

The Signal



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Chicago Bears Awards Fenton Football Players, NFL Honors Coach

By Jenny Aguilar

While the 2020 high school football season has been postponed due to COVID-19, Fenton's football team continues to achieve incredible honors. Seniors Eric Moreno and Nickolas Benn were chosen as recipients of the Chicago Bears Community High School All-Stars Award, and Coach Mathew Lynch was chosen by the Bears as the NFL Coach of the Week.

The Community High School All-Stars Award, presented by the Chicago Bears in partnership with Athletico Physical Therapy, recognizes high school football students who exhibit leadership, good character, and service in their community. Nine recipients will receive a customized Bears football along with an assortment of other gifts and \$500 to donate to a charity of their choice.

On November 9, the Chicago Bears announced Eric Moreno as the first recipient of the award. Coach Mathew Lynch, who nominated Moreno, described him as "a fantastic young man. He has his priorities in order. Despite the trials and tribulations he has faced in his life, Eric has always remained grounded and appreciative for all the gifts God has blessed him with. He exhibits tremendous humility, and he genuinely cares about the needs of others before his own."

Moreno was overjoyed to receive the news of his accomplishment, saying, "When I had found out about the award I was completely shocked. I didn't expect it at all. I was honored and excited to even be considered for the award."

Moreno chose to donate the \$500 to Shriners Hospital for Children--Chicago. With the first hospital opening in 1922, Shriners Hospital for Children "focuses on a wide range of pediatric orthopaedic conditions, including rare diseases and syndromes," as stated on their website. All families are accepted to the hospital, no matter their ability to pay.

Coach Lynch organized a trip for the football team to visit Shriners Hospital where the players got to take a tour of the facility, meet some of the patients, and even play a game of wheelchair basketball. Moreno describes the children at the hospital, saying, "All these children are fighting for their lives but manage to keep a smile on their face. When I visited, we played wheelchair basketball and got whooped by them! It was a great experience overall and when I heard I was able to pick who we could donate to, I knew right away it had to be Shriners Hospital."

Benn, who also went on the trip, felt very enlightened from the experience: "You walk in with the expectations that you will put a smile on a child's face as they get to interact with you. However, I found myself being the one with the biggest smile on my face because of these kids and the positivity



Photo courtesy of the Chicago Bears

they give off. You have people who take absolutely nothing in life for granted and choose to just live in the moment."

Nickolas Benn became the third recipient of the Community High School All-Stars Award on November 24. Benn has been a volunteer for the Bandits Youth Football Camp along with assisting both Tioga Elementary and Fenton High School Food Pantries: "You can really help make a positive impact on people's lives. The food pantries I volunteered at were within the very community I live in, and it is a huge reality check. These are people you interact with every day and it solidifies your relationship with them and the rest of the community when you are willing to help out."

Lynch praises Benn, saying, "Nickolas is one of the best human beings I have ever had the pleasure of coaching. He is a person with remarkable maturity and reliability. Nickolas is an intelligent, capable, dedicated, empathetic, and personable young man."

Both Benn and Moreno give credit to Coach Lynch for not only this award but also shaping each of them into better people. Moreno calls Lynch "the most inspirational figure in my life and I couldn't be more grateful [for him, along with] Coach Sabala as he himself has done a lot of work for the community. They have played such a huge role in my life and I love them to death!"

Benn values all the life lessons Lynch has given him and the rest of the team, saying, "To say that Coach Lynch is one of the most impactful people to walk into my life would be an understatement... You have someone who is teaching you things that way beyond football or school... He has convinced me that we are all put on this Earth to accomplish something special and I will forever believe in that."

Coach Lynch's influence was recognized at a national level when the Chicago Bears chose him to be the NFL High School Coach of the Week for Monday Night Football on November 16. Lynch, who discovered he was chosen while watching the football game on ESPN, was humbled about the recognition. When asked how he felt, Lynch replied by saying, "I don't really know how to answer this question. I am so happy for Fenton High School. The student population is fantastic and they deserve all the recognition."

