

JAG WIRE

Fall 2023 - Issue 1



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The JA parking lot truly is a colorful sight to see. The JA senior tradition of painting parking spots is one of the most enjoyed.

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Showing Out

By: Hayle Smith

The Girls Varsity Volleyball showed up and showed out for the JA annual Sideout Showdown, winning the tournament for the first time since 2016 extending their perfect streak for this Cinderella season to 9-0!

Despite the unprecedented success, the team is navigating some changes. Monica Slusser



shared, “We had a few seniors graduate who were a big part of the team. But I think it’s exciting to play with new people and we have been adjusting really well.”

Rachel Nunnally weighed in on the team’s adjustments, saying, “There hasn’t really been any huge changes, just lots of position switches and getting to know your teammates. A couple of days ago, Mckenna Adams injured her ankle, and that was a loss to the team because she is really talented.”

Alison Smith highlighted a tactical shift, mentioning that the team has transitioned from a 6-2 to a 5-1 formation.

Based on their successful season last year, the team is hopeful for the season ahead. Monica Slusser expressed her hopes for the season, stating, “I think that we will go really far this season and have a good chance of making it to the postseason, but as a team we always say one game at a time and don’t jump ahead of ourselves.”

Nunnally also shared her positive outlook, saying, “We are a pretty good team, and we are getting better.”

The team’s success is dependent on the bond between teammates and their trust. Slusser explained the dynamics and said, “Volleyball is a game of mistakes, so it’s hard to get over mistakes you make, especially when the other team will automatically get a point off of something you did wrong or it will make your teammates have to fix it. I think that builds team-

work and shows how everyone has everybody’s back.”

Nunnally elaborated on this aspect, explaining, “The dependence on your team [is crucial], and it’s not just one basket or goal to score on, [when there] are faulty errors.” Success of a team can be attributed to teamwork and friendships. Volleyball is a game of trust between players.

As the team readies itself for the challenges of the season, it might be common to wonder how players stay motivated for the entire season. Nunnally shed light on her approach, sharing, “I stay motivated because I want to get better, I always want to improve, and I never want to just let my team down. It’s a mindset and determination.”

Slusser shares a similar point of view and stays motivated from the excitement of learning new skills through practice and getting to play harder teams throughout the year.

Looking forward to the season ahead, Slusser identified their main rivals. “This year, our biggest rivals will be The Academy, Forge Christian, or Prospect Ridge, but it really depends on the year.”

Forge Christian is particularly noteworthy as a major rival due to the closely matched skill levels. Reflecting on a tough match from the previous year, Smith recalled, “The game last year was really close, it went to 5 sets and we lost in the 5th set.”

In addition to the Varsity team’s accomplishments, the Girls’ JV team has faced some challenges.

Nyah Beiser shared her perspective, stating, “We are improving, but we are progressively playing harder teams. We will grow, but we might not make it far in the season.”



New Perspectives

By: Benjamin Schumm

Imagine walking through the JA doors for the first time and entering your first classroom. This is a scenario that has played out for everyone at some point, but some students have experienced it more recently than others. Tyler Fix, Ashton Elder, and Logan Melby are all new students to JA and have unique perspectives on their new school experience.

“I was going to stay at Broomfield, but then, fortunately, I got the opportunity from Mr. Stadler,” Senior Tyler Fix states. “He got me in, put in some good words for me, and was able to get me into Jefferson Academy for my senior year.”

Fix is one of our seniors here at JA. He decided to switch to Jefferson Academy after seeing the college opportunities he would be afforded. Following in the footsteps of some of his friends and little brother, he decided that JA would be the best school to finish out his high school career.

Fix’s favorite part of the school so far is something that enticed many others to enroll: the academics. “I really like the learning pace and speed. I love the curriculum that we learn here at Jefferson Academy. The workload is a lot, but so far I think it’s setting me up for success,”



he states. Fix is not the only new student at JA this year. Sophomore Ashton Elder just moved from a church-run private school, but the adjustment to JA was surprisingly easy. “I’ve been enjoying audio visual production as a class, although public school is new to me,” Elder remarks.

