

The



Signal

The Official Newspaper of Fenton High School

Friday, February 25, 2022

Senior Karim Zaggoti Selected as QuestBridge Match Scholarship Recipient

**By Erica Ayala and
Chrystyna Prokulevich**

At the beginning of the school year, some Fenton students applied for the QuestBridge Scholarship program through a rigorous application process. College and career counselor Mrs. Rachel Georgakis helped all of these students apply.

She explains, "QuestBridge is a program that connects talented students with financial need to highly regarded colleges."

Karim Zaggoti, being the student who was matched and selected with one of the schools, "submitted his initial application in September. He was then selected as a finalist in October. As a finalist he had to list which colleges he would be interested in attending and write several more essays. He was then selected as a Match Scholarship recipient in December."

And through a difficult process Karim continued to keep his head up and await the very nerve wracking answers.

Karim shared his experience with the process, "The Questbridge

scholarship experience was extensive but not complicated. I had already done the work; it was just a matter of showing and expressing my abilities and hard work throughout my four years at high school...I'm grateful for Questbridge allowing low-income, high achieving students to attend a college of their choice and alleviate the worry of the financial aspect of college."

Karim has done a vast amount of activities and has constantly taken rigorous courses that ultimately prepared and got him to where he is now.

But it isn't just him who helped him through the process, with gratitude Karim adds, "I couldn't have done it without the assistance of Mrs. Georgakis for leading me to this scholarship and helping me through the process. Mr. Berago and Coach Torres have been my mentors and have shaped me to become who I am today."

Through his hard work and constant persistence Karim is now able to start a new chapter in his life. So many of you might be wondering,

what school is Karim going to?

Karim says, "I will be attending Washington University in St. Louis and majoring in Computer Science! I was ecstatic when receiving my match decision email after being selected as a finalist. My family and I celebrated after hearing the news that I had matched with WashU because of the massive and uncertain financial burden it took off of my shoulders. This scholarship will enable me to follow my dreams of becoming a software engineer to bring some positivity and good into the world."

Even through the hardest of times and constant pressure of feeling that good will not come, Karim's story should be a reminder that dreams really do come true.

Georgakis says, "I am so proud of Karim for this amazing accomplishment. He worked so hard not only through the application process, but throughout high school. I know he is going to continue to accomplish great things at Wash U!"

All of Karim's friends and family, and the staff at Fenton are extremely proud of his amazing work.

It is through an incredible work ethic, trust in the process, and knowing that the answers to the start of his dreams are just an arm's reach away.



Photo courtesy of Mrs. Rachel Georgakis

Black Student Union Celebrates Black History Month, Educates the Fenton Community

By Michelle Agyemang

Each February, Black History Month emphasizes the culture and accomplishments of Black individuals around the world. This year, Fenton's Black Student Union (BSU) is working on sharing the importance of this special month around the Fenton campus.

Looking back, the celebration of Black history wasn't always as welcomed in society as it is now. "Black History Month started as Negro History Week in 1926. It was founded because it wasn't common to hear about Black achievements in that era. For most of our country's history, the contributions of Black people have been neglected; in fact, it wasn't until 1976 that President Gerald Ford officially extended it into a month-long celebration. This month allows schools and our nation, as a whole, to celebrate and honor Black people from all periods of U.S.

history. At Fenton, we want to just that and more— because we believe in Black History every day," says BSU sponsor, Mr. Mike Berago.

When asked what the importance of Black History Month is to her, freshman Tamaya Watson shares, "The celebration of Black History Month, to me, is not a time where we shove black history into others' faces; It's a time where we choose to educate others. Change in the society we live in is wanted by many, but the only way to create change is by learning history. Black History Month is a time where we can do just that. This month, although short, is filled to the brim with excitement! BSU is planning on creating lots of social events that are bound to bring people together, have fun, and be educated on the importance of Black History Month. Personally, I'm very excited to see the outcome of all our events for this

month."

Every day of February, a member of the BSU chooses a Black Leader to feature on the daily announcements during bison time. The BSU also plans to team up with the Fenton Flim Club on the Wednesdays of February to watch the movies, *Hidden Figures*, *I Am Bolt*, and *The Hate You Give*.

President of BSU, junior Jayla Spears, continues to describe the possible events saying, "We have music to play, open mics, name that tune, and a bunch of more ideas that will definitely make this Black History Month special."

Along with the fun events happening during February, the BSU is putting a significant emphasis on helping students find their roots.

"We're finding out who we are. The only way you can celebrate something is by finding the meaning of what you're celebrating...the more

you know, the more you grow," says club sponsor Mrs. Flo Brock.

Fulfilling one of its many purposes, the club has encouraged its members to find out their backgrounds and cultures. "It's our legacy. We want people to know who they are and where they come from," says Brock.

The BSU encourages all students to participate in the event and visit their club not just during Black History Month, but for the rest of the year.

"I want the student body to know that BSU is fairly new to Fenton. We're still working the kinks out, but it would be greatly appreciated if we had every black student in attendance at the meetings. I want every black student, not only this month but every other month after that to be a part of BSU and enjoy it too," says Spears.

Fenton Graphics Classes Open New Store, Teaches Students Both Art and Business Skills

By Jenny Aguilar

The Fenton graphics classes is proud to announce the opening of its new graphics store. Students from the graphics two and three classes have been hard at working preparing the launch for their first ever online store.