While these accolades were given to individual recipients, they also symbolize the achievements of Fenton High School as a whole. As Lynch says, "For outside organizations to recognize two Fenton High School students, it is a testament to the value the entire school places on providing an education to the student body that will be carried far beyond the classroom setting. Learning to be a servant of the world is far more important than any academic lesson a student could ever receive."



Photo courtesy of the Chicago Bears

Classic Story *A Christmas Carol* Reimagined As Radio Play

By Jenny Aguilar

Many activities throughout the world have taken a massive hit from the COVID-19 pandemic. Theater companies have been tasked with finding innovative ways to showcase their performances while complying with new health restrictions. Fenton's drama department is no exception, with this year's play, *A Christmas Carol*, being a radio play.

As the name suggests, a radio play, or radio drama, is an audio performance of a piece of theater or literature. Music and sound effects work in tandem with an actor's dialogue to tell the story to the listeners. From the 1930s to the 1960s, radio dramas had gained immense popularity, but as televisions became more accessible the radio drama medium slowly faded away.

Due to new health restrictions caused by the 2020 pandemic, radio plays were a viable way to perform theater while still following those new restrictions. However, there are some stark differences from traditional theater that both cast and crew had to come to terms with. As Jeremiah Barr, the technical director of the theater department, says, "One of theatre's draws is the spontaneity of performance--anything can happen at any moment. With this

being recorded, we lose that but gain the ability to make it very clean and crisp, which has its own drawbacks--we need to get a performance that is real and spontaneous, which I think we can do." To help convey a genuine performance, all of the group's rehearsals are recorded so that "when there is a magic moment

we can capture it." Junior Joan Hitt, who plays Young Scrooge, Tiny Tim, and Fred's Wife in the show, reflects on the pros and cons of the process, saying "So far, the experience has been wonderful!! It's been really cool to work with professional equipment; it feels just like being a voice actor! I just wish I had more time. The most

challenging part for me has been being told that we can't meet in person anymore. I really miss being with my peers and making art with people."

To add more life to the show, the sound crew has been tasked with finding music and other sound effects while also recording foley cues, the "special in-scene sound effects." There will also be photos of performers, rehearsals, artwork, and background research to further immerse the audience into the world of the show.

A Christmas Carol, the classic story by Charles Dickens, tells the story of Ebenezer Scrooge, a grumpy old man who despises Christmas, and how the ghosts of Christmas Past, Present, and Future try to change his rude ways for the better. When asked about the choice of this year's show, Barr explained, "It's a great story, the Victorian Era in England was filled with "ghost" stories that take place in winter... It's really a cool time capsule of a time and place but also one that has a very universal message--that people can change and change for the better. And who can't get behind that, especially in these times."

On December 18th, a link to the recording will be posted on the school website for people to listen to on their computer or smartphone.



Photo courtesy of Matt Nelson

Library Offers Creative Activities, Valuable Resources For All

By Michelle Agyemang

The Academic Resource Center, or the ARC, is known for being an open space where students can work on assignments, participate in creative activities in the Makerspace or just simply spend time with friends. With the COVID-19 pandemic keeping students out of the building, the ARC has transformed into a completely virtual experience.

The library sends weekly emails to all students at Fenton. Titled the "Library Line-Up", the email includes a detailed list of upcoming activities and services given to students. One of the featured events on this list is the library's Curbside Library Book Checkout. Here, students can safely pick-up their library books from school on Monday through Friday during regular school hours. Students can order books through the library's online catalog or by filling out the book request form located on the "Library-Line Up". Many students have benefitted from this, such as freshman Zujeidi Mendoza-Garcia who says, "Fenton's library services have helped me personally in multiple occasions such as for ELA essays. I have checked out books to read and recently found out they have other books for origami and [more]."