The amount of homework was quite overwhelming to Elder at first, but he has settled in now and is adjusting quite well to JA’s rigorous curriculum. When asked about how he liked it here, he laughed and said he liked JA “as well as one can like school!” Brand-new freshman Logan Melby transferred from Excel Academy Charter School to JA this year.

According to Melby, Excel has had a rough few years, so it was nice to have a school where he had the same teachers every day.

“It’s got a lot smaller classes than a lot of the schools that I was supposed to go to,” Melby says. He is quite pleased with the smaller community that has room for him. Many students, new and old, can relate to his favorite part of JA, with its cool LED lighting and welcoming, friendly atmosphere. “The computer room, it’s awesome!”

JAGWIRE

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If you would like to contact the staff or advisor of the JagWire email us at newspaper@jajags.com



Fresh Faces

By: Hannah Strumpher

This new school year we welcome new classes, new teachers, and even a new principal. Mr. Stadler has been teaching for 22 years, with most of them being at this school.

“I started teaching at JA many years ago as a fourth-grade teacher,” Stadler says. “So I taught fourth grade, I taught technology to little kids, and I taught middle school math. I have been an athletic director and an elementary principal, and now this year, [I am] the principal of JA.”

The biggest reason that Mr. Stadler first came to Jefferson Academy was to be a part of the community that his family was in. He wanted to put in his time and effort into places he was most closely connected to.

Mr. Stadler said, “Coming back to JA, for me, was really purposeful and saying if I’m going to work 50, 60 hours a week - I enjoy doing it for other communities, too - I’m going to do it for the school that I’m most invested with and make sure that the school that my kids and family are a part of and the community that I live next to has the best possible leader and is the best possible school in the state of Colorado. I want to be a part of that which is a little closer to home than the other schools that I’ve worked at.”

The thing that Mr. Stadler has struggled with the most has been connecting with all of the people in the school. He wants to balance connecting with as many people as possible over a short timeframe while still making them feel valued and appreciated.

He stated, “I want for every single kid in this school to have

an opportunity to connect and to know that they are seen and valued and feel appreciated and they have a sense of belonging. Whether it’s a part of the drama club, or art, or music. Whether it’s an extracurricular club after school, a sport, or a club that takes place during the day like SLAB. I just want every single kid to be able to make connections and know that they have a trusted adult that they know cares about them at school. [I hope] they have a group of people or a circle of friends that they can connect with.”

We have also had quite a few new and returning teachers join us this year, all eager for the year ahead.

“The students and staff are incredible. I came in quite nervous for this job, but the staff has been so welcoming and helpful and the students have been so engaged in their classes,” said Mr. Moore, a new electives teacher.

The thing that most of the new teachers have struggled with is getting ready for their classes every day. [Continues on Page 10](#)

Seventh to Senior

By: Sabrina Madruga

As the new school year begins, the halls of Jefferson Academy are bustling with both the old faces of the returning seniors and the new faces of seventh-grade students. The classes are able to find common ground in new beginnings (and endings) that are filled with lots of emotion.

"I am excited for senior year," states senior Kate Rock. "It's going to be a little bit stressful, but I think it's all about fun. It will be interesting to try to figure out how to do it all."

Discovering how to juggle everything coming into the final year of high school can be extremely trying. For many seniors, this may be the case. However, others see it from a different point of view.

"It's going good so far," remarks senior Chris Rock as he talks about his senior year. "I do feel like the 'tired' has already kicked in, though."

There are still many advantages to senior year. These include freedoms that provide many opportunities to thrive in an academic environment while preparing for other life adventures they may go on after high school.

"I definitely feel it's fewer classes, and so you get more of those electives that you want to do," comments Chris Rock. "I am going to take musical theater and choir at the same time, so it's more of what I want to do."

