



JAGWIRE

Spring 2023 - Issue 5 - New Horizons



Grantham Graduates

After 17 years of dedicated service to Jefferson Academy, our principal, Mrs. Grantham, will be graduating this year with the class of 2023.

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After 17 years of dedicated service to Jefferson Academy, our principal, Mrs. Grantham, will be graduating this year with the class of 2023.

“I chose to resign in order to seek out new opportunities after being here for 17 years and being a principal for the last 9, including this year. When you're in a position of leadership, you feel like you have a certain list of accomplishments. I feel that I have accomplished everything I could have accomplished, and I want to give someone else that opportunity,” says Principal Mrs. Grantham.

Mrs. Grantham has made her presence known to her students. When you see her, either in class or a hallway, she always flashes a smile. She can frequently be seen welcoming students in the front vestibule before the day begins, wishing students a good morning.

“I think it will be very sad when she leaves this school, just based on everything she has done and the impact she has made. But I look forward to seeing what new and exciting things await the future and how the school is going to become even better,” states Sophomore Sydney Duncan.

Despite loving her role as principal, she wants to be a teacher, stating, “It was never really in my career path to be a principal. It was one of these opportunities I said yes to and its been awesome and amazing, but my love for kids is in the classroom.”

Mrs. Grantham's impact on Jefferson Academy cannot be denied. “I think she has impacted the school in many different ways and continues to, no matter what. It will definitely be a change since it will be someone new in charge but I think JA will get right back into rhythm with it,” says Freshman Daisy Rush.

Having earned the respect of her leadership team, Mrs. Grantham has always remained a powerful presence at JA. “I think she's brilliant. I think she has brought the school together through some really difficult times, such as COVID and some different changes in education. I think she has empowered our teachers and our administrators to have a voice in the way that the school operates,” adds Assistant Principal Mrs. Porreco.

Throughout COVID, Jefferson Academy has lost multiple administrators, teachers, and students. COVID was a difficult time for everyone, especially schools having to make the transition from in-person to online. Mrs. Grantham stayed through all of it and worked to find a solution to the issue. Although moving to online school isn't easy, having a good structure and transition into it can make it better.

“When we went into COVID, she pivoted faster than any other principal in the district. She got systems and processes working at JA faster than anyone I know, and it served us well,” says Jefferson Academy Executive Director Mr. Matlick.

One hallmark is that she has managed our school by being able to know what to do in hard situations. Mrs. expanded the concept of Jefferson Academy Secondary being a second campus for Front Range, which gave students the opportunity to study college-level classes on top of their normal high-school curriculum, allowing them to go into college extra prepared. Concurrent Enrollment allows students to have an easier transition into college and gives them an idea of what they will be getting into.

“Mrs. Grantham has been on the front edge of a lot of pieces of education. For example, the Concurrent Enrollment here at the secondary has absolutely exploded. We are a secondary campus for Front Range because of her decision and leadership to say, ‘Hey, this would be great for our students to be able to do college as well as high school at the same time.’ It started before she was here, but it has really expanded since she's been here, and I don't know that any other district has as many kids involved with it as we do,” states Mr. Matlick.

She has been able to give JA multiple opportunities that would be difficult to find elsewhere. Students at JA have the chance to go into college with credits already and have a head start in their studies.

“The school has gone through a lot of phases since she's been here. I've seen her as a principal when I was a student here. I actually took teen choices with her, and obviously have had her as my boss for the past couple of years. During this time, the school has really strived to be something good and really help the students in different ways,” says Mr. Mellott, Junior High Science and AP Physics teacher.

Mrs. Grantham has been here since most of us can remember, and she has enforced an academic structure that guides Jefferson Academy and its students.

“I think the school is in really good shape right now. Mrs. Gratham and the administration and teachers have built a phenomenal school that will carry on the legacy. I think whenever you take on new leadership there's going to be change because it's just different ideas and different innovations and ways of doing things, but I think the school and its foundation will persevere,” says Mrs. Porreco.



Graduating Grantham

by Madeline Scoggins

Bonded

by **Gianna Gagliano**

With the swing of the golf club, the sound of dodgeballs on the gym floor, movies playing, and a fun afternoon at the rec center, this year's class bonding day was highly anticipated amongst the students at Jefferson Academy. With a half day of school on the 27th, and an afternoon filled with each grade's respective activity, the ability to communicate and interact with one another, and develop new relationships as the school year begins to wrap up was now more possible than ever.

