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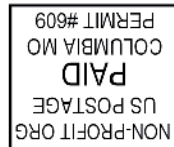
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★ SPRING 2021 ★

## QUARTERLY CONNECTION

## ECRWSS POSTAL CUSTOMER



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# CPS students celebrate CoMo 200



As Columbians take part in the city's bicentennial celebration, Columbia Public Schools' students are getting involved through historic lookbacks and meaningful art projects.

Joy Bess, Columbia Public School's coordinator for social studies and secondary language arts, said although activities were altered due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there are still a lot of exciting things taking place.

Students in kindergarten through 12th grade were invited by the CoMo 200 committee to participate in what was originally planned as a calendar contest, by submitting a piece of artwork representing and celebrating ways Columbia's citizens have risen to face a challenge. Submissions could be hand-drawn, digital art or original photos. A total of 64 submissions were received.

Committee members judged the entries on the criteria of creativity and relevance to theme. The calendar is now a feature in *Inside Columbia* magazine and the winning selections will be published in the June issue.

In addition to the art contest, many other bicentennial events and activities on the agenda for spring are designed around getting students and their families more involved with the Columbia community.

Fifth grade students at Grant Elementary School are working to build bridges between students of different cultural backgrounds with the design of a Buddy Bench. The bench will provide a place for all students to meet, talk and build relationships. Students are working on a paint design for the bench that will represent the many different cultural backgrounds at Grant Elementary School.

Another project at Grant Elementary School is the student design of a mural to commemorate the history of the school within the context of Columbia turning 200 years old. The completed design, also a fifth-grade project, will be painted by students in one of the school's stairwells.

Students throughout the district will learn about Columbia's African American Trail through a special episode of the KBIA podcast "You Don't Say" featuring Barbara Horrell.

Horrell is vice chairman of the Sharp End Heritage committee, which has been instrumental in establishing markers on the trail. In the special podcast episode, she speaks about the history of the Heritage Trail and the African American community in Columbia.

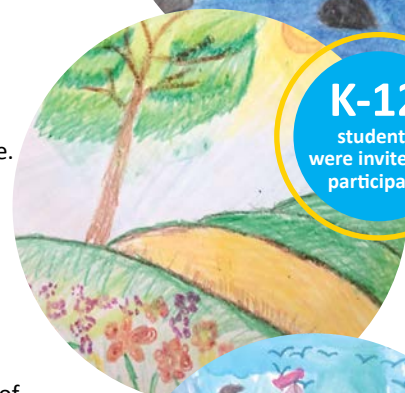
Bess said the 200 bicentennial celebration and its significance to Columbia is important to share with students. She said she hopes that by exploring the contributions and challenges of past generations, students can compare and contrast those generations to their own lives today.

"I hope that students gain a sense of all those who came before them, doing different things to contribute to the community and make it a better place," Bess said.

Bess also said she believes teaching about our past helps students find purpose for their futures.

"I hope they think about their role in the community," Bess said. "Whether it is being civic-minded and voting, finding other ways to have their voices heard, or doing things like recycling and otherwise taking care of the environment."

Bess said she hopes these opportunities spark ideas for young people about what they can do to contribute to Columbia's future.



**K-12**  
students  
were invited to  
participate



**64**  
artworks  
celebrating  
CoMo



# Oakland Middle School turns 50

This year marks the 50th anniversary of Oakland Middle School.

The school, which opened as a junior high school in 1971, has produced many successful graduates and hosted numerous accomplished educators.

In 1989, Oakland Junior High School was one of five Missouri middle and junior high schools to receive national recognition for excellence by the U.S. Department of Education. In 2011, the Missouri Presidential Scholar was an Oakland alumnus. Just last year, Oakland teacher Melissa Fike was the recipient of the Milken Educator Award, considered by many to be the Academy Award of teaching.

Helen Porter has spent 24 years as part of the Oakland family, and has served as the principal at Oakland Middle School for the past nine years. Porter began as an English teacher and worked as a teaching mentor, administrative assistant and assistant principal along her journey to becoming principal.

Porter said she has always enjoyed the amazing teachers and staff who tend to remain part of the Oakland family long after they have moved on.

During Porter's time at Oakland, there have been many changes.

In 1997, the school was a middle school serving sixth and seventh grade students.

Later that year, the district opened Lange Middle School and Oakland became a junior high school serving eighth and ninth grades. In 2013, the reorganization of all secondary schools throughout the district resulted in Oakland becoming a middle school once again, serving grades six, seven and eight.