The library also creates fun events like Harry Potter trivia which is held on Mondays from 1:00-1:45 pm. Makerspace activities where students can participate in crafts and learn new skills take place with the library as well. "Crochet Creatures", a project where students start with basic crochet stitches and eventually work up to the Japanese art of *amigurumi*, takes place on Monday afternoons at 2:00 pm. Freshman Jatziry Bailon says, "It's been really fun doing the library activities for school as a pass time, and getting a book is really easy especially since I just have to go pick it up. A lot of the projects are really creative and things that I wouldn't normally do. They're also entertaining, and the library teachers are really nice."

Along with the fun activities and events hosted by the library, academic resources are still available to all students. Librarian Elizabeth Wright says, "Fenton's library services, especially instruction on how to find and use reliable information, helps students become more effective agents of change in their world - a world of many pressing issues to solve." The Virtual ARC, which is located under the Academic Resource Center tab on the school website, is a place where students can easily find all the academic resources the library has to offer.

More information about the library services at Fenton can be found on the Virtual ARC or by contacting Mrs. Wright at wright@fenton100.org.

it's about to get ugly

**UGLY SWEATER
CONTEST**

**Join the Bison Link Crew in
Showing off your School Spirit!**



Instagram Contest
@bisonlinkcrew

Follow @bisonlinkcrew

And tag us in your picture by Friday 12/18/20
and we'll repost your photo.

**The picture with the most likes will
win a \$25 Target Gift Card**

Don't have an Instagram Account?
Email your photo to bray@fenton100.org or mcdougal@fenton100.org

11 Music Students Accepted Into ILMEA District 1 Groups

By Olivia Markowski

As we know, Fenton High School has many talented students. Talents may be shared through numerous ways, but one way a handful of students in band and choir have showcased their talents was through auditioning for ILMEA.

ILMEA includes the general music events such as chorus, jazz, band, and orchestra ensembles, and it is offered to the Elementary through Senior High students of Illinois. ILMEA holds a district festival every year which is determined by an audition. Every fall, an audition is held by the Illinois Music Education Association where students share their musical talents which later determines their entry to participate in the district festival, and some may even be asked to qualify students to participate at the state level.

Music Educator Mrs. Williams shared student accomplishments by stating, "We had 10 choir students selected for the District 1 ILMEA district 1 choir... these students got their music this fall, and met with me once or twice a week to prepare.. We even had mock auditions which they then went back and



Courtesy of G. George

improved in order to be selected. I am so proud of their hard work!"

For the vocal auditions this year, students Jason Garcia, Joan Hitt, Abbygale Horvath, Karissa Lara, Alex Moreno, Abby Niehoff, Evelyn Perez, Bartlomiej Sporna, Aiden Torres, and Kamil Widlo have all been selected this year.

As preparing for an audition may take a lot of time for these students, Junior Joan Hitt shared her experience, "Every year for ILMEA auditions we prepare outside of school, which really proves which students have the dedication to push through. This year was an even bigger test. Usually we would meet every day before school starts, we did not have this luxury this year. This year we met in September once to twice a week. The ILMEA Audition includes an excerpt from two pieces, two scales, and three tirads. We had to submit our videos to Mrs. Williams, who was kind enough to give us feedback, and then she sent it into our District and the State. I auditioned on Vocals for Alto 1, and I made it. In years past there is usually a performance of the District 1 Choir together, performing their pieces that they auditioned with. This year was different. Instead of a concert, each vocal group and instrument group attended a zoom meeting. Here is where we had Masterclasses from different professionals around the Country. In music, your body is your instrument. In my Masterclass we worked on our range and different ways to keep our instruments healthy and how to tie our whole body and our voice together. It was such a wonderful learning experience. I would encourage every student at Fenton whether you're in Band and Choir or not, if you play an instrument, if you sing, audition! The worst thing that could happen is not making District."

Alongside the choir, our band also has participants, these participants would include, Anna Micor, Flute & Piccolo, Julia Rihani, Flute, Iza Weglarz, Baritone Saxophone, Jadyn Golz, French horn, Lizbeth Chaidez, Euphonium, and Aiden Torres, Euphonium.