Having good relationships with your peers is a determining factor of how enjoyable a school year can be. These relationships are vital for many aspects of school, such as mental health, academic motivation, and overall emotional development. This is why class bonding is so crucial.

"Class bonding is important in order to sharpen your communication skills, as well as open you to new opportunities for friendships," states Junior Connor Scarboro. "I think these friendships are important for students' overall enjoyment of high school."

This year, the Seniors headed to the Westminster Recreation Center for their class bonding day. This was highly anticipated and proved to be a fun activity for the senior class to gain even more friendships as they prepare to head off to college. While doing so, they even reconnected with some childhood memories.

"I am really looking forward to the hot tub and pool rope," stated Senior Grace Parker. "I used to go to the Rec Center a bunch when I was younger, but haven't gone in a while, so I'm super pumped to experience it all this time with my friends."

The Juniors headed to Top Golf for a fun afternoon of golfing. Friendly competition and good conversations are just a few of the perks of attending bonding day. Hanging out with friends and taking a break from school were the main reasons the Junior class was excited about this day.



"I'm looking forward to hanging out with my friends," states Junior Freja Hampton. "I am also looking forward to having a good time with everyone I don't normally hang out with."

Instead of an outdoor experience, the Sophomores opted to spend the day playing games inside at Dave and Buster's. Just like the Juniors and Seniors, it granted Sophomores entertainment as well as new opportunities for friendships. Furthermore, it gave them the ability to have a more tightly-knit class.

"As I attended class bonding day, I most looked forward to hanging out with my friends," states Sophomore Reese Gibbons. "I also looked forward to the opportunity to hang out with my classmates outside of the school setting, and to do fun activities, rather than educational activities."

While all the other classes left school for the day, the Freshmen got to experience what it's like to "rule the school" while spending the afternoon in a competitive dodgeball tournament. This allowed the class to spend time with friends and gain new relationships through an aggressive game of dodgeball.

"I was looking forward to spending time with friends," states Freshman Wes Hampton. "Playing dodgeball with friends was super fun."

Overall, class bonding day was a fun way to take a break from the stresses of school and allowed students to gain new relationships that can last a lifetime.



Where in the World?

by **Maddie Leyba**

The smell of Paella Valenciana fills the streets of Madrid while war cries long lost to time echo through the Colosseum of Rome. The month of March brings on endless opportunities for students as they can travel to Spain, Europe, New York/ Washington D.C., and even Chicago.

JA students previously looked forward to a trip to Peru, however, due to recent political events, EF Tours has deemed travel to Peru unsafe, instead offering a trip to Spain. "EF Tours is all about safety, and obviously, that comes first," Ms. DeFiore, a chaperone for the trip, enlightens. "They sent out a letter stating that at this time it is not safe to travel to Peru. They were really cool and offered another country at no additional cost and the trip got extended."

With so many travel opportunities being offered, the Spain and Portugal trip holds a special place as it allows students to be immersed in a culture of which they have studied the language. Students at JA are required to take at least two years of Spanish, putting them at an advantage when it comes to traveling.

"My goal is to give my students the opportunity to be immersed in different cultures," Sra. Bocanegra shares, touching on the purpose of visiting a Spanish-speaking country, "to give my students another perspective of the world, to try new food, to see different places, to know how other people act, and to see other people's traditions."

"When you travel to different countries," Sra. Bocanegra explains passionately, "you see a different way of life. Life is more open, not closed. We need to immerse in that globalization."

"I am excited for Spain," Aleya Beimers, a junior attending the trip, states regarding the change. "I would be excited either way. They are obviously different trips, and they obviously have different histories too, but Spain will be super exciting. It will be a more unique experience since it is not part of the Americas. I am excited about the different cultures and foods."

While students are in Spain and Portugal, members of the senior class will be exploring the historical sites of Europe. Going to France and Italy has become a tradition for JA seniors, allowing students to not only bond as a class, but also experience the beauty of history in person.