In 2001, the school went through a large expansion that eliminated 12 of its 15 trailer classrooms and allowed special education classes to move into the building. This expansion also provided for the addition of industrial technology classrooms.

In 2020, the school received a new athletic field and equipment. Building renovations also included ceilings, fire sprinkler systems, floors, windows and paint.

One program that has been important to the teachers and administrators at Oakland Middle School is AVID, or Advancement Via Individual Determination. The program is designed to help students with high academic potential prepare for entrance to colleges and universities, and Porter said it is a schoolwide focus.

"On college color days we encourage students and staff to wear their favorite higher education logos or colors," Porter said. "We even donate shirts for kids that don't have them. The idea is to foster a community that embraces post-secondary education and get kids excited about a future plan."

Perhaps one of the biggest things to celebrate about Oakland Middle School is its rich history of diversity and community.

From large populations of English Learners to families with diversity in economics, race, nationality and heritage, Porter said the culture at Oakland Middle School is one where students and teachers feel a great sense of coming together.

"We've always been big into hospitality, and we support our families however we can," Porter said.

Each year, Oakland families come together to provide groceries for school families in need, so that they can enjoy a holiday dinner. During the 2020 holiday, despite the pandemic, Oakland staff provided groceries for twice as many families as in previous years, with enough to prepare meals for up to 80 people.

The school maintains a clothing closet where students can get outfits for school, and it is not unusual for Oakland families to come together to support other Oakland families by helping to pay for unexpected family expenses or other needs.

"If you are part of the Oakland family, we help all the way around," Porter said. "We serve families every single day and embrace ways to help others. It's nothing unusual for us."

That spirit of community at Oakland Middle School fosters a culture of happiness and fun. From proudly wearing the school colors of blue and orange on game days, to one-minute-music dance breaks in the hallway between classes, the school continues to be a place where students and staff come together to celebrate learning, diversity and community.



## Countdown to Kindergarten!

Do you have a child who will be five years old before **August 1, 2021**, and needs to enroll in kindergarten? Begin the kindergarten enrollment process securely and easily online.

Learn more: [www.cpsk12.org/kindergarten](http://www.cpsk12.org/kindergarten)



# Engaging students in art

Columbia Public Schools' art educators helped students continue to create and learn during the pandemic. Many teachers assembled and delivered project materials to student homes.

"Teachers leaned into the idea that we would not allow restrictions to stifle students from creating," James Melton, director of Fine Arts for the district, said.

Like all educators, art teachers refined their skills, learning how to engage and encourage each individual student without overwhelming. They took advantage of digital platforms, creating online projects with specific landing pages that enabled student participation, and used art shows to provide students opportunities to share their work and gain feedback.

"Participation of students in art shows has always been viewed as an opportunity that teachers encouraged," Melton said. "This year it has been much more voluntary, because the big focus is how we can get kids engaged without them feeling they are falling behind."

The Columbia College 16th annual High School Art Exhibition showcased several CPS art students this February. This year's show had 41 participants with 65 individual works submitted from nine different mid-Missouri high schools, including Battle and Rock Bridge high schools.

Students received awards for first, second and third place in five different categories as well as a Best in Show.

Eleven Battle High School students submitted 16 artworks of drawing, painting, mixed media, sculpture and photography. Their teachers are Sheri Parker, Brandi Rackers and Jody Spriggs. Five of the eleven students received awards.

Rock Bridge High School had submissions by three students in the categories of drawing, photography and mixed media. Each of the Rock

**41**  
students from 9  
mid-Missouri  
high schools



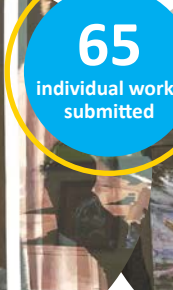
Artist: **Juliana Blackburn**



Artist: **Isabella Dablemont**



**65**  
individual works  
submitted



Artist: **Beth Joffe**



Bridge students placed and received an award. Their teachers are Carrie Stephenson and Abigail Gorsage.

Award winners received ribbons, cash awards and discounted tuition to the Columbia College Summer High School Workshop.

Melton said recognizing opportunities to do things differently and better, such as virtual art shows, has been the most important takeaway.

"The 'normal' perimeters with which we usually engage students were taken away," Melton said. "We had to rethink in lots of ways. It's been healthy. It has opened us up to new ideas, and our efforts have caused us to rethink and re-envision."

