaquelline Michalski added, "At Thanksgiving I always love the pie, specifically cherry pie, it is always so good. I also really like stuffing, but the pie is probably my favorite."

Though some JA students love Thanksgiving and everything it entails, others are not really excited for the day at all. Some feel that the day is boring, or not as good as the other holidays their families celebrate.

"Thanksgiving is not really that fun, I honestly think it is kind of inferior to the rest of the holidays. I am only looking forward to the break, which will be nice," said freshman Levi Roth.

Even though there are some mixed feelings on Thanksgiving and its various traditions, the majority of students at JA can agree that the week off of school is pretty enjoyable. No matter how the jags will spend their week, hopefully at least part of the holiday will be a good time.

Two Schools One Community Continued

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As for Junior High participation in previous events this year, STUCO had asked if they wanted to be included in the events: "We asked, and they asked us to [include them]. It wasn't like we just did it, we talked to the sponsors and said, 'Are you guys going to have stuff going... do you want to be a part of this?'" Ferb explained. But after seeing the frustration the High Schoolers underwent, she went on to say, "Maybe that was my fault. Maybe I shouldn't have asked them if they wanted to be a part of our spirit days, but we always have in the past. Maybe that's a good place to break things too. It's just hard when everyone is in the same hallways, you know what I mean?"

When asked about her thoughts on Junior High and High School being together in future events, Annabelle Phillips, a seventh grader, responded, "I am genuinely fine with anything. I think [Junior High] should be allowed at High School events, but only specific ones. Because they need to have some things to themselves."

"It's a little frustrating," Ali Smith, a sophomore says, regarding the homecoming spirit week earlier this

year. "I feel like they should [have their own events/spirit days] just because they are not in High School yet. It's more of a High School experience, so they will eventually get there, but for now, they are in Junior High."

Now with Junior High Community Club up and running, they will be able plan a separate week of spirit days allowing both High School and Junior High to have their own special event, while still celebrating school spirit together.

While it might be more comfortable to stay separated, it is also important to build relationships within the student body as a whole. As a charter school, part of the vision of Jefferson Academy is to build a strong sense of community and culture.

"I think [STUCO and Community Club] should still be separate but still work together on things," Ms. Babcock agreed. "Just because of sheer numbers, for one thing. Being together would be too much. Plus, you guys do run stuff that is just for High School and we are going to run stuff that is just for Junior High." Working together allows not only for mentorship opportunities but also bonding opportunities between the junior and senior highs.

Chilling Night

by Memphis Larson

Jefferson Academy Theater is back in full swing, with a performance consisting of the stories of Edgar Allan Poe for a night of chilling drama. Dubbed "Night Chills," students performed several of these stories, with contextual narration in between. An audience of families and students alike filled the auditorium, and between their silence and their reactions, the nature of the stories acted out were amplified.

Seeing as this was the first fall play since Sleepy Hollow, which ran just before COVID, there were a few challenges that the crew had to face. Due to the structure of fall plays, the cast was club-based rather than class-based. This proved to be challenging, as the club has naturally dwindled in the past few years.

Night Chills also provided the benefit of expanding the club by casting actors who might not usually have the opportunity to perform. An example of this is freshman Adonis Maldonado, who holds no previous experience



in drama, yet showed a strong performance the night of the play.

"It was a bit stressful at first," says Adonis. "You have that moment where you want to cry but you really can't. It was very overwhelming, but eventually, I just went with the flow."

Adonis played multiple characters with relatively major roles, blending in even with some of the most vetted members, some of whom had gone through the entirety of COVID experiencing the theater program.

Between a lack of time and scheduling, the crew had to put in a lot of hard work to get the show to the point where it was when performed. Ms. Grace, the theater director, expressed how this really was comparable.

"There was less time as a group, but more time individually," states Ms. Grace. "Most of our other shows rehearse daily, but Night Chills did not until the last few weeks."



With the next page in the book of Jefferson Academy's theater rapidly approaching, in the form of the Addams Family coming up in December, the whole crew is busy getting at it once again for yet another display of theatrical excellence.

Addams Alert

by Grace Beck

They're creepy and they're kooky, mysterious and spooky, and they will be making an appearance in Jefferson Academy's theater this season.

"The Addams family is a comical feast that embraces the wackiness in every family that features an original story and it's every father's nightmare. Wednesday Addams, the ultimate princess of darkness, has grown up and fallen in love with a sweet, smart young man from a respectable family, a man her parents have never met.

And if that wasn't upsetting enough, Wednesday confides in her father and begs him not to tell her mother. Now, Gomez Addams must do something he's never done before, keep a secret from his beloved wife, Morticia. Everything will change for the whole family on the fateful night they host a dinner for Wednesday's 'normal' boyfriend and his parents," Ms. Grace explains regarding the upcoming musical.