Graphics teacher Mrs. Lauren Lemm, explains how this store came into fruition at the start of 2020, saying, “I applied for a grant and got it. We were about to start but the pandemic hit. I decided to apply again and got \$300 from the Bensenville Arts Council to start our business.” With this money, the students had a starting budget to spend on products which is, as Lemm points out, “not [normal] for most companies.”

The store consists of stickers, rubber bracelets, mugs, keychains, and tumblers, all of which are personalized with either colors, names, characters or anything else the customer desires. Fenton crest t-shirts will also be made available for purchase. All the profits will go directly back to the students. Senior Colin Aguilar, one of the students involved in the store’s creation, highlights how “customers should definitely try and take advantage of our flexibility when it comes to customization. All our designs are basically handmade,

which means we can put whatever you’d like on them.”

This new store not only offers a variety of items for the Fenton community to purchase, but it also gives the students involved the opportunity to learn about what it takes to create a business. Lemm states, “I wanted kids to be able to be independent and run their own business independently, and still have fun. They are level two and three students so they have been with me for a couple of years.”

Aguilar gives an insight into what it has been like starting this business, saying, “The process of starting the business has been fun. It has been an interesting challenge to try and come up with ideas for products while also trying to fit a budget at the same time. My first idea was too expensive, so I had to adapt and find ways to do things that would be a benefit to the entire group...It was definitely rewarding, however, to find a way to make myself useful despite not having ended up doing exactly what I thought I would be doing.”

As the students prepare for the launch of their store, Lemm looks into what she hopes for the future: “I would love to make this a year-round

thing [where] they are constantly making a profit. Our goal is to have students go into the bookstore and [be able to] buy the cheapest thing to have Fenton gear.”

Aguilar also states, “Future customers should know that the store is a great opportunity to get something interesting and unique

without having to order it online for an inflated price.”

Customers will be able to place their orders via the QR code google form where they will also be able to specify their unique customizations. More information will be put on the announcements in the coming weeks.



Graphic courtesy of Lauren Lemm

Fenton Approves Senior Open Lunch; Students, Staff Agree Off-Campus Pilot Program is a Success

By Chrystyna Prokulevich

This has definitely been a year for a lot of change here at Fenton. From new renovations to blended learning, we have seen it all. But one of the most recent and well-appreciated ones is the open campus lunch pilot program.

Fenton has been allowing senior students to leave campus during their lunch periods and be able to take time for themselves during the school day. This has been a long awaited program that many students have been asking for.

Assistant principal Ms. Eileen Roberts gave some insight on why the program started.

She says, “This is a great opportunity to give something to the Senior class during the pandemic.”

By being able to give the seniors a choice and opportunity to take time for themselves during a long day is a great way to start creating some lenience and trust with the students.

The staff is proud of how the students are handling it by always making sure they are aware of the

amount of time they go out for.

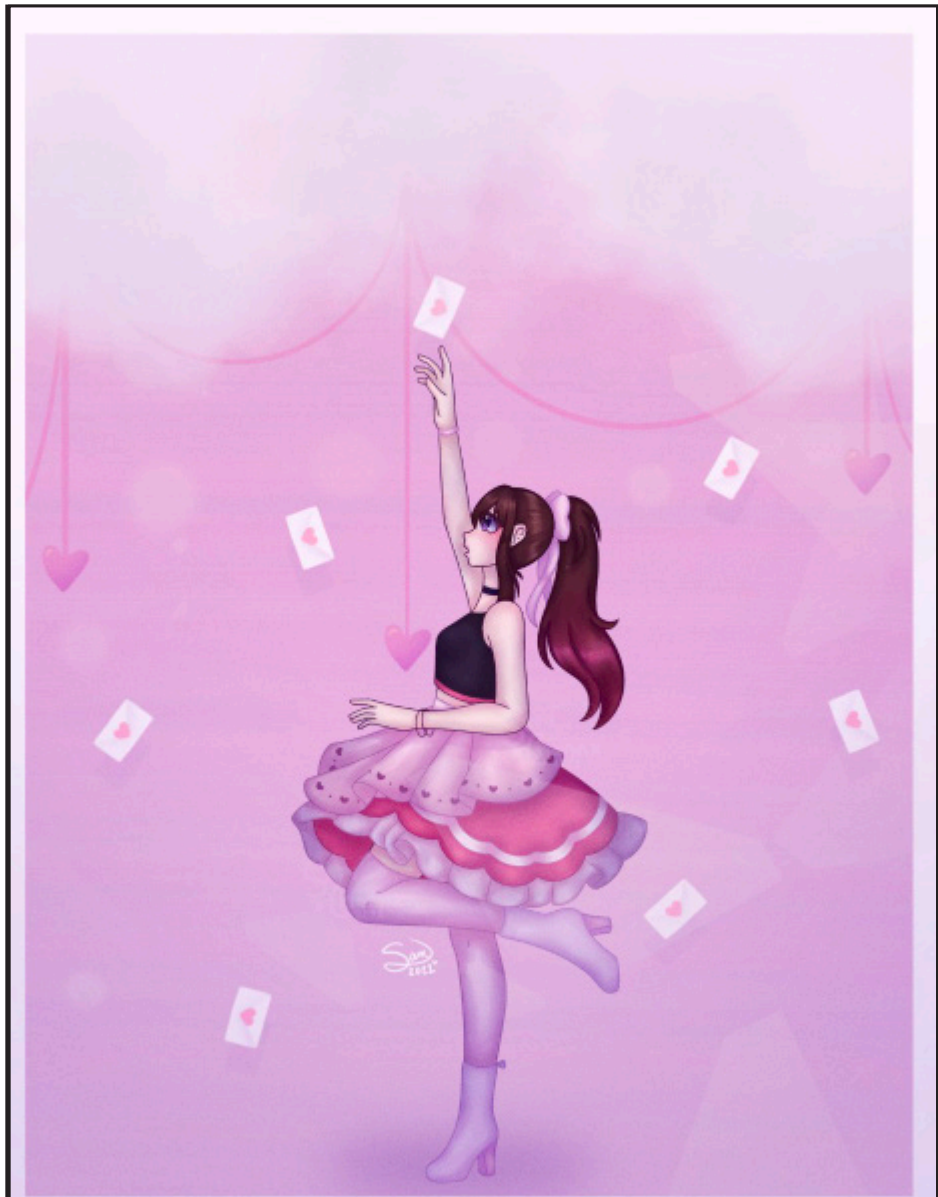
Roberts states, “The senior lunch program is going well! We have very responsible students that go out for lunch and return on time.”

