

# The



# Signal

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## Fenton Celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month with Films, Games, Panel

By Michelle Agyemang

As the month of October comes to an end, we look back on the events of Hispanic Heritage Month. Hispanic Heritage Month is nationally celebrated from September 15th-October 15th. Throughout October, Fenton has been hosting events that celebrate the history, contributions, and traditions of Latinx and Hispanic communities.

The events for this month were planned by a committee of students, teachers, and administrators. The committee met multiple times to brainstorm ideas on how to celebrate the month. Eventually, certain groups were assigned to run a particular event during the month.

The kickoff event to Hispanic Heritage month occurred during all lunch hours. Mexican beverages, Aguas Frescas, were served to all students in the cafeteria courtyard. Later in the month, students had the opportunity to decorate windows in the cafeteria and common area. Students decorated each window with symbols, like celebrities and national highlighting an individual Latin nation. The ARC was decorated with a display that showcased objects that represent various parts of Latin culture. Loteria, a traditional Mexican game, was played during lunch hours.

The Latin Film Festival was also held after school as a tribute to the contributions and achievements

of Latin Americans. The movies "Stand and Deliver," "Selena," and "In the Heights" were played during the festival. All three movies shared stories of success that occurred in Hispanic cultures.

During bison time, a documentary called "Being Eñye" was played for all students to watch. The documentary shared the life of Denise Cox, a first-generation American who made it her mission to provide a community to people born in America to Latin families, or Eñye's.

Following the bison time viewing of Being Eñye, students watched a student panel in the auditorium that consisted of student panelists addressing microaggressions that they have experienced. Along with things that they wish Fenton could improve on.

Senior Alicia Severiano held a significant role in planning the student panel. She commented on her experience, saying, "When choosing people for the panel many of them were hesitant to participate and even before the panel started many of them were still hesitant if they even had anything to talk about or if they say something wrong. But once they got comfortable in the panel you could see their joy and relaxation after they were able to finally talk about their experience. Even after the panel many of them came up to me being happy

they were finally able to share their story and have people listen. That was my favorite part, seeing as they felt heard for once. And even students who went to watch the panel came up to me being happy that they weren't the only ones with those experiences."

Student panelist, senior Xochitl Quinones, comments on her experience during Hispanic Heritage month, saying, "[The panel] was eye-opening- I hadn't realized the extent of trauma I had experienced at school until I was up there, talking about my experience at Fenton. It made me reflect even deeper on interactions that had seemed fine but I realized had actually been racially motivated comments. Hispanic Heritage is incredibly important to be celebrated- although a majority at Fenton, we aren't taken seriously in society due to negative bias. it's important we get positive recognition and light while

also not being stereotyped; it's like there's this crazy caricature going around of Hispanic individuals, especially women. As a Hispanic and Latin woman, I'm either seen as angry and passionate and annoying and overly sexual or as domestic and ignorant and submissive. It's important we break these molds society is always trying to fit us into."

Celebrating Hispanic Heritage is extremely important to fostering a sense of community and inclusiveness within the walls of Fenton. Division Leader of English, Social Studies, and ELL Kate Ward says, "It is important for all of our students to see themselves represented and accepted at school and feel proud of their backgrounds and heritage. We are making concerted efforts at Fenton to spend more time recognizing and celebrating our diversity."



Photo courtesy of Rick Kambic

## Peer Tutoring Now Offered to Students For All Grades, Subjects

By Jadyn Golz

Feel as if you need help in your classes? Do you learn better from someone your own age? Peer tutoring is available at Fenton High School!

Director of Equity and peer tutoring supervisor, Mr. Mike Berago, states, "We want to expand our support for all students as much as possible. We want to reach every corner of the school to support as many kids as possible. The only way we can do that--we're always limited resources right--and the only way we can do that is to leverage our own students. We have a lot of bright kids that have all the capabilities and skills to help their peers. That helps two ways, kids that are doing peer tutoring--the actual tutors--learn the skills to work with other people. To work individually to

help other kids. That also, I think from my perspective, I think that when I'm getting help from someone who is my peer, I might feel more comfortable asking for help than I would from an adult."

If you're struggling and would like to request help from a tutor, go to the Fenton Crest in your chrome extensions. Under "Links" there's a link called "Peer Tutor Request Form" where you can select the subject you'd like help with, and either counselor Ms. Maia Whalen or Berago will set you up with a tutor. From there, you and your tutor can communicate on when and where you'd like to meet.