While this is the end of an era for the seniors, it is a fresh start for the seventh graders at

Jefferson Academy. This new beginning has a very prevalent common theme of anxiety and independence amongst the seventh graders.

"I like [the secondary] a lot," says seventh grader Olivia Williams. "I think that it's more nerve-racking because there's a lot of older people walking around and it's a lot bigger, but the best thing is there is a lot more independence."

Being new to the secondary school as seventh graders allows for large amounts of growth, with the end result being the seniors in their final year. This maturity means growing up, taking the opportunity to make new friends, enjoying new experiences, and learning new things. The social aspect of making the transition to the secondary is an example of this growth and maturity.

Seventh grader Nate Leschuk mentions, "I get to make new friends because I get to see other people who are not just my classmates. It's much easier to make friends this year."

So whether you are a seventh grader walking the halls of JA for the first time, or a senior foregoing your last semesters, the year is sure to be full of opportunities to have fun, learn, and make new friends.

Jake Duncan, seventh grader, additionally stated, "JA is a much better school in my opinion. There's just better people, better teachers, and the learning is much more flexible. I just really like everyone here. It feels like I'm growing up, which is really nice."



Shadow

By: Gianna Gagliano

Over the summer, numerous seniors had the opportunity to delve into their future as they gained more knowledge about specific career interests. The seniors were required to complete a 40-hour work-study that involved full immersion in their chosen career. This was all done in preparation for their subsequent senior seminar class that includes a thesis paper and presentation.

By completing these work studies, many seniors were able to make crucial observations about their given job shadow. They were able to decide if it is something that still grabs their interest, or if they would rather go in a different direction. This also allowed them to gain insight as to what they want their future to look like.

"My job shadow was really fun and made me really want to explore more options in my



chosen field," states senior Leia Michel. "I was able to really see what marine biology is all about."

However, some seniors did not get around to completing their job shadow over the summer. This changes their senior seminar course and eventual grade. However, this decision also impacts their knowledge about their career interest.

"I did my job shadow; however, I feel like it would definitely make the process a lot harder," says senior Lauren Hiatt. "It is definitely possible to not do it though, and that would allow you to explore even more job options outside of the barriers of a job shadow."

These 40-hour work studies are all done to discover a problem within the field of work or future trends within that job. These problems are then utilized to create the big end-of-quarter presentation and paper worth a solid chunk of the seniors' final grades. This can cause significant amounts of stress and anxiety surrounding the class.

"I am slightly nervous about the presentation and paper," says senior Shaelee Torres. "But, we have many resources and help available to us in class, so it should not be too difficult."

Best of Both Worlds

By: Kris Kientz

As the school year sweeps in, students are looking to join different programs and become involved in their community. Jefferson Academy can seem disconnected from the rest of the world at times, but the school offers several opportunities that are distinctive to itself. Students are able to reach a higher level of academic achievement while still following their



passions and playing sports.

One unique opportunity JA offers is the Warren Tech program. High school juniors and seniors can sign up to spend half their day at the Warren Tech campus for an entire semester. There, students can study a specific trade or topic they are interested in and gain experience. Junior Samantha Hirsh is currently a culinary student at Warren Tech. She believes it is an incredible program that JA offers, and is grateful that she can get the JA experience while still following her passions.

"I wake up for the day and I'm ready to do something new," Hirsh comments. "Doing