Melton said teachers worked to make the impossible possible, and he saw over and over how the arts and the teachers throughout the district have done their very best to keep students moving forward and growing.

"We figured it out because kids matter," Melton said. "We're going to be there to help kids the best we can. You can paint an idea that this has been difficult, but it was a win and we are going to apply what we've learned and be even better in the future."

**"It has opened us up to new ideas, and our efforts have caused us to rethink and re-envision."**

## BATTLE AWARD WINNERS

**Alexandria Merriman**  
*Best of Show*

**Alexa Ramm**  
*Second place, Drawing*

**Jaiden Rader**  
*First place, Photography*

**Miriam Tramel**  
*Second place, Photography*

**Avrill Phipps**  
*Third place, Mixed Media*  
*Selection for Exhibition Poster*

## ROCK BRIDGE AWARD WINNERS

**Juliana Blackburn**  
*Third place, Drawing*

**Isabella Dablemont**  
*Third Place, Photography*

**Beth Joffe**  
*Second Place, Mixed Media*

*Best of Show Artist: Alexandria Merriman*



# Construction Update

## Locust Street Expressive Arts Elementary School



Students at Locust Street Expressive Arts Elementary School returned to the building after the winter break. Everyone at the school is enjoying the newly renovated space. The building remodel included the addition of 10 classroom spaces, removal of seven classroom trailers, additional office spaces and elevators, a new playground, a new art room, a new music room and the completion of a black box theater. The new art room is a larger space that will accommodate more students than the previous classroom and is filled with plenty of natural light. The new music room also has ample space and connects to the black box theater, which uses a simple design to facilitate a flexible stage and provide for easy audience interaction.

## John Warner Middle School



John Warner Middle School is fully completed and open. The school has a 700-student capacity and serves sixth, seventh and eighth grades.

## Rock Bridge Elementary School

An addition to Rock Bridge Elementary School is underway and slated for completion in Fall of 2022. The project was ahead of schedule when winter weather pushed it back to the original timeline. The addition includes new classroom spaces that will replace the classroom trailers, new playground facilities and ADA accessibility projects. Work has continued while students are in the building.

## Jefferson Middle School: A STEAM Academy

The final design for renovations at Jefferson Middle School are almost complete and will include a remodeled gymnasium and the addition of an elevator in phase one of the project. Bids will be accepted over the next couple of months with work scheduled to begin this summer.

## Russell Boulevard Elementary School

The design process for a renovation slated to be completed in the fall of 2023 has begun. The renovation will include the addition of 10 classrooms and an elevator, along with other ADA accessibility improvements.

## Locust Street Expressive Arts Elementary School



Video tours of the new facilities: [www.cpsk12.org/cpstv](http://www.cpsk12.org/cpstv)



# News You Can Use

## NATIONAL MERIT FINALISTS

Congratulations to **Columbia Public Schools' National Merit Finalists.**

*Rock Bridge High School:* **Tyler Dettmar, Shruti Gautam, Hyunjae Hahm, Andrew Kim, Skylar Koepke, Vignesh Kumar, Arren Mallott, Amira McKee, Jarett Ren, Garrett Roach and Ellen Schaezler.**

*Hickman High School:* **Adin Aberbach, Hunter Bailey, Benjamin Edidin, Daniel Fratila, Ellen Gates, Christina Hua, Ethan Jones, Samuel Morgan, Isaac Stiepleman and Alice Tang.**

The National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) was established in 1955 to identify and honor scholastically talented youth. Through this nationwide competition, National Merit Scholarships are awarded to program finalists and special scholarships are awarded to other high performing participants.

## PERFECT ACT

Congratulations to **Macie Sexten** of Rock Bridge High School for scoring a perfect ACT Score of 36.

## EXCEPTIONAL EDUCATORS

The Board of Education recognized three Columbia Public Schools educators with state-wide awards. **Ryan Armstrong**, Parkade Elementary School K-5 physical education teacher, received the Missouri Society of Health and Physical Educators (MOSHAPE) State Teacher of the Year Award. **Mike Szydlowski**, science coordinator for Columbia Public Schools, received the 2020 Missouri Invasive Plant Task Force Award. **Betsy Jones**, secondary school counseling director, received the Mid-Missouri School Counselor Association (MSCA) School Counseling Coordinator of the Year Award.