If you'd like to become a tutor, contact Berago at [berago@fenton100.org](mailto:berago@fenton100.org). It's a great opportunity to help

other students at the school and earn some community service on the way.

Junior Mia Silva explains, "I decided to become a peer tutor, because when I need help I appreciate a peer explaining how to do things because we are on the same wavelength of learning. I also feel like when I help students it's not only allowing other students to reach out for help, but setting a trend in our school as a whole that peers can be a good resource for assistance."

Fellow tutor Kaitlyn Hoffing (Junior) states, "I believe that the other tutors and I are making a positive impact on our school. We may not be able to help a large number of students, but I believe we do a pretty good job tutoring the students that we can."



**FENTON HIGH SCHOOL  
ACADEMIC SUPPORT**

**ARE YOU STRUGGLING  
IN YOUR CLASSES?**

**HELP IS AVAILABLE!**



SCAN THIS CODE TO  
REQUEST HELP FROM OUR  
LEARNING LABS



SCAN THIS CODE TO  
REQUEST PEER TUTORING



**Cartoon by Ethan Diaz**



## New American Sign Language Club Highlights Overlooked Community

By Jenny Aguilar

Fenton students and staff are invited to join the new American Sign Language Club, or ASL Club. Sponsored by Mrs. Melissa Eshelman and created by Senior Carlo Martinez and Sophomores Febe Reyes and Dominika Wandachowicz, the club offers a space for people to explore the sign language community.

Eshelman, who is a special education teacher at Fenton, grew up with two deaf parents who use sign language as their primary form of communication. Eshelman explains, "My dad was born deaf because of the Rh factor which has to do with blood type. Back then, they didn't have the shot to prevent the antibodies from attacking the fetus."

Eshelman's mother lost her hearing when she fell off a stool when she was three years old. "Both [my parents] learned how to sign, and my mom knows Polish sign language."

As a result, Eshelman grew up learning how to sign much before she began to speak verbally. She states, "Interestingly, I had an IEP (Individualized Education Plan) when I was three because of my lack of language and to help with social skills. But after a year with an IEP, I

was just like everyone else."

Martinez was diagnosed with mild to moderate hearing loss at two years old. "My hearing loss has made things a challenge for me; I stopped talking at the age of three for almost a year." However, just two years after his initial diagnosis, Martinez received his first pair of hearing aids: "These hearing aids helped me develop my speech, [create] my lifestyle, and to appreciate sounds that I could not hear without them."

While able to communicate verbally, Martinez still had an interest in the ASL community. He says, "I had quite a couple of experiences with deaf customers at work. I wanted to learn how to fully communicate with them because I know it's difficult for others to not understand you."

Reyes and Wandachowicz's interest in sign language goes back to elementary and middle school. Reyes states, "I became interested in ASL when I was in 5th grade. It always fascinated me how people could fully communicate using solely their hands. Coincidentally, it was in 5th grade that I met Dominika. When we were in 6th grade we decided to start learning [with] the alphabet as the basic step."

Wandachowicz adds on, saying, "We used to pass notes in a secret language we created but this wasn't always possible, so we wanted to learn a different way of talking without talking out loud... We used to go to the public library and borrow books or flashcards [to learn ASL]."

These four people shared the idea of creating an American Sign Language Club at Fenton. Eshelman shares, "It has been a dream of mine to start an ASL club for a long time. I've been in education for 15 years, but I never found the right time. [Then] Dr. Mitchell connected me with Carlo Martinez who was interested."

Reyes shares her perspective, saying, "In freshman orientation last year, [Wandachowicz] and I asked a student at one of the activity stands if they had any club like [ASL]. They said no, but that interested us... It wasn't until this year that we saw our opportunity. Mrs. Millman put us in contact with Mrs. Eshelman and Carlo, who were also working on an ASL Club."

Eshelman was impressed at the response the club garnered after the initial google form was sent out: "I was overwhelmed with joy when I saw the responses... There are over

50 people who are interested. I want them to know this is something new and different for Fenton. I am excited to help these students bring it to life."

The ASL Club plans on teaching American Sign Language, playing games related to ASL, watching TV related to ASL and the deaf community, and doing sign sync, where members would learn to sign songs of their choice. The club is also looking into inviting guest speakers and having field trips into the community, such as a deaf senior group, once the pandemic gets better.