As the cast starts to put the show together there are many things to look forward to. "There is a lot of energy and it is a very funny

show!" Addie Gripp, a senior in the play, states.

As the cast comes together and has fun creating the show, the rest of the student body should be getting hyped about the show. There are many things to look forward to by "bringing new life to beloved characters," says Gripp. "I have a lot of friends in the class and we are a good group of people, and we have a lot of fun."

The shows are on December 8th and 9th at 2pm and 7pm. Tickets will be sold for \$20. Keep an eye out for the sales to start.

Workplace Wonders

by Eden Woodward

Establishing oneself in the workplace can be difficult for anyone, but for older students who may not have any workplace or professional skills, finding a job, let alone an internship, can be extremely daunting. Enter Ms. DeFiore, who has started a new elective available for junior and senior students: Professional Workplace Skills.

“Employers right now, today, are not looking so much for the technical skills that students have, but they’re looking for leadership skills, communication skills,” explains Ms. DeFiore. “They really want people who can get along with other people, who are willing to hear other ideas and be open to ideas, and be a team person.”

Professional Workplace Skills focuses on helping students learn what works in the workplace, whether that is through learning soft skills like communication and teamwork, or through gaining hands-on experience at an internship set up during the quarter-long class and taking place throughout the spring semester.

While the actual class Professional Workplace Skills is new to Jefferson Academy’s curriculum, Ms. DeFiore had the internship program running during last year. “We had a student working for the Attorney General’s office. We had a student working at a bakery who wanted to own her own business. We had a student who was welding,” shares Ms. DeFiore when asked about some of the internships that students held last school year. “It was just a wide variety of different career fields that students were interested in.”

This internship opportunity draws in a variety of different students. Junior Valyn Highley has some high hopes for this class, sharing, “I am hoping to intern at an animal shelter, or if not, then somewhere that works with animals. Ever since I was little, I always knew that I wanted to work with animals because they’re the one thing that really brings me joy in life.”

Senior Haley Callico sports a similar interest to Highley, hoping to intern at a farm. “It sounds like a really neat experience to help me learn more and experience a potential job for me in the future,” says Callico in regards to her aspirations. “This falls in line with what I would like to do as a career,

and I enjoy working outside and with different animals.”

Junior Chandler Kline, on the other hand, hopes to intern somewhere to further his knowledge on both the equipment and the art of DJing. “I am interested in this internship because DJing is a subset of my passion for EDM music. I both create and produce EDM music and then use DJing as my method of performing said music.”

While Professional Workplace Skills is currently only offered to junior and senior students, underclassmen should not feel discouraged, as Ms. DeFiore has hopes of expanding this elective. “I want to see it expand to every grade. I see freshmen, sophomores. I see getting a bus,

I see transportation happening. I want this to be school-wide because right now it’s only offered to juniors and seniors because of the transportation aspect of this, but I hope it’s something that all high school students can explore and enjoy someday.”

Professional Workplace Skills has an impact outside of the credits received in school by helping students refine what they want to do with their future as well as

provide new experiences. “I think that this class will help me make more connections with different people,” says Callico. “I am also hoping to grow in my skills in handling different animals. Instead of me sitting in a classroom, I get more of a hands-on experience with a potential career.”

The internship program within Professional Workplace Skills also provides other opportunities that otherwise would not have been offered in standard curriculum. “The electives provided at JA can be a bit lackluster to me at times,” says Kline, “especially due to the lack of a shop class or a car mechanic class, and I think the internship is the equivalent of allowing the student to pick an elective in any subject they so desire regardless of if JA offers it or not.”

Professional Workplace Skills may be a growing elective, but it cements itself as a valuable tool for students looking at expanding their skills in a hands-on way. Ms. DeFiore is constantly hoping for new students and will gladly share information on the elective: “I just hope to get in those classrooms and say, ‘here I am, here’s the program, sign up!’”



Pen Stroke

by Jacob Brackney

High school comes with a multitude of impactful moments that can shape students and their futures, but with the end of an era rapidly approaching, Jefferson Academy’s seniors are beginning to take the next step. Some may be receiving acceptance letters from their dream colleges, while others are planning to play their sport in college. Very few are lucky enough to have the opportunity to do both. However, this very opportunity has struck a few girls on JA’s soccer team.

For one of the seniors, Allie Jo Kirkpatrick, signing was one of the most important things to happen to her. She stated, “It feels important, it’s just amazing. It just feels like I finally made my dream since I was a little kid come true, and it’s just a huge opportunity and a huge accomplishment.”