The question of whether or not this program will be continued onto the next school year for 2022-23 is still up in the air.

Through the process of having “The Administrative team [continuing] to monitor and make [recommendations] closer to the beginning of the school year,” is how the program will be determined if it will stay or not.

When asking other seniors, they enjoy having this opportunity to go home and be able to have a break in their busy days.

Many seniors are already taking on very difficult coursework, and being able to have about an hour all to themselves is something that is very appreciated. By respecting the rules and making sure to come back for their next classes, seniors are helping ensure this opportunity is available to the students next year.



Cartoon by Samantha Lang

Speech Team: The Ups, Downs, and Turn-Arounds of the 2021-2022 Season

By Xochitl Quiñones

Stale pizza selling for \$5; kids talking to inanimate objects; adults doing mental calculations as they watch numbers flood their phone screen: Welcome to a Speech Tournament.

If you had asked me my freshman year where I saw myself in four years, I hardly would have said a state-qualifier in public speaking, yet, here I am, and I'm not alone.

Seniors Karissa Lara, Evelyn Perez, and Carolina Rosas (as well as myself) advanced 6 events to the State Tournament in Peoria. Returning State Champion Karissa Lara advances two events, Poetry Reading (an 8-minute performance of published poetry) and Informative Speaking (an 8-minute informative speech about any subject). Evelyn Perez advances Special Occasion Speaking and Carolina Rosas advances Humorous Interpretation (a humorous, 8-minute performance where she plays all the characters in her story), which she placed 6th for at State Finals last year. Meanwhile, I advance in Radio Speaking and Original Oratory. But before State, obviously, there was a lot of work, memories, laughs, and tears that got us there.

Head Coach Nicole Hendricks recalls fondly of, "[Senior] Muhamed Rojba inviting Feinberg and me to his Impromptu round and winking at us as he performed. It was both totally creepy and hilarious that he felt comfortable to give his speech so easily while goofing around. Somehow, he got the 1 in that round!"

Given that Impromptu required Rojba to put together a seven-minute speech that interprets a famous quote, it's clear that his talent was sufficient to still coexist with his sense of humor.

Coach Melissa Feinberg shares that her biggest pride is regarding "the team's resiliency and openness to new ideas... For many reasons, we did a lot of event switching this year... It was so refreshing to see so many members step up and trust their coaches. That trust is so valuable, and it's always meaningful when a student chooses to place that trust in their coach and in themselves as a performer."

But, of course, Speech isn't *just* competing- it's also most renowned for the bonds teammates and coaches make with each other.

Sophomore Febe Reyes states that some of her fondest memories were when she was at "team bonding at IHOP", referencing a tradition of teammates going to IHOP to celebrate the long day at Conference (which has had the Fenton Speech Team as Champ for the past three years straight).

Thankfully, the pandemic has not had the strain one would have assumed it would have on the camaraderie between teammates.

Despite the pandemic, we have all managed to find time and places for dinner after tournaments, a Thanksgiving banquet, and a White Elephant, bringing all of us together for countless memories we still laugh (and cry) about.

Junior Angel Santiago recounts that his "favorite memory wasn't just winning regionals, but watching so many seniors who worked so hard this entire season to make it to state. I'm so proud of how well our team has done this year, I'll definitely miss all of you."

Junior Tera Pabico shares the sentiment, explaining how "the hundreds of hours Xochitl and I spent together, preparing our speeches every weekend for three years straight is something I'm definitely going to miss next year. I'll never forget getting dirty looks from competitors when we would giggle as we waited to be called up to be given our scripts."