Although it may seem daunting, all four founders encourage anybody who is interested to join. Wandachowicz states, "I want them to know we are welcoming anyone... Students will be able to see what it is like from a non-hearing point of view."

Eshelman continues this sentiment, saying, "Expressing yourself in sign language is very different than verbally. It involves body language and expression. If you are someone who is shy or reserved, it can bring out a different side of you."

The ASL Club meets every Wednesday from 3:30-4:20pm in the community room.

## Student Council's Fall Blood Drive Set for November 4

By Michelle Agymang

On November 4th, from 7:00 am-1:30 pm, all students will have the opportunity to donate blood in Student Council's November Blood Drive event. The event will be held in the Front Gym, where the Versiti Blood Donation Center will be set up to collect blood.

All students must be at least 16 years old to donate. Males must be at least 5' and 110lbs and females must be at least 4' 11" and 142 lbs or 5' and 138 lbs. Students will receive 1 hour of community service for attempting to donate their blood and 2 hours for a full donation.

Student Council advisor Mrs. Julia Bray comments on the rewards of blood donation, saying, "If you donate there's free snacks! But, the other incentive is that students get

community service for donating, and donating blood saves so many lives, so that's really the huge benefit of blood donation."

To sign up, students must scan the QR code posted below or go to <https://bit.ly/BloodDrive-11-4-21> and return a signed permission slip from a parent or guardian.

For any student planning on donating, Bray shared some key information on how to complete a healthy donation, "Whenever they donate they need to make sure that they're getting a good breakfast, or if it's later in the day making sure they've eaten lunch, and also drink plenty of water."

If you have any questions, email Mrs. Bray at [bray@fenton100.org](mailto:bray@fenton100.org).

## Jazz Band Begins Year with Saturday Jazz Bootcamp

By Abby Hernandez

Congratulations to the 40 students who made it into jazz band or jazz lab band.

Jazz bootcamp is on October 30th and students are excited. On Saturday students will come in and learn jazz fundamentals that will be used throughout the year.

Senior alto saxophone player Xavier Martinez is excited and said 'that even though it is one day of jazz it prepares you for what the season is about and we have lots of fun.'

"We hope to see all the jazz members there and we are excited to be playing for the rest of you. Real live jazz greats will be here at Fenton high school on Saturday the 30th. People you'd pay to go see in the city will be helping us," says band director, Mr. Garrett George.

### Blood Drive

Turn a new leaf  
Fall into giving

**Thursday  
November**

4

7:00AM - 1:30PM

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

PHOTO ID IS REQUIRED.

MASKS ARE REQUIRED

Email: [bray@fenton100.org](mailto: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 yrs old with signed permission slip and must meet height/weight requirements.

\*Photo ID required - you may use your student ID.

Please make an appointment on-line:  
<https://bit.ly/BloodDrive-11-4-21>

Or Scan QR Code ----->

Appointments preferred; Walk-ins are welcome.





## EOS Continues to Work with Fenton to Increase Student Involvement in AP Classes

By **Chrystyna Prokulevich**

Fenton has never been a school to shy away from challenges and find ways to open up to new opportunities for all students of different backgrounds. Over the past decade, Fenton has had a lot of changes to its courses and what is available to the students who are attending the high school. And over recent years, we have seen so many great advancements with the AP teaching and courses, with one being, by joining the Equal Opportunity Schools program back in 2015.

EOS, for short, is a non-profit organization, and their entire mission is to ensure that all students, particularly those who are low income and students of color, have equal opportunity and access to rigorous courses. But where did this all start and how much more do we have to reach for?

I sat down with Ms. Kate Ward, Division Leader of English, Social Studies, and ELL at Fenton High School, and she explained Fenton's connection with this program. She

first gave me the backstory of how this foundation was founded and where it came from.

She says, "The founder [of EOS], had a best friend who was Latino and he realized that, in his classroom, his best friend was never there, and he questioned why, since he was just as smart as him, he was an AP student. That became his life."

A passionate remark, to change the stereotypes and allow for students of different backgrounds to join classes that should be welcome to them as well. EOS was introduced to Fenton when previous curriculum director "Jill Kingsfield heard about it, and demographics at Fenton have shifted over the years, when I started here I taught AP World History to seniors and I had one section and it was all the kids in top ten percent, and what we realized is that our classes were not representing our student population. When we heard about EOS, Kingsfield [saw this] as something that would help us, and we started working with them to change that."