One of these students, Anna Micor, had qualified on both flute and piccolo, and was named first chair piccolo for the entire District 1 band auditions! Anna Micor shared her dedication and experience, "Because of covid, the audition process was completely virtual. Students were required to send in a video of them playing 3 pieces. Then, a judge graded their performances, and the ones with the highest scores would be accepted into district ILMEA, so kind of like the first level. In order to prepare myself for recording the video, I practiced the three pieces including 2 etudes and 1 scale since about May of last year. I'm glad I started preparing so early, because I was accepted into the district 1 band on both flute and piccolo this year! I earned first chair status for the piccolo as well. From here, I, along with other students who have been accepted are waiting on results as to whether or not we've been accepted in the State ILMEA ensembles!"



Photo courtesy of Sereidy Williams

Marching Band Adapts Practices, Finishes Outstanding Season

By Michelle Agyemang

Despite the extraordinary circumstances posed on all sports and activities, the marching band was able to navigate their way through all of them. With extra precautions put into place, the band was eventually able to have a season. A usual season for the band would consist of regular practices starting in the summer and performances in front of large crowds throughout the fall and winter seasons. This year, the marching band reduced their season down to a few weeks. Their practices were a mix of socially distanced in-person practices and at-home online practices. Junior Riya Patel says "Usually, I get to see my friends and march and make music with them but I wasn't able to do that this year. Even though I couldn't do that this year, I liked how we weren't out in the cold as much this year as compared to a usual year!"

During their practices, the marching band worked on traditional pep tunes, like "Seven Nation Army"

and the school fight song. Along with the regular arrangement of pep tunes, the band also worked on their halftime show. "This year we worked on a halftime show, that the students named, called 'Fenton Mosaic' it represented some of the cultures and cultural music that we see at Fenton. We had the 'Krakowiak', a Polish song. 'El Cumbanchero,' a Puerto Rican song. We had 'El son de la Negra,' which is a Mexican song. We also had some American patriotic songs" says band director Garrett George.

The band ended their season with an awards night where students were given their letters. They were also presented with best of and most-improved awards. Also, in marching band tradition, some out of the box awards were given out, as well.

Even without the usual environment of a chaotic football game, the marching band made the most of their season. The marching band was able to do what means the most to them: make music. Best said

by Mr. George, "The adaptability of the marching band students was just awesome. Their willingness to make new and different things work...

Their attendance was really good throughout the season, I was really impressed. The students have inspired me. I feel resolved to a certain extent."



Photo courtesy of Garrett George

Boys XC Season Ends; Runners Reflect on Their Season



V. Vazquez Sectional 2020. Courtesy of Jay Ehrhardt

By Sarah Guerrero

As Fenton's boys 2020 cross country season comes to an end, coaches and runners look back and reflect on the ups and downs of this unusual season, and recognize the work and effort each teammate put in to help one another succeed.

In March of 2020, schools across the nation shut down due to COVID-19. Extracurricular activities were forced to pause all in-person activity, including the cross country team. After months of continuous school closure, runners looked forward to getting back to what they loved doing most: running. But,

as cases began to rise, uncertainty became prevalent among the team. Senior Juan Carlos Sosa recalls feeling anxious. He "wasn't sure there was going to be a season at all." In these times of uncertainty, communication became key. So through weekly Zoom calls and Google Classroom announcements, the team kept in touch, hoping for some news. Senior Christopher Kovich remembers feeling "like it would never end."

That all changed when the Illinois High School Association (IHSA) announced that the boys and girls 2020-2021 cross country season would be possible with new guidelines and regulations. Head coach Patrick Fritsch explained that the team would no longer be able to participate in large weekend invites, due to new restrictions on the number of participants per race. The schedule that the team did have included dual meets every weekend, competing against the Upstate Eight. The team adapted to these new changes, as Fritsch said the "team hadn't competed in dual meets for a number of years." The team continuously made safety a priority, and followed the IHSA's regulations, which included wearing masks at all times except when running, maintaining a six foot distance between every person, and having everyone's temperature checked before practices and meets.