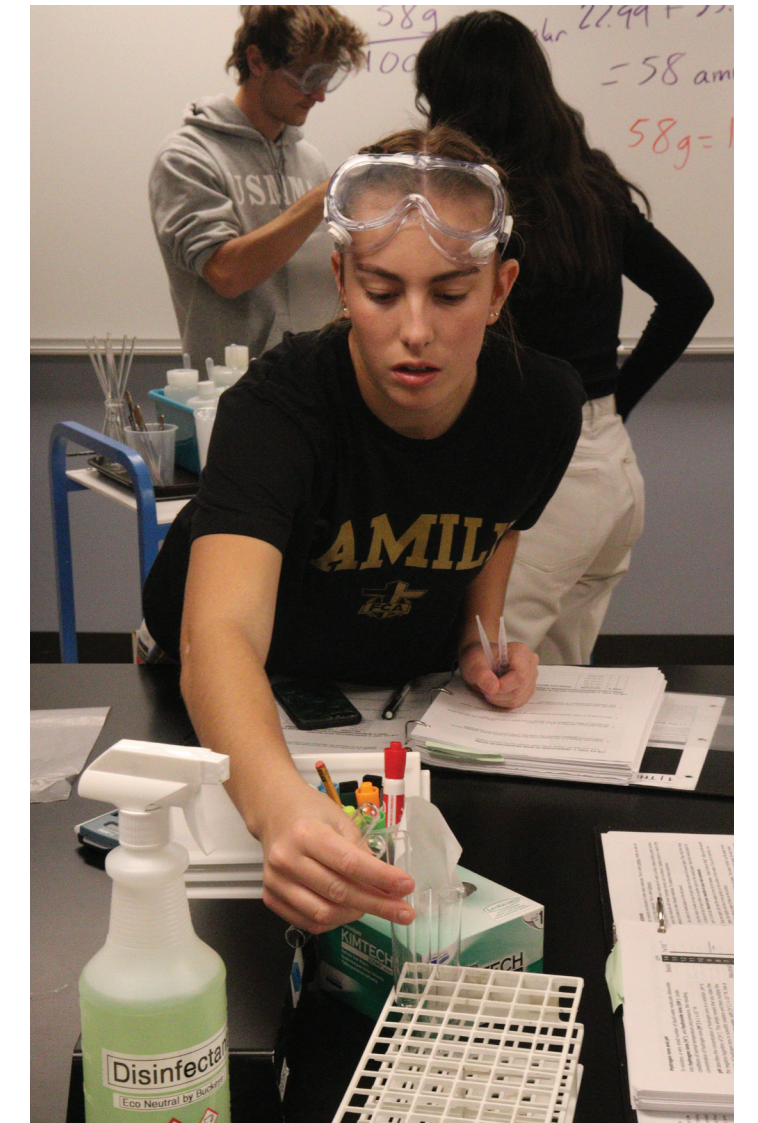
hands-on work makes me feel more productive. Cooking isn't always easy, but I'm excited to learn more while still attending JA. It's a really great experience."

While Warren Tech is one of the more obvious opportunities offered at school, it is not the only one. Jefferson Academy also offers various college courses that students can take through Front Range Community College. Several teachers at JA are certified to teach these courses, and it allows students to graduate high school with several college credits. Junior Sarvesh Satheesh Kumar has taken several college courses over the years, and he is in quite a few this year too.

"I enjoy college classes," Satheesh Kumar states. "I get to experience a higher level of education, and all the college teachers keep the workload reasonable. I think it is great that JA

is offering us a way to get ahead of the curve." JA focuses largely on academics and future careers, but it also provides a space for athletics. Student-athletes at a college prep school can often go overlooked. The list of sports at JA is quite short, but the school offers the Advantage program for athletes interested in sports not offered. Several students compete for Standley Lake or Pomona High School in sports like swimming, football, rugby, ultimate frisbee, and much more. Junior Evelyn Claeys is on Standley Lake's swim team and enjoys the experience.

"Sometimes I feel like moving schools with my sport because I would know everyone on the team better and relate to them," Claeys explains. "But, JA lets me take the classes I want while still playing the sport I love. I wouldn't trade that in for anything."



Maestra to All

By: Benjamin Schumm

Spanish, Sources of Strength, and Psychology! Oh my!

Over two decades ago Mrs. Dasta was going through her daily routine when she was approached by a member of the JA office staff who knew she spoke fluent Spanish. She accepted the offer to become a long-term Spanish substitute teacher without knowing it would change the rest of her life.

