Get ready for the shortest day of the year: Winter solstice occurs Dec. 21.
Read page 2

Meet more new staff plus learn how you can purchase handmade holiday cards.
Read page 3

Winter sports wind up while Football ends season with six consecutive wins.
Read page 8

The Eagle Flyer

December 2023
Kennedy High School
422 Highland Avenue
Waterbury, Conn. 06708
Volume XIX, Issue IV

Beautifying Kennedy

By Tefta Mino
Staff Writer

New student group decorates

Have you ever noticed that some of the bulletin boards around Kennedy are old and not updated? Likewise, have you seen the few new additions?

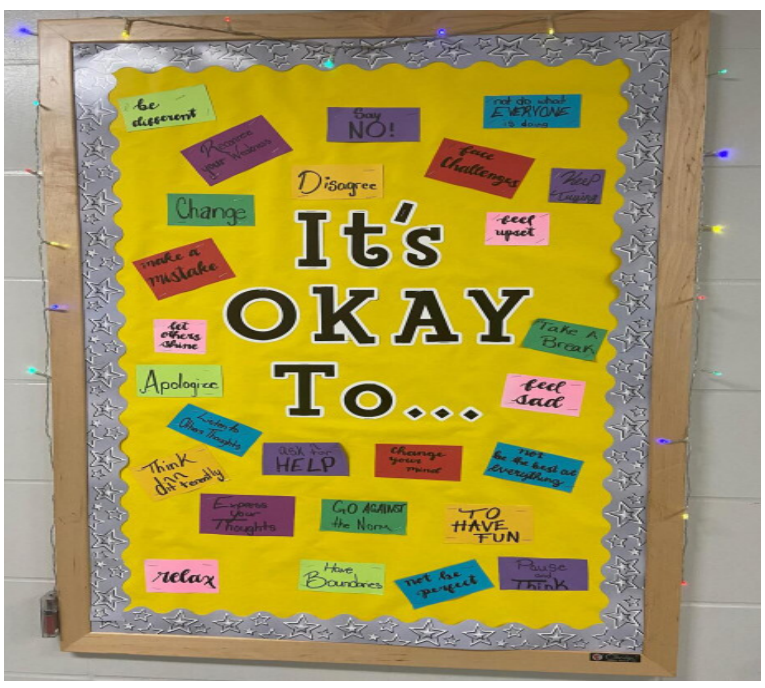
The new Eagles Beautification Committee, formed Fall 2023, have been redecorating the bulletin boards throughout the halls to make a difference in how students see their school. They enhanced the boards near the VPs' office and school counseling office on the first floor. Take a look! (Photos below.)

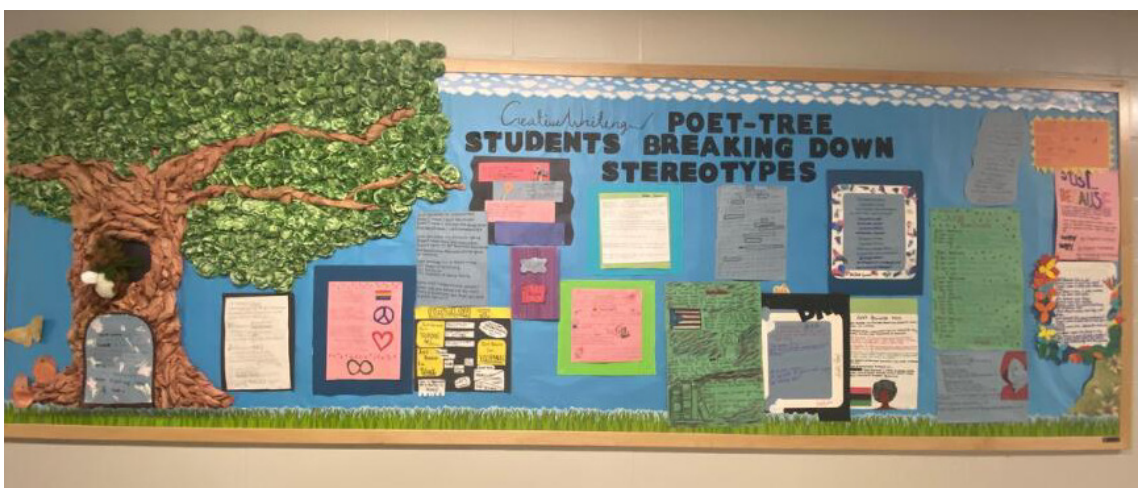
Besides the bulletin boards, they also created snowflakes and hung them from the ceiling in the main lobby. If you were wondering why they are down, they were asked to remove them for the new mayor's inauguration Dec. 1 but they will be back up before no time.

The committee gathered together and crafted many paper snowflakes to surprise staff and students when they walked through the door. See how festive it looks? (Photo to the right.)

Are you interested in joining? Everyone is welcome! They would love more help to #BeautifyKennedy! Reach out to the committee president, senior Ryan Verdejo, or adviser Mrs. Cusack, English and creative writing teacher, in Room 107.