The team's season was off to a great start when they defeated Elgin Larkin on Saturday, September 5. The team faced many

challenges throughout the season, many brought by the troubles of living in a pandemic. Some students were unable to condition regularly throughout the summer, as Christopher Kovich says, "By the time the season began, I was unprepared. And that showed in a lot of people."

Juan Carlos Sosa expresses that these changes and challenges could teach valuable lessons and encourage valuable skills. "This year, I learned to be more independent. We couldn't see one another every single day, so I had to rely on myself and I had to keep myself accountable when it came to getting my runs in," he says.

Our society has become familiar with the feeling of isolation during these past few months of social distancing. That feeling was very present on the course as well. Juan Carlos Sosa recalls how strange the meets felt at first. "Usually, we'd have over 100 people competing in a meet, but this year, we could only compete against one other school. That's about 7 runners. It was awkward, but I felt super grateful. I mean, I was lucky enough to be able to run," he says. This feeling was reciprocated by Christopher Kovich, who says, "It was a weird experience... it didn't really feel like a cross country race. It felt like you were running on your own for most of the race. But as the last couple of meets happened, there were more people. It felt like a normal season again."

The team's final race was on Saturday, October 17, against

Streamwood. Fritsch reports that the team "finished in conference with a 2-7 record to finish in 7th place in the Upstate Eight Conference," and finished in 6th place overall at the IHSA Regional meet. Although they were not able to advance to the IHSA sectional as a team, sophomore Victor Vazquez and senior Juan Carlos Sosa advanced to run in the sectional meet (October 31). Victor Vazquez finished in 27th place overall, and would have qualified for the IHSA state meet. The state meet did not occur due to COVID-19.

Christopher Kovich recognizes the unexpected and peculiarity of the season. "Eventually, it was my last meet. In previous races, I wasn't getting times that I was proud of. But I knew that it was my final year... the final race of my high school cross country experience. So, I gave it my all," he says. He also acknowledges the hard work of his team, saying, "They all worked really hard this season. They were really there for me this year. We had some ups and downs, but in the end, we really gave it our all and worked great together."

Freshman Mateo Corona joined two weeks into the season. "I was nervous because of the pandemic and I didn't have much experience in cross country." He now encourages others to join, and says, "you shouldn't be scared to try new things. If you join cross country, you could make more friends. And throughout the season, the coaches really help you become the best runner you can be."

Benitez Shares His Experience Working Polls on Election Day

By Alexis Benitez

On November 3rd while everyone else was enjoying their day off from work, I was up and working. Recently I got to experience what it was like to work at the polls on election day and, let me tell you, it was not as chaotic as I thought it would be.

My day started at 5 am. The booths opened promptly at 6, with us setting up the signs outside the polling place. We all had to go the day prior to set up the actual polling booths and deposit boxes so we wouldn't be overwhelmed in the morning. After everything was set up and we were ready for people to start coming in. We were immediately greeted with a wave of people. One of the more experienced judges had told me that the day was going to be pretty predictable. There was set to be a before-work rush, lunch break rush, after-work rush, and a before closing rush, with the rest of the day being pretty easy.

My job for the day was to officialize the voting ballots by initialing them because a ballot will not count for a vote until it is signed in an attempt to make them more secure. The day ran pretty smoothly with no anti-masker conflicts which was a pleasant surprise because I had been expecting at least a couple conflicts. The most conflict we had throughout the day was when someone walked in wearing a "Trump 2020" shirt. We kindly asked them to leave because electioneering, promoting a candidate, was not permitted within 100 feet of the premises.

The end of the day cleanup was as easy as the setup the day before. The only difference was that we had to sign everything. We had to sign 4 ballot reports, the envelopes they were individually sealed in, the confirmation sheet that proved we were there, and the sheet that went with the ballots. Once that was all said and done two poll booth workers from different political parties had to take all the ballots and ballot reports to the election division office in Geneva. The ride was not only long, but heavily guarded. Upon entering the town of Geneva, every street corner had either a Sheriff's car or regular police car parked on it. The process to drop the ballots off wasn't difficult: just long. This year's election had more poll booths opened all across the county, so there was a long line of cars all with their respective poll booth workers and ballot boxes. Once inside the parking garage all we had to do was pop open the trunk. The workers there would take the ballots and any other necessary paperwork out of the car and we were free to go.