"I think that JA is family," stated Spanish and Psychology teacher Mrs. Dasta. "I've met a lot of great friends, teachers, and colleagues here; it's always just been a very comfortable and warm place for me. More important are the kids that I've met. I've had some amazing students and I think that's what keeps me coming back." You can tell immediately what kind of person Mrs. Dasta is from this description: somebody who cares about students and their wellbeing and really cares about supporting the student body.

"Always know that there's a support team for you," Dasta reminds. "If you feel like you're overwhelmed, go get help. Teachers, counsel-



ors, whoever it is." Not only a teacher, Mrs. Dasta runs JA's suicide prevention program Sources of Strength. It speaks volumes about her character that she's willing to step up and discuss these scary

topics with students who might be struggling. She urges students to talk to trusted people about anything they're struggling with, be it school-related, social, or personal.

"Growing up in Arizona, I used to look forward to every September for our county fair, which was a big deal in the small town I grew up in," Dasta

recounts. "I loved just being able to spend time with my friends."

The relatable teacher understands wanting to hang out with friends. It was one of her favorite things to do in high school. While she does recognize the appeal of friends, however, she cautions new students to not forget about their studies.

"Freshmen especially, take your schooling seriously because it goes by really fast. Don't get overwhelmed with everything that is before you."

Fresh Faces Cont.

Ms. Swaney, a new science and electives teacher stated, "There's a lot, a lot of prep work I have to do. Every night, I'm at school 'til at least five and then I go home and I keep working."

The biggest goal for the new teachers is to make an impact in their students' lives.

"I'm really just trying to make a difference in kids' lives and help them feel successful, like they can do anything," said Ms. Moyer, a new math interventionist teacher.

While teaching students is their job, they seek to form personal connections with their stu-

dents, too.

"I want to try to build relationships, try to get to know students a little bit better and make some connections. I want to do a good job for the school and for our administration," said Mr. Porreco, a P.E. and electives teacher.

This year will be challenging and unpredictable, but there are many fun things to look forward to within the year.

Ms. Morris, a new librarian mentioned, "I want to start some fun initiatives, like student initiatives in the library. So that is a big goal that we're working on."



were out there working for hours and it shows."

These parking spaces are a perfect opportunity for students to have the freedom to create something lively and personal while having fun painting with friends. "I think the senior parking spots gave us a great way to bond and start off the new year with a fun event. It was very enjoyable to see each person's creativity," said Marina Munir.

Every senior had different inspirations and ideas for their space which created a beautiful diversity among the spots.

Stori Blois shared a bit on her process by saying, "I got my 'inspo' from Pinterest. I just took a basic design and made it my own by adding different colors. I thought it turned out cute though."

Being able to create your own design for the spot is not the only draw for these special spaces. Having a designated place that only you can park in is another big reason the seniors enjoy their spots.

"I decided to get a spot because I wanted to have a reserved spot close to the front doors," said Dustin Reidy. Chandler Cline added, "I really like that I'm guaranteed to have a spot close to the school every day."

Spotted

By: Mackenzie Estep

The JA parking lot truly is a colorful sight to see. The gorgeous decorations, courtesy of this year's seniors, were completed the week before school began. The JA senior tradition of painting parking spots, while recent, is one of the most famous and enjoyed.

Senior Ari Kozlowski shared her thoughts on it: "I've always loved looking at the parking spots of the seniors, and to be honest, I never considered not doing it. It is just such an iconic part of senior year I couldn't miss out on."

This year the seniors were so excited that the participation was off the charts with over 60 total spaces.

Student Body President, Mark Leoni said, "We actually ran into the problem of not having enough spots for some people, which I think is indicative of the turnout. I also think that they were probably the best-looking spots, people

Music Matters

By: Jordan Leshuk

Open stage, bright lights, music until their heart's content, community bonding, and fun moments are what Tri-M is all about. Tri-M focuses on how to express musical talent and gives people a safe and friendly environment to learn new instruments on top of being able to freely play the instruments that they already know.