Angel Santiago competed in Humorous Duet Acting (a humorous, 8-minute performance with a partner) and Special Occasion Speaking (a humorous, 8-minute speech that attempts to resolve a social issue) and plans to hopefully continue in these events next year. Tera Pabico competed in Dramatic Duet Acting (a dramatic, 8-minute performance with a partner) and Radio Speaking (4 minutes and 50 seconds to 5 minutes and 5 seconds radio broadcast that is cut and written by competitors 45 minutes before their performance, complete with headlines, transitions, two international, two national, two local, and one sports stories, as well as commercial, sports scores, weather, and intros and outros) and not only enjoyed her events, but is "so excited to see what the next season will bring!"

Having been a four-year member of the team, it's hard to say goodbye. I have had the honor of trying 7 of the 14 events during my time in speech, and of those, I'm proud to say I was able to advance two to state and three to sectionals. Being in Radio Speaking for three years and Original Oratory (an 8-minute persuasive speech) for a little over a month has truly changed my life. I can't begin to explain the growth I've seen in not just myself, but my team in general. The seniors who were all shy and scared freshmen are now the most incredibly confident, multi-talented, and funniest young adults I know. The juniors and sophomores who I distinctly remember helping guide for the past two years are now getting ready to step in as leaders and mentors for the next season. The freshmen who were a little lost at the start of the season have already begun to find their way through the (sometimes) overwhelming world of speech.

Senior Karissa Lara is in the same boat, sharing that what she

"loves about speech is how positive and fun the atmosphere is. I always feel like I have people rooting for me to be the best version of myself and that positivity is what makes doing what we do so fun and worthwhile!"

There are a lot of feelings that come to mind with the phrase "public speaking"-- for most people, it's a mix of fear, embarrassment, and dread. For Speech kids, public speaking and speech itself take a completely new meaning. Karissa Lara expresses that "speech team means being constantly surrounded by talented and goofy kids who dress in suits for 12 hours straight."

Senior Dylan Orlik, a member of this year's state-qualifying PIR (Performance in the Round-- an event where a 15-minute play is performed for an audience who sits in an outer circle), agrees, revealing that "the speech team has given [him] an amazing chance to meet new people! During [his] short time in PIR, [he's] been lucky enough to share memories... and allowed [him] to develop new friendships and learn more about [himself] and conquer a fear of speaking in front of large audiences."

Every Speech competitor

shares a few distinct memories: it's an early Saturday morning in the winter and it's snowing. As you get on the bus, you feel the nausea settle in your stomach as excitement floods your veins. As you walk into the host school, you're hit with a wall of warmth and as you walk down the halls towards the cafeteria, in search of a table to be your team's home away from home, you see kids talking to lockers, practicing their scripts.

Maybe you see a competitor desperately trying to lint roll as they also struggle to slip into their competition shoes. My personal favorite is the bus ride home. Hearing the clinks of medals as your teammates finally relax after a long day of (fake) crying, consuming overpriced concessions, and, of course, speaking. Although speech tournaments are well known to cause immense feelings of anxiety, stress, and tiredness, they have also been well known to create the most wonderful, amusing, and sentimental memories among teammates.

Welcome to the World of Speech. Here, we say it like we mean it and mean it when we say it. We hope you stay awhile.



Photo courtesy of Xochitl Quiñones

Varsity Girls Basketball Season Produces Fenton All-Time Record for Wins

By Chrystyna Prokulevich

Close your eyes. Imagine a gym filled with a crowd of people cheering your team on, “Fen-Ton, Fen-Ton!!” Running back and forth, passing the ball, trying to get it in through the hoop that holds so much glory. Ten seconds on the clock. Your heart starts pumping, the nerve starts kicking in. Five seconds. You don’t think you are going to make it. Three. The ball is here. Two. You shoot. One. You score! The crowd goes wild! The cheers are exploding, everyone who supports you is there to share your successes with you! This feeling, the one where the world is twirling and the power of knowing that you did it, is something that the Fenton Girls Varsity Basketball team has felt so passionately this season. Not only have they had an amazing season, but they are also able to add the title of being the team to break Fenton’s record for most wins! The girls were on fire and have consistently shown that they are unbreakable when playing together.

When talking with Coach Dave Mello, I truly could tell how passionate and proud he was of these girls. He wrote, “This is a season that won’t ever be forgotten. What these 11 girls accomplished this season is something that can never be taken away. They openly talked about having a really good season as we finished camp last June. Then, to come out and overcome just about every obstacle that was placed in front of them and to finish with 26 wins just speaks to the character of these

girls.” After a challenging year, the entire team of girls were not capable of having a normal season during 2020-2021, as many other athletes have faced as well, they have shown that passion for a sport that they truly love is what counts. No matter what, when they step foot onto the court they are always trying their best and lifting each other’s spirits. Watching them play is like watching a fire up in flames, they are connected and with so much drive and determination. Coach Mello takes the words right out of everyone’s mouths by saying, “The girls never used any excuses as to why they couldn’t do something, they just went out and gave their maximum effort to get the job done.”

The varsity team consisted of four seniors, four juniors and three sophomores. The age range is certainly large, but that did not matter, because they were close no matter what. Senior Hailey Miller says, “This season was so much fun to be part of! Our team worked extremely hard at practices, and it showed in our games. We always encouraged each other, and I think being friends on and off the court really benefited our performances.” I asked Hailey if she felt as though the girls felt like her family and she replied, “For sure!” She really made it obvious that the team had an undeniably strong bond that they made sure to continue to grow whenever they were with one another. “We always encouraged each other, and I think being friends on and off the court really benefited our performances.” What these girls

have, is something that it takes most teams a very long time to actually find. Anyone watching can certainly see that they are more than just a team.