Needless to say the day was long and tiring but not hard. All the poll booth workers were the nicest people and every voter was respectful and abided by all the rules. If I had to sum up my day in one sentence, I'd say that it was an interesting and worthwhile experience. I would definitely sign up to work the booths again next election.

The Speech Team Continues Their 2020 Season Virtually, Still Remains Strong

By Olivia Baran

Fenton's Speech Team has been advancing greatly over the course of e-learning. Speech students, known as *speechies*, had to audition virtually on "FlipGrid". The speech coaches, Ms. Hendricks and Ms. Feinberg used these virtual auditions as an aid to place each student into their proper events. The speechies spend many hours practicing and they each have a thirty-minute session on Google Meets. The speech team has already performed at three competitions over the course of just two weeks! For many, who have yet to hear the great news, the speechies placed 4th at the Fremd Varsity Vikings Tournament.

Ms. Hendricks states, "Varsity members Karissa Lara and Carolina Rosas both said they felt like it was a real tournament again and can't wait to do it again." Having a positive attitude is vital during times like these.

The speech team has managed to find a successful way to practice virtually. "Our students typically submit their recorded videos after uploading to YouTube by Tuesday the week of a tournament, then we have a Saturday morning meeting via Meet to see who advanced to finals, say congrats and pump them up, and send them to their devices to stage the perfect lighting and camera angles for their live final events", Ms. Hendricks discloses.

Doing things virtually is definitely something new for many students. It can prove to be challenging and can promote a lack of motivation.

Emanie Kashif states, "I almost feel like it's harder to perform over a call than it is in normal circumstances." This is definitely understandable. However, the speech team has proved that success and a positive attitude is attainable even during a virtual setting.

Fenton’s Extracurricular Meetings Announcements, Updates

By Erica Ayala

Club Name	Sponsor Name	Google Classroom	When do you meet?	Additional Announcements
STUNT	Annette Valente - valente@fenton100.org	dzlgbsn	Every other Thursday at 3:15pm	
Highlights Yearbook Club	Mr. Kambic (kambic@fenton100.org) and Mr. Nelson (nelsonm@fenton100.org)	fszrtbc	Thursdays at 3:20 p.m.	The Highlights Yearbook Club is still accepting new members to join. Also, as we progress in our coverage, one of our staff members will likely reach out to your club, team, or event organizer to collect neat stories and photos for this year’s publication. Keep an eye out!
Basketball	Taft and Kopp taft@fenton100.org kopp@fenton100.org	Please email us for classroom code	The season will start virtually on November 16- calendar will be supplied	
Car Club	Mr. Drelicharz via email	ib36v4p	Fridays from 3-3:30	
Speech Team	Nicole Hendricks at hendricks@fenton100.org and Melissa Feinberg at feinberg@fenton100.org	urwymot	Monday team meetings at 12:00 (noon) and sign up for 30 minutes sessions Monday-Friday	Our competition season starts November 7th and there is still time to join and be a part of our amazing team
Scholastic Bowl/Academic Team	Mr. Aguilar (aguilar@fenton100.org), Mr. Laudermitth, Mrs. Santinello	gfbechp	Tuesdays 3:30-4:30	Scholastic Bowl/Academic Team is a Trivia Club. No experience is needed to join, and we are always looking for new members. You are welcome to bring a friend. For the 2020-2021 school year, we will meet virtually. Practices and competition will last until late January. Reach out to Coach Aguilar (aguilar@fenton100.org) if you are interested but have a conflict with Tuesday practices. We are looking to add an additional practice day during the week.
Bison Buddies	Mrs. Szkorla (szkorla@fenton100.org) and Mrs. Taylor (taylor@fenton100.org)	vii6w3o	Every other Wednesday at 3:15.	
Fenton Football	Coach Lynch: Lynch@fenton100.org		We will start meeting via Google Meet/Zoom shortly to start preparing for the upcoming season in February	Please contact Coach Lynch or Coach Chappell if interested in playing football.
Kaleidoscope	Patrick Escobedo	rsovs5t	We have a montly open mic on the second Wednesday of each month.	Kaleidoscope is always looking for poets, writers, and artists who want to share their work with the school and community. We also participate in our conference lit fest, submissions are due by February 1st, and we attend Louder than a Bomb and other poetry related events in the area.
BRAVE- Fenton Gay Straight Alliance	Jessica Muscarello - Muscarello@fenton100.org	35dsfbn	Fridays at 3:15 in google classroom	We will be celebrating Trandgender Awareness month this November.
Marching Band, Jazz Bands	Mr. George, georgeg@fenton100.org	Jazz Bands: jfgc7mr; Marching Band: jxjl4e2	Tuesdays @ 4:30	We just had our Jazz Boot Camp sponsored by the Bensenville Arts Council. We also had two in-person rehearsals for Marching Band where we recorded video to be coming out soon.
Fenton Art Club	Mr. Russell- email is best: russell@fenton100.org	I email it to each student before class begins	Every Monday at 1PM	Looking forward to seeing everyone! No art experience is required!
Bison Buddies	Mrs. Taylor-taylor@fenton100.org Mrs. Szkorla-szkorla@fenton100.org	vii6w3o	biweekly	Next meeting and activity will be Wednesday,November 18th, 3:15 PM. We will be making puppy chow at home in our kitchens!