Over all this time, I wondered if there was any time that students were never as welcome to take these classes.

Ms. Ward said, "I once had a student who loved the history channel, and I gave him the textbook to take home, and he came back on Monday, and told me he thought it was a little boring, and so I let him take AP World, and his essays weren't as good as the ones that AP English had, but he was getting the information down. And at the end of the year, he ended up getting a 5 on the test. And it really made me question, why am I the gatekeeper? If someone loves history, we need to let kids explore their passions."

Now in 2021, Fenton is home to 32 AP courses that students are welcome and encouraged to take. Throughout the year we see so many different activities such as the AP bootcamp and AP student panels to promote the classes and show that these are difficult classes, but there are so many people that can help you!

Ms. Ward tells me, "We have

tried to do so many different things to make rigorous courses more inviting, what we want kids to know is that everyone is invited, you don't even have to have a specific GPA!"

Fenton staff and EOS leaders want students to take chances and see that they should not be afraid of closing themselves off from incredible classes such as those that AP are. There is no room for gatekeeping anymore, and if anyone is willing to put in the work and set a challenge for themselves then they should take it. But how can students become involved in this program and movement at Fenton?

The EOS Committee is made up of teachers and administrators and the focus is working on support for all AP students, but particularly new AP students. We are looking for current AP students who would like to join us for our meetings one Tuesday a month from 3:15 to 4 pm. Interested students can email ward@fenton100.org. Students will earn community service hours for their participation.

## Asian Student Alliance Formed at Fenton; Members Share Insights on the New Club

By **Michelle Agyemang**

Fenton now has its very own Asian Student Alliance! The Asian Student Alliance is a student group that focuses on celebrating and discovering the many Asian cultures found at Fenton. The club was started by two seniors, Hema and Kina Patel.

Co-founder Hema Patel recalled why she decided to start the club, saying, "I wanted to get more representation for the Asian population at Fenton and help educate others about Asian holidays and traditions. I also wanted to give people a chance to participate and help plan events where we can all celebrate and learn together. Forming a close community and making sure that it is super inclusive is important to me and I'm glad I got to start that at Fenton."

Club sponsor Ranjana Rajendran comments on the mission of ASA, saying, "The Asian Student Alliance seeks to build more awareness in our community around Asian identity, holidays, foods, and issues. We would like to contribute to Fenton's mission to increase cultural competency and acceptance of diverse perspectives."

The club celebrated the Hindu holiday season, which started in mid-October and will go up until November 6th. Along with the Hindu holiday season, the club also plans to celebrate "Filipino Heritage Month, Lunar New Year, Asian-Pacific Islander Heritage Month, and Ramadan." To learn about the many great Asian cultures, "the students would also like to arrange field trips to visit various cultural centers, and of course, yummy restaurants to learn about different foods," says Rajendran.

As Fenton takes a turn to be more inclusive of all students, having an Asian American Alliance allows students to come together and bond over something that means the most to each of them--their culture.

Junior Tera Papico states, "I really like the people in ASA. Everyone's so nice and I really love how everyone is so excited about it. There's just always good energy every time we have a meeting."

When asked about the importance of ASA to her, senior Riya Patel says, "It's important that there are different cultural clubs at Fenton because it ensures that no one feels left out. Fenton has a very diverse student body and it's good that we have multiple organizations that can represent different students. Finally having a club, or association, to represent Asian students at Fenton means a lot to me."

Students of all backgrounds are welcome to join ASA. "You don't have to be of Asian descent to join. We welcome all students who want to learn about new cultures from their peers," says Rajendran.

The Asian Student Association meets twice a month in room 539, with certain events outside their meeting time. To stay updated with ASA, join their google classroom with the code, do5zstr.

## Photo Op: Favorite Fall Activity?

By **Jenny Aguilar and Michelle Agyemang**



**Morelia Aburto '22:**

"Going to a pumpkin patch, apple picking and starbucks menus! They are fun to do and I can do them with my family."



**Jazmin Camacho '22:**

"Pumpkin carving because you can put your ideas into a pumpkin and make it look realistic. It looks really cool when you put a candle in it and it reflects on the wall."



**Tera Pabico '23 :**

"I like trick or treating because it's really nostalgic to my childhood and I love candy and dressing up."



**Gerald Logue '23:**

"Jumping in leaves and carving pumpkins because it's a fun fall activity that everyone does"