So when it came down to how they reacted to the unbeatable record that they created, let’s just say that not only was the team ecstatic and certainly very emotional, but the crowd was through the roof. The game had a packed gym, and support from all over town. Classmates, friends, parents, teachers, staff members, and so many others had joined the Lady Bison to watch their winning game and celebrate all together. They won it like a true family! Hailey says, “I am so proud of us for breaking the school record for wins and earning 2nd place in the Upstate Eight conference.” With a doubt these girls have made a name for themselves, and have shown the importance of family,

true sportsmanship, and their high quality of athleticism. And although the season may have come to an end, Coach Mello’s words highlights what the important factor of the whole season was, “Many special memories were made this season. As Coach Lawson told them after the last game, ‘you probably won’t remember all the specific numbers from this season but what you will remember are all the great times you had together.’ The memories of this season will carry on with all of us for a very long time.” Memories and bonds are what last you a lifetime. The Lady Bison have certainly shown us all what it means to be a family. The fact that they are also the team to break the Fenton High School record, is just an amazing bonus, and proof of their hard work. Great job ladies, you really have outdone yourselves!

Fenton High School 16th Annual “So You Think You’re All That?” Talent Show!

By Dalila Perez

Busy March 3, 2022? WELL DON’T BE!! Fenton’s 16th annual Talent Show is just around the corner. Grab some friends and watch your peers show off their special talents. Acts such as choreographed dances, musical numbers, comedic performances, and more will be put on. Come see the magnificent talent Fenton has in store for you!

Date: March 3, 2022
Time: 5:00 pm
Location: Fenton Auditorium



Stock photo from Unsplash.com



Cartoon by Samantha Lang

Ignite Takes Annual Ice Camp Trip, Chance to Bond Spiritually

By Michelle Agyemang

On the weekend of January 24th, Fenton's non-denominational Christian Club, Ignite, took on the cold during their annual trip to Ice Camp. Ice Camp is held at the Miracle Camp and Retreat Center, which is located in Lawton, Michigan, on Bankson Lake.

During their trip, the club had the opportunity to participate in fun activities like snow tubing, archery, broomball, and spend time in the gym and game room. Along with the fun games that come with camp life, the group went to multiple chapel sessions that sparked meaningful conversations.

"My favorite experience from Ice Camp was staying up late with some of the other girls. We talked on a deep level, and having those conversations reminded me how much I need deeper connections in my life," says senior Ally Durkowski.

The ultimate goal of Ice Camp is to have both students and leaders strengthen their relationship with Christ and increase their faith.

"It's one thing believing in Christ by myself and going to Ignite, but then when we go to Ice camp it feels so good seeing all the other people that believe in what we as Ignite believe

in. I felt like what everything prayed for had a stronger foundation," says senior Alexia Barcenas.

Senior Angelina Bottalico shares her experience saying, "My favorite thing about Ice Camp was doing fun activities with my friends, growing our relationships with each other, and building my relationship

with God. I learned that God wants to build a relationship with us despite our sins."

Ice Camp is a time when students have the opportunity to get all the worries and stresses off their chests. The beautiful nature and seclusion that the trip provides is the perfect environment for students

to separate themselves from their everyday lives.

"I have learned that taking kids off campus and spending some interrupted time with them is more powerful than any other activity we do. In the sense that you can really bond with kids because your away from school and it conducive to bonding and people letting their guard down. We are all there with the same goal in mind to be together to share some quality time and get to know each other even more," says sponsor Marty Erickson.

Talking about his experience as a sponsor, Mr. Simon Sanchez says, "Every year is different, there is always a different group of students going with us. One thing that really surprises me is how willing students are to open up certain topics or struggles they go through. It has been really encouraging to see students express them and not hold it in."

"It's a good time for people to feel spiritually recharged. To throw off everything that distracting or stress and enjoy the people around you. You really feel present with the people you're with. Even if the students weren't there I would still personally grow. It's not just for the kids. It's for me too," says Erickson.



Photo courtesy of Simon Sanchez

Student Council Prepares For Blood Drive on March 23rd

By Sarah Guerrero Gorostieta (she/her)

Fenton's Student Council is hosting a Blood Drive this Wednesday, March 23rd, and they are calling you to help!

Any student 16 years or older who meets the weight/height requirements must have a permission slip signed to donate, and they are encouraged to do so, now more than ever in the face of a national blood shortage.

According to the American Red Cross, there has been a 10% overall decline in blood donations since the pandemic began, as well as a 62% percent drop in college and high school blood drives related to COVID-19 complications.

Special education teacher, Mrs. Julia Bray, organizer of Fenton's blood drives, shares her concerns with this matter, and calls for student's and staff's help.

"There really is a huge need for blood," she says. "This national blood shortage is dangerous, as it has forced hospitals to decide which patients are able to receive blood and which ones have to wait, despite their health situations. As drives have been canceled all over the country because of the complications a pandemic brings, we at Fenton want to do our part in helping those who need our blood. Donating is an easy thing to do, an important thing to do, and it will help save lives."