"[My goal] is to expose them to something different before they leave high school," explains Mr. Thimsen, the coordinator of the trip, "to make them see some of the cool stuff we learn in history come alive."

The Europe trip is special because it encompasses countries students have spent their whole lives learning about. "You are a lot more well-cultured when you come back," Mr. Thimsen says. "You learn that the world is much bigger than Broomfield, Colorado. It is a life-changing experience for a lot of kids, and most go back."

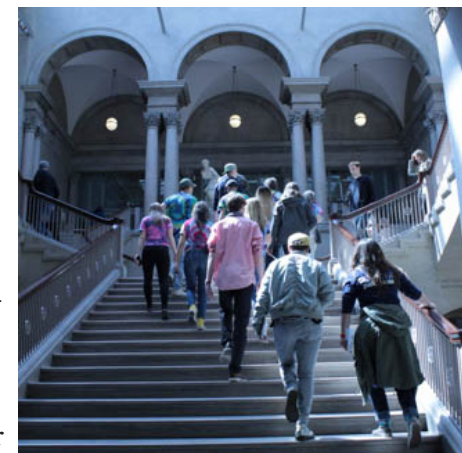
"I am excited about everything," Logan Davis-Miller, Senior, elaborates. "This will be my first time not in the US. If I am going somewhere, it is usually for a school thing. [Friends] are part of the reason I prefer going on school trips overall. I enjoy having all my friends there- they make it so much better."

While high school students travel out of the country, eighth-grade students find themselves exploring New York and Washington, DC. "My goal every year is to introduce students to history," shares Mrs. Porreco. "Both DC and New York have different histories. We learn about the judicial system, how our founding fathers discovered Washington DC, and the history behind it. When we go to New York, we think about the immigrant story, Ellis Island, the Statue of Liberty, all the burrows, and the different ethnicities. With students, when we live so far west, it introduces them to a new part of geography and a new part of history."

April brings a unique opportunity for National Art Honors Society members: the chance to go to Chicago and immerse themselves in the culture of one of the country's greatest art hubs. This trip will take place from April 21st to April 23rd.

The trip will allow for "exposure to different cities, demographics and geographical locations that can inspire new ideas, ways of seeing and interacting with the world around us and ignite our imagination," depicts Mrs. Garcia in a slideshow detailing the trip.

Traveling is not just a way to explore the world, but is also a way to experience history in person. Jefferson Academy offers many opportunities for students to do just that.



Jags on the Job

by Mackenzie Estep

From doggy daycare to virtual cyber security, many students have begun working as JA's internship program is back in full swing this semester.

Over the course of the first semester, participating students took a Workplace Skills class, taught by Ms. DeFiore, that prepared them for their life on the job.

"This semester was fantastic! We offered a Professional Workplace Skills Course for students who wanted to complete an internship this spring. It was a combination of learning necessary soft skills and securing an internship. Students took ownership of their learning and placement and we placed 18 students in internships this spring semester!" DeFiore excitedly shared.

An advantage of this program is that it is designed to work with students' schedules. Instead of completing their internship entirely outside of school, it replaces a class in their schedules.

This allows them to work an internship without giving up other outside-of-school activities and commitments.

"I like how it works with my school schedule and that it is included in part of my school day. I think having shorter shifts is really beneficial to keep it from feeling too much like a job. I know internships are working without pay but money is what gives me the encouragement to push through hard, long shifts. So having shorter shifts helps it feel more like a class that fits into my day and allows me to go to sports after," said Valyn Highley, who is working at Dogtopia.

However, not all of the students' internships fit into the time allotted in a single block. Many have created schedules with their employers where they

do not have to go in every day, or are able to work outside of school hours.

"I usually go in during zero hour because my sister has band Thursday and Friday and we find it easier to stick to the same schedule throughout the week. It's also nice that I only go in on Tuesday and Thursday and I can work from the library the rest of the time. So it works out well," said Chris Rock, who is interning for Oracle.

This program is a perfect opportunity for JA students to not only get some experience in the workforce, but also to help them explore different careers that they can continue with after school.

"I decided to join the internship program to work in a field I might actually go into, so it would help me know if that would be something I am interested in. I wanted a field in computers in particular because I know it is a growing field and it feels like there is always more to learn," said Rock.