Tri-M reaches out to students from freshmen all the way through our seniors. It gives people the chance to play any instrument in front of the student body and display their musical talent on stage.

E. Fisk shared, "It is a place where people are interested in music and people who have a passion for music can meet." Tri-M has built a community where individuals can interact with each other and share what they enjoy with everyone around them. Fisk also states that "it can exercise your skills and abilities."

Being in this club gives students the chance to share what they love, whether that is singing, playing piano, guitar, bass guitar, or any other instruments, and people can even try new instruments too. Even if someone is not in high school, they can still come to the Open Mic Nights to show off their talent. One other thing Tri-M does is an Induction Night which allows

students to listen and hear everyone play. Any one can participate! It is one of Fisk's favorite things that Tri-M does.

He says that it is his favorite because "it is usually pretty organized and you get to hear everyone's songs and what they have been working on."

Chris Meier also shared her views about Tri-M. She is in her 3rd year with Tri-M and she originally became interested in Tri-M after a senior was going around and looking for incoming freshmen. She knew how to play piano so she decided to join and she enjoys it very much. She says, "It is more than an honor society, it's more of a community, and we are just trying to support musicians at J.A. and make it so we all have a collaborative experience and expand those music opportunities."

There are many fun things to do event-wise. Students get to participate in Valograms, Trick or Treat Street, Fall Fest, and a parade. One experience Meier was able to have was after an open mic night, she and some other members of Tri-M went to an IHOP for 3 hours. She said, "It's really cool as an underclassman, like I was that year, to get to know upperclassmen and especially when they're such a big musical inspiration for you."



Governing StuCo

By: Rylan Mills

With a new year has come new change in Student Council (StuCo), and with that some new ideas and challenges. "As someone who has advised student groups for over 20 years at the college level, it felt like a wonderful opportunity to work with JA students in a different way than I currently was and apply the skill set that I had in my previous jobs." Ms. LeValley is one of the new advisors for StuCo and she is more than excited to kick off the school year with her new position.

StuCo will hit the ground running this year as Homecoming is right around the corner. StuCo will be in charge of planning the dance and getting students excited with spirit days and activities leading up to the dance.

Homecoming may be the biggest priority for StuCo, but it isn't the only one. StuCo will work on making things better at school and is in charge of doing the morning announcements and making sure every student knows what is going on at school for that week with the weekly calendar by the senior lounge. StuCo has also managed to get the vending machines back in operation, opening the drink vending machine early in the school year.

"JA Student Council has such a phenomenal history, and I am very enthusiastic to work with students and continue the

good work!" exclaimed Ms. LeValley.

The student officers are also working to make changes to the year.

"We're doing a lot of things that we did last year so we have yet to hit a problem this year," assures Mark Leoni.

This year the Student Council will be under the leadership of Mark Leoni, the student body president, and Maisy Harris, the senior class president.

Leoni plans to change StuCo for the better, having plenty of experience under his belt by being in StuCo all four years of high school and being a part of Junior Council (JuCo) as well.

"It's nerve-racking 'cause you're suddenly leading a club every day that has 55 people and that's a lot but it also means that I can try to do things better, I can lead the student body and Student Council in the right direction,"

Team First

By: Madeline Scoggins

As the softball team enters their second year of the program, a lot has changed since last year, but the team has high expectations and they are working hard to improve and meet their goals for the new season.

“Since last year, a lot of things have changed. Our seniors graduated, and we lost some very valuable players. We also made a head coach change, but honestly, the team has been in a better spirits this season and we are all growing closer as a team,” says Sophomore Aubrey Cox.

This being the second year of the program, changes have also been put in place. The team is improving and adjusting to the new coaches. Coach Lang has moved up to head coach this season after the team’s head coach from last year had to move. This left an open spot for an assistant coach as well until Mr. Mellott stepped into the position. They’ve been doing well and introducing new drills and goals for the team to work toward, hoping to make it further into the playoffs this year.