## CPS STUDENTS RECOGNIZED FOR OUTSTANDING WRITING

Eight Columbia Public Schools students were selected for their outstanding writing in the 2021 Missouri Writing Region of the Scholastic Writing Awards Contest. Winning pieces will be published in Missouri Youth Write, an online publication which will be available in June 2021. Gold Key winners move on to the national level.

*Battle High School:* **Mina Chen** – two Silver Key Awards

*Hickman High School:* **Robin Crouch** – Gold Key Award, **Grace Gomez-Palacio** – three Gold Key Awards and one Honorable Mention Award, **Anna Waters** – Honorable Mention Award

*John Warner Middle School:* **Jenna Lin** – four Gold Key Awards, **Victor Petruc** – Honorable Mention Award.

*Smithton Middle School:* **Ziqi Zhang** – Honorable Mention Award

*West Middle School:* **Adelyn Gibbs** – Silver Key Award



# 2021 Summer School Programs

## JUNE 14 – JULY 23

**Columbia Summer SUNsations** offers free summer school for students entering kindergarten through eighth grade.

**Gifted Education (EEE)** for grades 2-5 at The Gifted Center (Eugene Field School) and 6-8 at Gentry Middle School.

**Special Education Extended School Year (ESY)** at Rock Bridge High School.

**Summer Expedition** is a six-week program for high-potential multicultural students grades 5-8 who have been historically under-represented at the college level and not enrolled in the gifted program.

**Early Childhood Special Education and Deaf Hard of Hearing** is at the Early Childhood Education Center, 901 Rain Forest Pkwy.

**Early Childhood Special Education** is at The Center for Early Learning North, 2191 Smiley Lane.

## JUNE 14 – JULY 9

**The Secondary Summer School High School Credit Advancement** program is available for Columbia Public Schools students entering ninth through 12th grades. This program offers opportunities for credit advancement in the form of online, blended or classroom course options.

## JUNE 14 – JULY 30

**The Secondary Summer School High School Credit Recovery** program allows students to make up credits they did not pass in order to stay on track for graduation. Successful completion of a credit recovery class results in the grade of P and .5 credit.

## JUNE 14 – JULY 30

**FUN CITY Youth Academy** partners with Columbia Public Schools to offer half day summer school curriculum (math, science, social studies, reading and writing) and half day FUN CITY programming. The program is located Blue Ridge Elementary School.

## JUNE 14 – JULY 1 & JULY 6 – JULY 23

**The Columbia Summer Enrichment Preschool** at Center for Early Learning North (CELN) is a tuition-based program available for students ages 3-5. It runs 8:30-11:30.

## JULY 8 – JULY 23

**Arts Explorers' Program** is at Gentry Middle School for selected elementary students entering grades 4-5. Enrollment is by recommendation only.

## JULY 12 – JULY 21

**Secondary Choral and Instrumental Music** is at West Middle School and offers enrichment instruction in choir, orchestra and band courses for secondary music students entering grades 7-9.

## JULY 12 – JULY 23

**Secondary Theater** for grades 7-9 at West Middle School.

## JULY 12 – JULY 21

**Secondary Choral and Instrumental Music** is at West Middle School and offers enrichment instruction in choir, orchestra and band courses for secondary music students entering grades 7-9.

[www.cpsk12.org/summerschool](http://www.cpsk12.org/summerschool)

## 2021 MAC SCHOLARS SUMMER PROGRAMS

**MAC Scholars Honors Summer Academy** is an academic and enrichment experience for entering 10th grade high-potential multicultural students. June 14-22 in partnership with The University of Missouri.

## BEFORE- AND AFTER-SCHOOL CARE

**Adventure Club** is an extended day program at elementary schools delivered by the University of Missouri - College of Education. It provides a supervised before- and/or after-school program during Summer SUNsations and Summer Enrichment programs. A non-refundable registration fee is required. Enrollment flyers are available at the elementary schools and there is also a link on the CPS website under Summer School. Adventure Club website is: [education.missouri.edu/adventureclub/summer-program](http://education.missouri.edu/adventureclub/summer-program)

## A+ TUTORING

**Opportunities for tutoring** in summer school may be arranged for secondary students enrolled in the A+ program. A+ students should contact the A+ coordinator in their high school building for additional information.

## ADDITIONAL SUMMER PROGRAMS

**Information regarding summer camps/programs** sponsored by various organizations, colleges and universities is available in school guidance and/or principal offices.