Senior Lili Bermudez encourages the student body that fits the qualifications of a blood donor to take part in this upcoming event, recalling her experience with Fenton's last blood drive in November of 2021.

"Donating blood is a simple way to give back to your community, and the blood drive staff makes sure it is a comfortable and straightforward experience for all."

Bray acknowledges the great results of the last blood drive, and encourages the Fenton Community to rise above our last results in order to support millions of patients in need around the globe.

"We had a really good turnout in November. Walk-in donations played a huge role in meeting and surpassing our goal that day, and we're hoping to see a rise in donations this next month."

Donations will begin at around 7am and will go all the way until 2 pm. Students are able to sign up for an appointment using QR codes that will be posted around the building, but walk-ins are welcome throughout the school day as well.

BLOOD DRIVE



Hope springs
eternal

**Wednesday
March**

23

7:00 AM — 1:30 PM

Helpful tip:
Make sure to eat a healthy
meal and drink plenty of
water before donating.

PHOTO ID IS REQUIRED

Email: bray@fenton100.org
with questions.

**Fenton High School-Student Council
BLOOD DRIVE**

1000 W. Green Street, Bensenville
Located in the Front Gym

*You must be at least 16 years old with a signed
permission slip and must meet height/weight
requirements.*

Photo ID is required-you may use your student ID.

Please make an appointment on-line:
<https://bit.ly/BloodDrive3-23-22>

Appointments are preferred; Walk-ins are welcome.



Dance Group *Violet Envy* Covers Popular K-Pop Dances, All Invited

By Samantha Lang (She/Her)

Kpop, also known as Korean Pop, is a popular music genre among many of the students. It not only features catchy songs from amazing creators, but a lot of them also have fun dances to go along with them. Hence why they created a club for it.

Violet Envy is Fenton’s first official Kpop dance group. They do all sorts of dance to all sorts of music, ranging from kpop to normal pop that we all listen to now. If you are interested in dancing, kpop, or are looking for a fun after-school activity, then Violet Envy is the perfect club for you.

Sophomore Anastazja Michalski explains, “Violet Envy is essentially a dance cover club, if there is a dance out there that we like, we learn it as a group and do a proper cover of it. We mostly cover Kpop choreographies, we are a kpop club, but we’re open to any type of choreography.”

Violet Envy meets every Thursday and Friday, though meeting days may vary. They are very

welcoming to any newcomers who would like to watch their practices to get the feel of what they do.

Ms. Demetra Danigeles says, “When I started with Kpop I had no clue what I was getting into. I never heard that kind of music, I didn’t know anything about it, or any of the members. I loved everything about it real quick! We are one of the biggest Frida Kahlo groups here at Fenton and I can see why.”

The group started with nothing, no official meeting place or official sponsor. Now with hard work and dedication, they have all the materials that they needed.

Continuing on, Danigeles mentions, “We are filled with dancers of every level and every personality, and always welcoming new people. It’s such a safe place for them to express themselves through dance and music while having fun doing it, and I am lucky enough to be there and watch it happen. I am so honored to be a tiny part of Violet Envy and can’t wait to see them rock it at the talent show!”



Photo courtesy of Anastazja Michalski

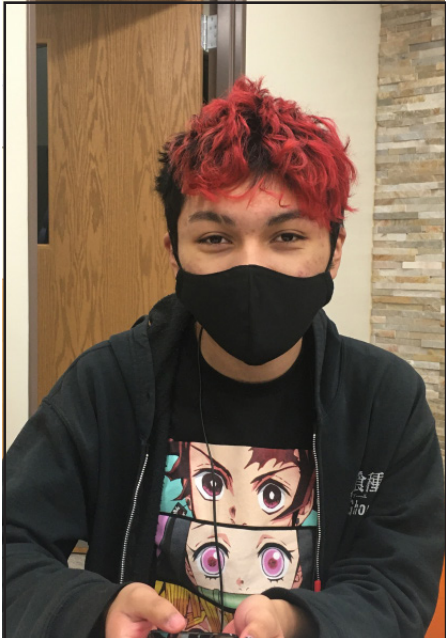
VioletEnvywillbeperforming multiple dances at the upcoming talent show on March 3rd. This club features dancers from all grade levels, the dancers include, Abigail Punsalan, Anastazja Michalski, Ashley Sotelo, Cadence Stoltman, Damary Herrejon, Franchesca Quinto, Lucy Rodriguez, Mariana Hernandez, Mateo Corona, Mia Hernandez, Olivia Beecroft, Pirote Thach, Samantha Lang, and Yessenia Sanchez.

Photo Op: What are You Most Looking Forward to in the Springtime?

By Jenny Aguilar



Febe Reyes '24
“I, as any student is, am looking forward to spring break. We work very hard every day in school and the break will be a great time to practice self-care as well as spend tmoments on our hobbies.



Ismael Saldana '23
“Just going outside again and enjoying the nice weather instead of it being cold.”



Alexa Calderon '24
“Going on walks again and not having to carry my jacket around :)”



Yael Monzalvo '22
“Being able to go outside again in shorts and enjoying the weather.”