“If I could change something it would be the fact that we barely have enough people for a team,” states Freshman Ellie Arnold.

The softball team had hoped to gain more players than they had last year, though after losing valuable players over the summer not many people joined the team this fall. With only 10 players they have been trying hard to improve and be at their best for this year’s season.

“It has been a blessing and a curse all at the same time; with only 10 players, there is a lot of opportunity for everybody. It has been difficult because we have to be very cautious of keeping the athletes on the field. This includes eligibility, injury, etc. If we are missing even just two players, we would have to forfeit the games,” says Assistant Coach Mellott.

“It was a lot different to begin with, but I’ve honestly liked the changes a lot. I think every season is going to be a little different, but this season has just taught me to adjust and be grateful for where I’m at,” says Aubrey Cox.



Fresh Start

By: Abigail Stephens

The ball flies through the air as the new season kicks off, but where is it headed? JA’s Boys’ Soccer Team continues to progress, but they’re off to what can only be described as a “rocky start.” As of September 11th, the varsity team has lost three games and tied three others.

There has yet to be a single win. However, the team remains positive. “It looks a little rough right now,” explains varsity player Jayden Bilby. “The seniors that brought us to the playoffs last year have graduated so now we’re a team of freshmen.” Among the varsity ranks are nine freshmen, five sophomores, five juniors, and three seniors.

The player’s opinions of the season so far vary greatly, with the fresher faces having a more positive outlook. “We had a good tie with Peak to Peak,” recounts varsity player Troy Brown. “They were state championship runners [last

year].” The newer players have expressed their satisfaction with their performance so far, while the older players were hoping for more.

Despite some disappointments, the co-captains remain positive. “I think it’s going pretty good,” remarks co-captain Asher Bieser. “As a young team we are starting to learn how we are going to have to play throughout the year.” He also mentions that the older players are “used to a different style of playing and are used to a much better win-to-loss ratio.”

In addition to the new players, there is also a slight change in leadership within the team. Head Coach Cassell has stepped down, favoring the assistant coach position so he can make it to his own son’s soccer games.

Some players say they feel the difference while others do not. “He’s not always there anymore,” explains varsity player Dylan Stoner. “I feel like when he’s gone, the focus of the team is not always at one hundred percent.”

Regardless of the new changes, the soccer team plays on. “I’m excited for the next year,” states co-captain Bieser. “My goal is to make the playoffs.”

Going the Distance

By: Rylan Mills

While most people shy away from the thought of running, a select group of JA students find the thought of running fun. These students are among the 36 athletes on the Cross Country team, varying from underclassmen racing for the first time to upperclassmen veterans who are looking for a chance to run after high school.

“As a captain, I believe I have the responsibility to be a leader for the girls’ team, help the whole team grow closer together, and to be a positive role model for the underclassmen and other runners who are new to the team,” captain Valera Noland states.

Noland will team up with Maya Ross this year as the girls’ team captains, both of whom are very enthusiastic to begin the season. The girls’ team will include returning varsity girls Sarah Welsch, Kennedy Stadler, and Leyna Gibson as well as new freshmen who are eager to race. The girls started their season strong, placing third in the Broomfield Battle with Maya Ross and Leyna Gibson going 12th and 13th.

“I am really excited to just get better and watch my teammates succeed as well!” Noland says, expressing her excitement for her senior season.

The boys placed second in their league championship last season and third in their regional championship, and are ranked fifth in 3A for this upcoming season. The varsity boys are all returning from last year. These athletes include Sean Beasley, Rylan Mills, Aden Garza, and Levi Hinson.

“I want all the boys to be fast, especially varsity boys (possibly junior varsity boys), so you definitely have to cheer them on. You have to support them especially when they don’t believe in themselves,” captain Sean Beasley states.

The standards have been set high with head coach Ben Hershelman stating that “we want to win every meet every week. That’s the easiest answer. It’s not untrue, but my biggest goal for our teams this year is to race to our absolute highest potential.”