Valyn Highley added, "I am interning at Dogtopia, which is a dog daycare place. I chose Dogtopia because it seemed like a great way to get a chance to work with animals and the people there seemed really sweet."

This program is one of the many unique experiences offered to students at JA. Something like this takes a lot of planning and commitment, not only from the students, but also from the participating employers.

"It took students and businesses willing to take a chance on this. I am so excited to hear about their experience and all they learn!" said DeFiore.

Throughout the rest of the semester, students in the program will be able to learn what it is like to be on the job while also receiving school credit. There has been a lot of preparation regarding the placements for everyone, and with the semester in full swing, it should be a great experience for everyone involved.

"I am really excited for the rest of the semester because the people at Oracle know so much about many different aspects of computer sciences. I just can't wait to see how much I learn about all these different aspects," said Rock.



Going Green

by Grace Douglas

Members of the Environmental Club, a relatively new group at JA, gather every Monday at lunch and discuss environmental issues that are on their minds. Each member has their own reasons for joining the club, and each contributes what they can to the climate action movement, but they all share their ideas about environmental issues and ways to make JA more sustainable. Some members even had the opportunity to experience CSU Spur, a building complex dedicated to education on subjects like food and agriculture, water systems, and human and veterinary health. They now get to bring some of their knowledge back to JA.

New and old members of the club have expressed their excitement for helping JA be a bit more eco-friendly. Each member has a common interest of leaving JA and the earth better than they found it.

"I like how we have a plan to help the school in general, it's not just about what credits we're getting and what looks good on the resume. It's more about how we can improve our community and I think that that's kind of rare," Junior Anna Brenneman said, describing why she likes environmental club.

The start of the new semester brought in several new members, including Leia Michel. She has many thoughts and ideas about why she wants to help with climate action in her community and her reasons for joining.

"I think that it's good to help the environment, and we live on the earth, so why not give back to it?" Michel explained.

Climate change is an ever-present issue weighing on the minds of young people everywhere. The fear of losing our home, Earth, is a huge motivator for people to support ecologically sustainable causes.

"It is meaningful to me because imagining future

generations not being able to see the beautiful things in nature in person and only being able to read about it in textbooks terrifies me. Like everyone says, 'we only have one Earth and what we do to it, we can't always go back,'" shared Senior Jordan Quach, another committed member of the club.

Environmental Club members have high expectations for the coming semester with new plans to make JA a more eco-friendly space.

"We talked about adding compost bins and more recycling bins around the school, which would be really nice," Junior Marina Munir explained.

Implementing some new systems in JA is high on President Sofia Hiller's agenda for the club.

"I talked to one of the people in the greenhouse and asked a lot about the vertical gardens. He was saying that the lettuce grows really well in vertical gardens and that they'll have a quick turn-around rate. I think I'll use the tips he told me about the gardens to take better care of the vertical garden at JA," Hiller explained.

Other members of Environmental Club also got to experience CSU Spur and learn more about local resources and how Spur is working to educate local youth.

"The coolest thing that I learned was that CSU has a program where they give trout eggs to educators in the Denver area and they then raise the trout and release

them into the wild which is super cool for the environment," Valera Noland said.

Overall, Environmental Club has been a big success thus far and has high hopes for the coming semesters. "I like Environmental Club because it is so nice and welcoming no matter how sustainable you are," Jordan Quach said.



Finding Balance

by Maddie Leyba

Tick tock. The second hand of the clock could not move any slower. Tick tock. Who knew seven hours could feel more like ten? DING! The sound of backpacks zipping fills the classroom as the halls begin to fill with students, anxious to move on with their day.

Spending all day in school is one thing, but leaving straight for work is another. As students get older, they are expected to fulfill certain criteria. This could include anything from getting their driver's licenses to applying to colleges. For many students, these expectations might also include getting a job.

Everyone carries a different workload when it comes to schoolwork, which must be considered when choosing between applying for jobs and choosing not to work.

"I got hired at Target over Thanksgiving break last year," shares Junior Elliott Waters. "I started working there and I put in max hours for every single day I possibly could. I had a mental breakdown about two months after that because it was just too much. I didn't have time to do homework or anything like that."