Kaleidoscope Open Mic: A Place for the Writers of the World

By Jadyn Golz

I’ve been writing since 4th grade. Since then, it’s always been a part of my life. It’s encouraged me, it’s inspired me, and it’s motivated me. I love to write, and I’m always trying to get better. But one thing I’ve learned is that most people don’t want to read what I’ve written. Not in a mean way, but for some reason our generation has this allergy to voluntary reading. What’s up with that?

I really began to realize this in 8th grade. We were tasked with making a project of our interest that we would present at the end of the year in a convention style format. I wrote a narrative story, one of my favorites at the time. I worked for hours on that story. It came out as 13 pages with 11

point font and 0.5 in margins. I was immensely proud of it and was very excited to read it to people at the end of the year. Unfortunately, what is essentially a paper, doesn’t fare well at a convention. I was passed up time and time again. In the end, only about five people know what I wrote. It’s been collecting dust in the back of my Google Drive since.

I’ve almost been scared by that incident. For those who don’t know me personally, I’ve published a book through Amazon and it’s my pride and joy. It’s rough and bruised in some places, but I still love it. At the release, everyone wanted a copy. My friends all got themselves a copy and I was happy to sign it for them. Although, when I asked, only a few of

them had actually read it. I’m grateful to them, but it’s disappointing that even my own friends didn’t read something that I made. Since then, I’ve made a mental list of people I know who will indefinitely read my stuff. Unfortunately, that list is small.

By happy chance, this is right around the time when Kaleidoscope’s Open Mic came to be. After the first meet, I realized that this solved all of my problems. I look forward to Open Mic every month. I don’t share something every time, but it’s fun to just listen too. Everyone there is super talented and it’s always entertaining. Reading something isn’t required. We’d be happy just to have you there.

There’s always something new right around the corner. There’s

deep poetry about self-image and self-acceptance. There’s wild fantasy short stories that will bring you into another dimension. There’s short anecdotes of joyful times in class with the people surrounding us. And occasionally, there’s an original song or two.

The energy is always positive and supportive. It’s the perfect place to put your name out there as a writer of, well, anything! Got an essay you’re really proud of? Let’s hear it. Got a speech you’re really nervous about? We’ll help you get those nerves out. A comedy act no one will listen to? We will. New faces are always welcome with open arms and snaps from the audience!