Castro Set to Represent *Padres Unidos* at College Board Conference

By Julissa Velazquez

This upcoming April will be a very important month for Fenton High School as one of our deans, Mr. Pedro Castro, will be traveling to New York for a College Board conference. He submitted a proposal to speak about *Padres Unidos*, a parent organization that he has been running here for 11 years. The meetings are held in Spanish once a month to spread information and communication for Latino parents, students, and staff at Fenton.

Presentations led by Castro or others ask parents for input and provide topics such as "Navegando Fenton," which teaches parents how to use PowerSchool.

Mr. Castro stated he is, "excited and honored," to be invited to the conference. He claims he has, "over a decade of time, energy, and relationships that provides knowledge I want to pass on."

At the conference on April 4th and 5th, he is ready to learn from other schools and improve while also providing them with resources.

Castro stated, "I will encapsulate everything I've done and explain the lessons I've learned, the positive and the pitfalls."

Castro is very passionate about *Padres Unidos* as well as other forms of providing resources to Latinos at Fenton. For example, the Bilingual Bison, a yearbook for Fenton staff that includes any staff member who speaks Spanish.

At *Padres Unidos* meetings, Fenton students offer free babysitting for kids which in return earns them community service hours. Food is also available for all who attend.

Castro stated, "go to mass at St. Alexis and invite the congregation to the meetings."

He wants the whole community to feel welcome, not just Fenton parents.

Mr. Castro shared, "I've been in education for over 20 years. I'm a parent too and a lot resonates to my 4 daughters. Your age and education level doesn't make a difference when you have teens."

Many Hispanic students have probably heard the phrase "echale ganas."

Castro expressed how this phrase "says so much but also says so little."

He said, "Spanish speaking parents don't always have the tools to be able to help their kids."

His goal is to provide social and emotional resources.

He explained, "I am proud of the relationships I've established with a lot of parents. Sometimes I know the parents better than I know the student."

There are many benefits to coming to *Padres Unidos* meetings. Families feel comfortable with Castro as well as other speakers such as a doctor with his own practice who attends some meetings.

Castro described him by stating, "he knows his stuff, speaks Spanish, and is very funny. Parents love him." Some presentations given include strategies to open communication as well as parent/student boundaries."

Current world problems are also presented such as heroin and immigration to help make parents more aware.

Castro stated, "The fact that a parent steps in and shows up shows that they care and are interested."

Padres Unidos also includes 1 to 2 field trips where families visit colleges. The whole family is invited as Mr. Castro believes, "little kids value seeing colleges."

The district covers all costs. Door prizes are also given out at each meeting. By signing in at the entrance, you can win a \$15 gift card to AMC or Buffalo Wild Wings.

On this accomplishment, Castro stated, "I couldn't have done this on my own. Fenton parents and the community have given me this wealth of knowledge."



Photo courtesy of Pedro Castro

Be REAL Organizes New Anti-Bullying Campaign: "Be a Force for Good"

By Abby Hernandez

Deans Mr. Pedro Castro and Mr. Jason Madl as well as Be REAL sponsor Mrs. Julia Bray have been organizing an anti-bullying campaign called "Be a Force for Good."

Some of you may be familiar with the term Be Real (Responsible, Engaged, Appropriate Learner), which is what be a force of good branches off of. We want to focus on positive behavior at Fenton through these campaigns. Being a force for good encourages students to be positive citizens, a good people, and model the bison way.

Bray talks about the old stamp system Fenton used to

enforce and encourage positive behavior. "We will switch from stamps to a positive point system in Hero that used to track detentions but now we can use it to also track positive behaviors."

Some may be familiar with the app Hero as all detentions are scheduled through this app, but some may not. A student video will be coming out to show our student body how to log in and check their points.

Through Hero, you can track your positive points and redeem them for prizes. To ensure you don't forget to be a force of good there will be many things around the school with the Be a Force logo to remind you to always be a positive force.



Tennessee School District Bans Graphic Novel *Maus*, Sparks Debate

By Jenny Aguilar

In January 2022, the McMinn County School Board located in Tennessee unanimously voted to remove the graphic novel *Maus* by Art Spiegelman from its school's 8th-grade curriculum. The novel is the first of a two-part biography about Spiegelman's father, Vladek, and his life as a Jewish man in the Holocaust. Representing Jewish people as mice and Nazis as cats, the graphic novel portrays the horrific realities of many Jewish people during the 1930s and 1940s. The McMinn County School Board decided to remove the book on the pretext of the "eight curse words and nude imagery of a woman, used in the depiction of the author's mother's suicide," according to NPR. The novel was banned just days before the National Holocaust Remembrance Week.

Fenton English teacher Mr. Patrick Escobedo, who helped introduce the second *Maus* book, *Maus II*, into Fenton's curriculum, comments on his reaction upon hearing the banning in Tennessee: "I was shocked to hear that the book was banned because I don't feel that the book is controversial. It tells the story of someone who survived the holocaust. When I heard the reasons, I thought they were ridiculous. For students who are 13-years-old, the idea that they would be too sensitive really does a disservice to kids."

Senior Erica Ayala, who read *Maus II* during her freshman year at Fenton, voices her concerns about those in authority omitting information from young people, saying, "I honestly think that it's scary seeing schools and governments censor real information from young people, especially. When history is censored for young people, I feel they are bound to repeat it."