Mental and physical burnout are two very real things that students face when they take on too much. To manage this, Waters revealed, "I take Wednesday and Sunday off so I have time to do homework and kind of recenter myself from having so many things to do. I would suggest if you are going to get a job, put in hours that you think are manageable, and increase from there."

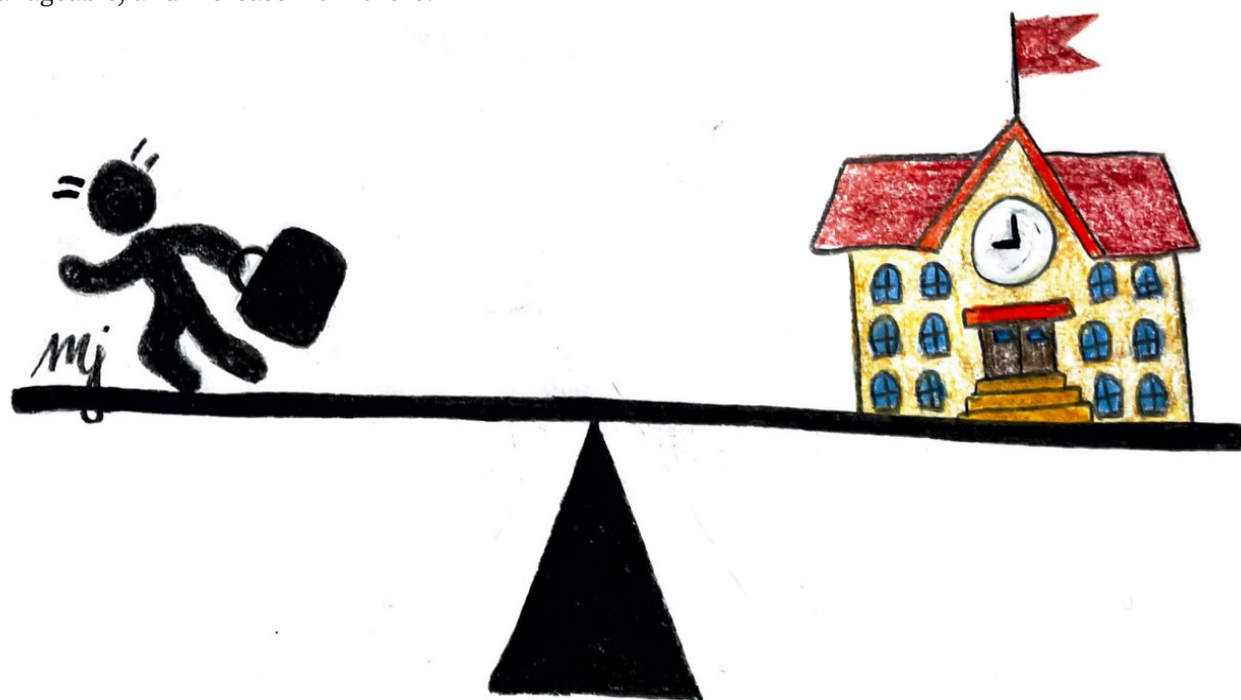
Jobs frequently clash with students' lives and school. For some students, finding the energy for a job is simply unrealistic. Many students are taking academically rigorous courses that require a lot of out-of-class studying or are involved in extracurriculars like sports or clubs.

"I think school should be prioritized," Senior Skyla Rogers states. "Choosing a job with flexible scheduling is a really good idea, especially in high school. School is definitely more important. Working is just a benefit."

There are many benefits to working, such as gaining experience in the real world and having money to spend on things like a car, social outings, and personal items. Working allows students to learn financial skills at a young age while they commonly avoid the stress of paying bills.

Benefits also include people skills: "[Having a job] has helped me have better social skills," Rogers noted. "When I entered the workforce, originally in retail, I was super shy and nervous, but now I am able to socialize and work with people better."

Working in high school gives students the opportunity to develop conversational skills and money management, but it can also take away from study time and add more stress to a student's life. "If you are able to practice that now," comments Mrs. LeValley, "when it feels a little less scary, then I think that is wonderful. But, I also don't want that at the expense of mental health or grades. There is a balance there."