While signing for college is a challenge for students, it is also a challenge for the parents and supporters of those who are signing. The signing seniors each have had someone in their corner that has been helping them through the process of recruiting and signing. To some, it may be their coaches. To others, it may be their parents that have been an influential and crucial support in this process.

Senior Amelia Allison, who signed with Hastings College, says, “My mom and my coaches helped me decide. My mom was a big part of my recruitment process because she went with me on all my visits. I also really value her opinion. My club coaches played a big role in my recruitment because they were constantly connecting me with coaches and helping me get better. God also influenced my decision and helped me realize where I fit best and

could be supported the best.”

Having people in their corner has been one of the biggest helps to all of them because they would not be where they are without the support from them. It is also about finding the right fit for the academic and athletic side of college. But it is also important to find a team that will accept who you are as soon as you enter the facility.

Senior Kate Runyon, who signed with The University of Tennessee, states, “I chose my college because the team felt like a family, the coaching staff is great, my playing style aligns with theirs, and I know I will get pushed as a person and player there. I like winning and they win championships.” Helen Stegner said, “Valparaiso was a good academic fit as well as an athletic fit for me. I went to a lot of campuses, but when I got to Valpo the girls and coaching staff were really nice and I wanted to go.”

Due to their incredible successes both on and off the field, these seniors have a signing day to celebrate their biggest accomplishments. During this time, they also take a moment to reflect and offer advice to others that are watching them sign.

Runyon says, “The advice I would give is to work hard, always believe in yourself, be grateful and trust the process. You can control your work ethic and attitude. That alone will get you very far.” And Kirkpatrick says this: “Don’t give up, nothing is impossible if you work hard. Also, work your hardest and build relationships with coaches and know how to email. Work hard on emailing and building the relationships, which are the most important because when you don’t feel robotic it really stands out to colleges.”



Future Fields

by Grace Beck

The chance to learn about developing medical products, or exploring marketing campaigns for perspective students, looking into land protection and conservation, finding out about the ins and outs of Denver Fashion Week, or even learning about the barber profession and running a small business. These, and much more, were all opportunities presented to JA students during the annual Career Day held the week before Thanksgiving Break.

As a college prep school the administration likes to give the students opportunities to look past graduation toward life after school. Career Day is a day where 23 professionals visit the school so students can learn about careers they could have in the future.

The opportunity to learn about future careers is no small thing, it helps create new ideas of something you might want to do or even rule out career wise. Although many students look forward to the day, they were provided a list of who was going to be presenting so they had the opportunity to plan ahead, a noticeable amount of seniors did not attend for varying reasons from homework to doctors appointments or because they have chosen the fields they think they are interested in.



Some seniors may not have grasped the opportunity this year but other classes were able to see some careers that they were interested in and inquire into fields they may not have otherwise known about.

"I liked how it gave us a chance to experience job options even if it's not ones we want, to see what aspects of the career we like," remarked sophomore E. Fisk.

The presenters commented on the fact that the kids asked great questions and were interested in the presentations and even the presenters gained from the experience.

"One of the presenters today was from the Colorado School of Mines and works in the marketing department," commented Mr. Cloonan.

"She was able to practice the marketing tactics on students."

Overall Career Day helped introduce students what future careers could look like and the paths that the different people took to get to their careers. Even though the seniors caught a case of senioritis, most students benefitted and are looking forward to future career days with more opportunities to learn about other careers.

Bookworms

by Eden Woodard

The end of the first quarter can bring midterms, cold weather, and holiday spirits, but for Jefferson Academy, it's brought two additions to the faculty. Ms. MacGregor and Ms. Javelet have joined Jefferson Academy as our two new librarians, replacing Mrs. Buechner, who left at the end of last school year.

Some of the students at JA might recognize Ms. Javelet. "I taught at JA as a long-term sub in the Junior High English Department in 2019," she says, "and I immediately loved the feeling of community that exists at JA. I moved around a bit after that, heading to California and Japan, but when I decided to move back to Colorado, I reached out to Ms. Grantham about any open positions because I really wanted to come back to a school that I knew was full of students and staff who were so kind and welcoming."

Ms. MacGregor, however, is entirely new to Jefferson Academy. When asked what drew her here, she responded, "Well, if you know Mr. Brazzel, then you know one of my best friends!

He let me know there was a position open, and after talking with him and researching what JA was all about, I knew I wanted to apply. I love the community-building, the emphasis on excellence, and the general vibe of the campus culture here."

Junior Valyn Highley is really happy with the new librarians, even though the change can be a little bittersweet. Highley shares, "I think the new librarians are really cool. I obviously miss Mrs. Buechner because she was really sweet, but the new librarians are really great. They know what they're talking about, and they're fun to be around."