Book bans in the United States date all the way back to 1637 when Thomas Morton's book *US New English Canaan* was made illegal due to its critiques on Puritan customs. Naturally, the majority-Puritan colonies felt it necessary to ban the book. Since then, many institutions, most prominently schools, have prohibited certain literature from being read. Then, in 1982 *Island Trees School District v. Pico*, the Supreme Court ruled that schools cannot ban books based solely on their content. Nonetheless, schools have continued to limit students' access to certain books.

Despite the Supreme Court ruling there is still Currently, there is a lot of ambiguity and confusion when it comes to deeming what books are appropriate for students. Junior Jadyn Golz says, "When it comes to censorship of media, such as books, it's really a question of who gets to decide what is deemed 'inappropriate' for a certain audience. I think many of us can agree that

six-year-olds shouldn't be watching people get shot or sexually assaulted, no matter how true it is. They're just not old enough. So the question is, *when* are they old enough?" Having published her novel *The Journey Home*, Golz understands the difficulties when it comes to how others will perceive books, no matter the content: "I think it's important that people know what happened in history, good and bad. However, I think that there's a proper time to teach things. Of course, people won't agree on what time that is because we all have different opinions..."

While disagreements on how to teach students have been going on for decades, there has recently been an increase over how divisive issues, specifically racism, are taught at schools. Books such as Ibram X. Kendi and Jayson Reynold's *Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You* and *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas are frequently challenged for how they deal with topics like systemic racism in the United States.

However, Fenton Librarian Mrs. Elizabeth Wright has instead brought these sorts of books and more into the spotlight at the ARC. Wright believes it is "an important moment to stand up for leaving anti-racist books on the approved books list." Wright cites Kendi and Reynold's book as one of her favorite frequently challenged books, saying it is "an easy-to-understand history of racist ideas, policies, and actions that have plagued our country for centuries. When I listened to the audiobook version, I felt like Jason Reynolds was taking the time to personally explain to me how racist policies were the root of the problem, leading to racist inequities and damaging ideas... I really appreciated his sincerity and authenticity. He didn't make me (a white woman of privilege) feel condemned, but rather he offers hope for change and suggests practical ways I can be part of that change."

Maus is not the only book that has recently been challenged. On February 1, 2022, The Atlantic published an article listing 14 books who are commonly challenged. Titles include *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood, *Speak* by Laurie Halse Anderson, and *Looking For Alaska* by John Green, which was banned on account of offensive language and sexually explicit scenes. In his YouTube video "On the Banning of Looking for Alaska" Green poignantly states, "Text is meaningless without context."

Other books from The Atlantic's list include *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee and *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison; the former has been a part of Fenton's curriculum as well as Morrison's other novel *Beloved*. Escobedo describes Fenton's approach to these typically banned books, saying, "I

think Fenton has always been very supportive of the teaching staff...We have a curriculum review process that ensures books brought in are done so thoughtfully...We spend a lot of time thinking about text and being mindful if texts are helping students have a powerful with the literature and units we have in class."

Ayala echoes this sentiment, stating, "I think that Fenton has done a good job of teaching books that include sensitive topics. Learning about slavery and the holocaust from books provides us a different perspective that teachers may not always be able to provide. Fenton has never shied away from reading books with topics that may be deemed uncomfortable."

However, Escobedo reveals that Fenton has begun to move away from teaching books such as *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* because of "the problematic portrayal of black characters. Our understanding of race and topics related to that has evolved. There is a growing discomfort of how some of those texts portray black characters." These novels are no longer required to be taught to students, but teachers have the autonomy to decide if they want to teach them because of the importance those novels have to the course as a whole.

Instead, Fenton has looked for more opportunities to showcase stories from a variety of backgrounds, no matter how often those books are challenged. Wright explains how there has been a recent "blossoming of African American writers in YA literature. If I read them, I'm empowered to talk about them. If I book talk them, it is more likely that students will check out those books. Teachers come to me for suggestions of books to read as a class. English teachers have been trying to include more diverse

writing voices, especially minorities." This school year, the AP English IV class forwent reading the classic novel *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck, a white man, in favor of reading *The House of the Spirits* by Isabel Allende, a Latina woman.

Golz also points out, "I think Fenton has done a good job handling traditionally banned books. But, this may also be because I think High School is the appropriate time to expose people to more graphic information like sexual assault in the Holocaust and American Slavery. It's not that I think Middle Schoolers are too young to learn it, I think they're too *immature* to handle the information in the proper way. Subjects like these, no matter how true they are, need to be treated with care. They're fossils, ancient artifacts. In order to learn from them, you have to handle them carefully. But, some people are careless and toss them around. I feel that High Schoolers have the maturity to handle these topics the *right* way."

In response to the Tennessee school district banning *Maus*, a number of groups such as "Fairytale Bookstore", "More in Nashville", and "Nirvana Comics" have offered to donate and lend copies of *Maus* to students in the McMinn County School District. NPR also reports that Davidson College Professor Scott Denham of Holocaust and German Studies has offered free online courses of *Maus* to those students.

As books continue to be challenged and banned, Escobedo reminds us that "every book you read makes you grow. We should always be encouraging growth, supporting it, and engaging it. If you tell someone 'you can't read that', let's talk about why. I really worry anytime a group of people says this is out and away. It really shows a lack of respect in what [students] are capable of understanding."



Cartoon by Ethan Diaz