Camp Computer

by Levi Roth

At January's close, eager students ready to learn about Linux and DevOps filled rooms throughout Jefferson Academy. Through hands-on instruction and exercises hosted by JA's Computer Science Honor Society (CSHS) partnered with the Software Freedom School, students learned all of the intricacies of Linux and DevOps.

"We had one of our students, who is actually the vice president of CSHS, Jacob Sayre, teaching," said CSHS president Jordan Quach. "[The classes] went really well because they were really quite interesting and engaging."

These classes are part of CSHS's ongoing mission to educate people on computers and engage with the JA community.

"For example, we have a February event for elementary students called, Code Camp, but we also have the Five Days of Festive Festivities that were at the end of last semester. And now we also have these Linux and DevOps boot camps."

The skills these classes covered are rising in demand in the tech world. Job openings for DevOps Engineers are expected to rise by 22% or more between 2020 and 2030.

Additionally, many websites run on Linux, making it important for the expanding online world.

"Linux is really important because it is the backbone of a lot of the websites and servers that you use on a daily basis," Sayre continued. "The class goes over getting you around, getting the hang of Linux and how to navigate the interface itself, and then also how to use its command line to build a remote website that you can then stand up and access even on your phone."

Linux and DevOps go hand in hand, which allows the DevOps course to build on the Linux course. Attendees were able to see what they learned shine through in the form of a finished product.

"The DevOps course is about taking the finished website from the Linux course and putting it through the DevOps development cycle," Sayre said. "That cycle includes a lot of stages, like production and physical release. In between that, there are more stages, like alphas and betas. The whole cycle involves things that typically the customer doesn't see, but it allows for automated deployment of finished work to the final product."

CSHS ran these classes as a partnership with another foundation, Software Freedom School, which regularly hosts introductory classes and fun events relating to Linux and free software.

"[Sayre] had the lucky opportunity to do an internship [at Software Freedom School]," Quach said. "His father and his father's friend work there. So they were why we had the awesome opportunity to create a class together and then they came here

for the classes that we are running."

With these classes now concluded, CSHS is "in the planning stages" for their annual week-long Code Camp. Code Camp, an event partnered with the JA Elementary school, has a goal to help get younger people engaged in tech.

"[The bootcamps] have been very successful," said Quach. "It's been really exciting to see everyone learning and having fun, getting involved with something we're really passionate about."



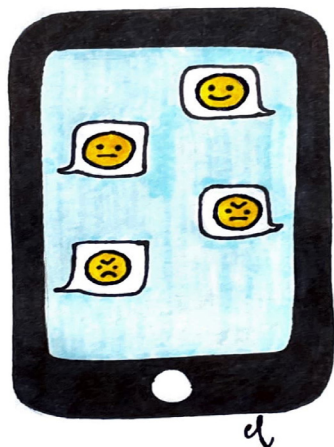
Screenagers

by Edén Woodward

By now, you've heard the name: Screenagers. A new attempt to educate the student body on technology and how it can be used effectively. Screenagers is a multi-film franchise that covers the intricacies of technology, including how it can be used as well as abused.

"Screenagers had come across my desk maybe two years ago and it's something that focuses exactly on what we're talking about: How is education influenced by technology and device usage," says Mrs. Adams, Jefferson Academy's Director of Student Services, when asked why exactly Screenagers has found a home in our school. "That was the hope. To learn more about it, and learn how to be more responsible with electronics and devices."

The first film, shown in the first semester, focused on the disciplinary aspects of phone usage, giving more advice to authority figures than to students. It also tackled cyberbullying, as well as the impossible standards set by social media. The second film, shown this January, covered the topic of mental health and the impact that technology can have on it.



"Not to say it's all bad impact," says Adams. "There's a lot of good impact too, but we need to understand it so that we can make responsible decisions for ourselves."

However, is it truly reaching the student body? Many students seem annoyed or put off by the idea of Screenagers. Seniors Alex Zhang and Logan Davis-Miller both responded negatively when asked if they felt there was value in watching Screenagers. Junior Jacob Brackney says, "There's some truth to it, but it all seems pointless in the end."