Both of the new librarians are very excited to start participating in and enriching Jefferson Academy, and soon will learn what it means to be a Jag. When asked if there were any future plans for the library, Ms. MacGregor responded with this: "We are currently looking at different options for the library and how we can innovate the space to better serve the students here at JA. I am incredibly excited about the ideas floating around, but I don't want to spoil any surprises yet! You all will know as soon as we can tell you!"

Finish Line

by Grace Beck

After months of training and hard work, the cross country season has come to a strong end, with girls placing 11th and boys placing 10th in the state cross country meet. Junior Sean Beasley, who placed 9th after taking down Logan Goodman (his greatest competition this season) by 0.3 seconds, said this about his goals for the next season: "Next year it's just the school record and placement at state top 5."

Now that state is done, the team starts to look toward next season to see what is to come. While the seniors on the team have raced hard and made the team what it is, it is time to look at the younger people on the team, such as the freshman.

Leyna and Chase, two freshmen, made it into the very special club of freshmen who went to state. "Honestly I feel like it wasn't that much different from everyone else," Leyna Gibson said. "I was kind of lucky to be there as a freshman. It is normally very hard to get there as a freshman," remarked

Chase Wittman.

Both trained very hard to be where they are now and they have high hopes for their next three seasons. While the high from state is wearing off, the excitement for the years to come builds on the team as they look at the fastest girls' team the school has ever had. The girls' times this year make them the fastest in school history but the coaches and runners know this is only the beginning.

"This year was different because there was more depth on the girls' team and a more dedicated and engaged team on the boys' side, so we were able to do more voluminous work that made us better later in the season," stated Coach Witkowski.

As the team looks back, they see the hard work, good people, and fun they have had to make the team what it is today. As the team looks to the future, they can see lower times and higher placings, much more fun and more good people.

Soccer Season Slips Away

by Gianna Gagliano

The cheering fans, the flying turf, and the high emotions are all aspects of a playoff game. These are all things that the boys' varsity soccer team experienced throughout their post-season games. Although the team fell short to the Peak to Peak Pumas in the second round of playoffs, they have a lot to look forward to next season.

A good coach is a crucial component to having a successful team. Positive leadership separates the good teams from the great teams, and allows for a productive environment where every player improves and contributes to the success of the team. With Coach Cassell in charge, the boys' soccer team has once again proven their capacity to succeed.

Junior soccer player Adam Livingston states, "Cassel cares a lot about us, and makes sure we know it. After the loss last year Cassel had no time to be sad, but instead made sure his team was okay. That kind of leadership is the most important for a team."

Camaraderie among players is a foundational principle of a team. The players have built friendships and have always had each other's backs. Demonstrated through the solid connection between the offensive and defensive lines, as



well as the crisp passes that are completed with accuracy, it is evident that the team has chemistry both on and off the field.

"Although many of the players get mad at each other on the field, we always remember to take nothing personally and we are always family," states Livingston. "We make sure to understand that this yelling is just from the drive to win, and that we are always family at the end of the day."

Despite last year's loss in the state final, and this year's second round loss, the team remains extremely motivated. This motivation will aid them in next year's season. Emotions are high, and the student body is very supportive. School spirit, mixed with the motivation from this season and last year, may be just the edge the team needs to come out successfully in the coming seasons.

"Besides the few freshmen, everybody who plays on the field remembers the feeling of losing," states Livingston, "the feeling we had in the locker room after the game. Something like that will stick with you throughout the next season. It motivates us because we want a second chance. We messed up last year, but this year we have a chance to redeem ourselves."

Regional Rally

by **Gianna Gagliano**

The Varsity Girls' volleyball team had their season cut short. After a tremendous effort this season, the team has accomplished so much, resulting in their playoff bid after their recent victories in their past few matches. Although they came up short in their final regional games, that doesn't tarnish their success this season.

Focus, hard work and determination are all aspects of successful teams. Without these, success and progress are very difficult to achieve. The work ethic of these volleyball players is remarkable, and their success this season can be attributed to it. Without their focus and hard work, they would not be in the position they are.

"We are working really hard in practice," states varsity volleyball player, junior, Freja Hampton. "We are making sure that we are always extremely focused and determined."

Success is measured in progress, in which the

team has made significant gains. This progress is due to attitude (hard work, determination, focus). However, skill, talent and team chemistry are very important factors that coincide with attitude that also have resulted in this success.

"We have been so successful this season," states Hampton. "This is because of our amazing ball connections between each other and our commitment."

This season has been an historical one for the team. With a new coach in charge, the team is becoming unstoppable with their appearances in state playoffs. The new coach has helped the team in so many ways, and their success can be attributed to her.

"The new coach has been really helpful," remarks Hampton. "She has been helpful in making sure our heads are in the game and that we communicate on the court."