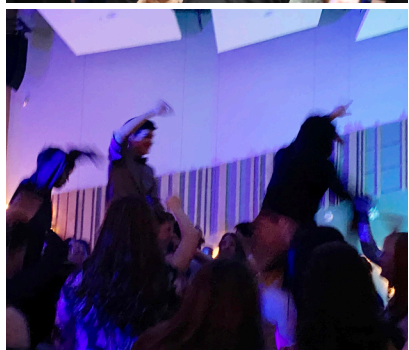
When asked what he would change about Screenagers, Brackney replied, "I would just remove it. You know people are going to be on their phones anyways, so why not just leave it as it is instead of wasting time?"

At the end of the day, Screenagers remains a divisive topic. When asked what she hopes students take away from the films, Adams

states, "It really is to just start conversations. There's no agenda, no prerogative. We're not hoping that students start saying 'Down with cellphones!' and the sort. In one sentence, it is this: Start the conversations and be more self-aware."

Winter Wonder

The first Winter Formal in three years has come and gone, and by most accounts it was a huge success. Student Government decided to make it a "Sadie Hawkins" dance, which proved to be a popular change at JA. "[The Winter Formal] was a great way to get in touch with other grades," Senior Jordan Quach mentions. "My favorite memory has to be participating and watching the dance circle." Being the first winter formal JA has had in a number of years, it was a huge success allowing students of all grades to come together for a night of fun and snowflakes. Chandler Kline made another appearance as DJ after the success of his debut at Homecoming earlier this year.



Oh, Valentine

Opinion by Edén Woodward

Valentine's Day. It's arguably one of the most divisive holidays out there. Maybe you're a lover, going out of your way to make it the biggest and best holiday for your partner. Or maybe you're a hater, who rolls their eyes and makes fun of those who participate, calling it immature and annoying. Perhaps you can't even be bothered to care. Wherever your opinions on Valentine's Day lie, you can't deny its controversial reputation. You can't help but find a little bit of irony in the situation; the holiday that is meant to be all about "love" is perhaps the most hated. What's the deal? Why have people grown so cynical about it?

The issue stems from how we define love. It's frequently used in a romantic context (think the annoying P.D.A. couples in the hallway who always happen to be standing right where you need to be) but it's much more than that. There's familial love, of course. There's the love you feel for a close friend. The Ancient Greeks managed to define over half a dozen different types of love. Obviously, it's complicated. So how do we celebrate something as profound as love?

Consumer capitalism to the rescue!

We've all walked into a store right as the new year turns only to be bombarded by the pink hearts littered throughout the seasonal section, urging you to BUY SOMETHING. Buy flowers for your partner, candy for your friends, gift cards for your family, anything for yourself! Rest assured, as long as you buy something, you're celebrating the way Cupid intended. It seems that the only "right" way to show your love is via money. The pressure is so ubiquitous that even schools are getting in on the action. Make sure you buy your Valograms!

Not to mention the pressure to perform. Valentine's Day can feel like a huge song and dance, putting your most cherished love on display for everyone to see. We all know that the holiday can suck when you're single, but being in a relationship doesn't

exactly make all that more enjoyable. Someone always does it better; someone always shows their love for their partner more creatively. Maybe you don't have the finances for a big display of affection. Maybe you're both closeted and you're stuck watching heteronormative relationships put on display, wondering "Why can't that be us?" Let's be real, maybe you just don't want to. Maybe that's not how you love. But that can't be right. If you're in a relationship, Valentine's Day is fun! It's meant to be enjoyable! That's what love is.

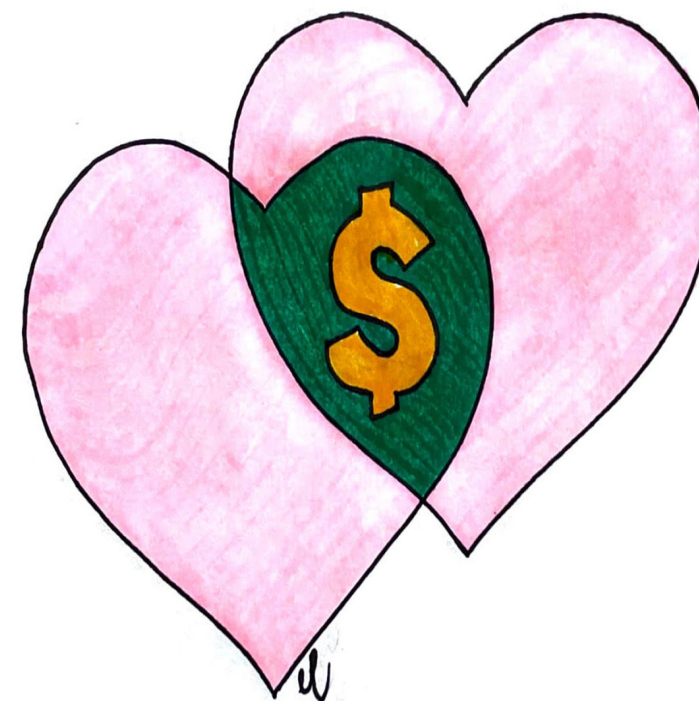
Right?

Thus, we find ourselves back at square one. The complexity of love strikes again, just another arrow in Cupid's quiver. See, Valentine's Day isn't

a bad holiday, it's just practiced incorrectly. There's too much pressure to purchase, to perform, to put you and your love on display for the entire world to see. Even in a relationship, you might find yourself dissatisfied or stressed with the upcoming holiday. This is why we need to start valuing other types of love. Romantic love has been prioritized over all else, demanding attention. But what about the deep and constant love you feel for your family? Or the powerful and profound love you share with your closest friends? It's the kind of love that might not be put on display but will

always have your back. Does its existence devalue romantic love? Not in the slightest. But it should be valued just as much.

Next Valentine's Day, try shifting the focus. Remove yourself from the societal pressures of the holiday, tear off the price tags, and do what you love with the people you love. Write your partner a love letter. Go star-gazing with your best friends and talk about the future. Watch a stupid movie with your family and relish in the laughter you share. Actively choose to love yourself and take a break from it all. Love is nuanced. Love is more than just one day on the calendar. Just remember to spread love, no matter how you do it.



Ballin' at Ball Areana



by Maddie Leyba

The crowd's cheers echo as the Varsity girls' basketball team takes home the win against St. Mary's at Ball Arena on January 18th. Students and players alike found themselves experiencing both the boys' and girls' varsity games on the same court played on by the Denver Nuggets.

The girls took home the win, while the boys took a close loss. "We played really well. They played just like Kent, who we also lost too," Senior Caden Fullerton, SF/W/G, notes in regard to the Ball Arena game. "Just really pressuring us, and speeding us up. Either way, we lost by 5 points, it was a close game, we almost had it, just a few mistakes here and there."

The season started off on a high and the boys' team has since demonstrated their perseverance as they soar through the season with an 8 - 5 record. The team has spent the past few months working to not only better themselves, but also prove themselves worthy of the 4A title.

"Girls are doing very, very well," Mr. Page, the official JV coach who also helps out with both Boys' and Girls' Varsity teams, recounts. "Their league is not quite as tough or as strong as the boys' side, they have been picking up some nice wins here and

there. From the boys' side, the metro league that we are in for 4A basketball is one of the toughest in the entire state. So they haven't been winning as many games, but we like to make sure that it is not always about wins and losses. Grinding out some tough, hard-fought games and the preparation that goes into those is often a better win than just the scoreboard."

"We're doing better, if you look at the games we have won and lost. Last year we didn't have the best record. This year we already have a better record," Caden Fullerton mentions regarding the season. "We are 8 - 5. We've played against some teams that we have historically struggled against in prior years. We have held them in pretty close games, actually having a chance [to win]."

The teams have been working hard to better their performances. "I would say, keep practicing, just keep an open mindset," Sophomore Jackson Tomalak, JV center, motivates. "Look at the pros and how they play the game and reflect on how you want to play better; how the team wants to play better."

But above all else, an essential part of a well-functioning team is proper team dynamics. "It is really nice to see some of the friend groups that you see in the hallways and in classrooms gelling and meshing really well together on the court," Mr. Page notes. "It is certainly a good opportunity and a good situation for our basketball program."

JAGWIRE

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The JagWire is Jefferson Academy's completely student-produced newspaper. The JagWire covers issues and events of interest to the JA community, its students, faculty, and staff. The paper is reported, edited, and laid out by students. The JagWire is published by Jefferson Academy, as part of classwork for the Publication Production Newspaper class.

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