AFTER SCHOOL DEDICATION (Top photo above) Student members of the newly formed Eagles Beautification Committee, led by adviser Mrs. Cusack, stayed after school Wednesday, Nov. 15, 2023 to place handmade snowflakes in the lobby. They are, from left to right, sophomore Kyaunna Llewelyn; seniors Lia Hong Li-Fernandez, Jascarli Grollon, Layza Campos-Robles, Ryan Verdejo (club president); sophomore Tefta Mino; and junior Inam Majeed. Students also helped create several bulletin boards around school, including two near the School Counseling office (see near left photo, and top photo, bottom.) Their other boards include the Club Hub and the Womens' Empowement Board ((bottom left corner photos).

Photos by T. Mino/staff

Seniors, Cusack transform creative writing into school project

By Melissa Guajardo
Poetry Editor

What started as one bulletin board turns into popular new club: Eagles Beautification Committee

Poetry can bring people together in many different ways! Writing a poem can really express one's mind with a powerful combination of words. Kennedy has a creative writing class where students write poetry and learn new writing skills, which gave the teacher the idea of creating a poetry bulletin board to show off her students' "incredible work."

With the help of creative writing teacher Mrs.Cusack and seniors Ryan Verdejo and Angelina Maldonado, a beautiful bulletin board was created that lead to the creation of a new student committee, they revealed in an interview Oct. 18, 2023.





"I wanted to create a poetry board to have a place to show off the incredible work the students are doing in my creative writing class," Cusack said.

The board is one of two in the hallway near the VPs' office. Verdejo and Maldonado worked together for a few weeks to design and put it together, with the goal of displaying students' amazing poems and their creativity. The board is named 'Creative Writing Poet-Tree,' and features a large, handmade tree. Students and staff can pass by and read the students' poems.

"I wanted to put my own mark on the school so it can last a long time," Verdejo said.

Poetry connects people, as in Cusack's class with creating stories, poems and more.

"Poetry connects to my creative writing class because we spend a lot of time writing poems and analyzing poems," Cusack said.

While working on the poetry board Maldonado also began work on a womens' empowerment board next to it. Students wrote quotes on the board to encourage strength and share inspiration.

"I am working on the women empowerment board and my idea with it was to spread kindness, body positivity and positivity overall. For girls to really brighten themselves," said Maldonado.

> "I wanted to create a poetry board to have a place to show off the incredible work the students are doing in my creative writing class."
>
> **Mrs. Cusack, Creative writing teacher**

This project grew into the Eagles Beautification Committee, led by president Verdejo and adviser Cusack. With nearly 25 members, they have their own Google Classroom, and stay after school to decorate but, Cusack admits it all started with one email.

"One day while walking in, I got tired of looking at the same boards, so I emailed Mrs. Carpinella (art teacher). I asked her if she could send two students she trusted to help me redo it. She sent me Ryan and Angelina. Together, we transformed the boards into something the whole school seemed to be talking about. For Ryan, whose talent is unlike anything I have ever seen, it has truly become an interdisciplinary study," she said.

Does 'laziness' myth impact view of poor, neurodivergent?

Despite having jobs, more than half of Americans will face 'situational poverty'

By Arlex Linares
Staff Writer

NEWS COMMENTARY

Poverty-stricken and neuro-divergent people often get called 'lazy' by more fortunate people in the United States nowadays to justify American poverty through opinionated rhetoric.

"The truth is people in the U.S. work hard, sometimes multiple jobs, and still have trouble covering essential expenses: rent, utilities, health care, and groceries to last the week," according to family-health-project.org, an organization that strives to expand on the idea that providing funds to those in need will have many benefits.

What does neurodivergent mean?

The term 'neurodivergent' describes people whose brain differences affect how their brain works. They have different strengths and challenges from people whose brains don't have those differences. Neurodivergent isn't a medical term." It's used in place of normal vs. abnormal.

Successful people who are neurodivergent : Sir Anthony Hopkins, Simone Biles, Greta Thunberg, Florence Welch

source: my.clevelandclinic.org, a health information website

Yet despite Americans putting in the work at their jobs, more than half will face dire conditions for as long as a year, if not more.

"66 percent of all Americans will experience situational poverty for at least a year," according to nccaa.net, a website from the North Carolina Community Action Association, an agency that hopes to equip those with a low income with tools for becoming self-sufficient.

Of the percentage of Americans who face these conditions, millions face situations so dire they can be compared to third-world countries.

"About 40 million live in poverty, 18.5 million in extreme poverty, and 5.3 million live in Third World conditions of absolute poverty," according to ohchr.org, a United Nations Human Rights website, featuring a special report on extreme poverty and human rights.

Despite what some may say, tax cuts do not necessarily benefit impoverished Americans nor give them more money.

"The $1.5 trillion in tax cuts in December 2017 overwhelmingly benefited the wealthy and worsened inequality," according to ohchr.org.

The poor worker in America is in no way slacking off, yet they're still incredibly impoverished.

"...they are people who work, or are looking for work, 27 or more weeks each year and have incomes that are below the federal poverty level (FPL)," according to family-health-project.org

It's not only the poor who are called 'lazy' despite the reality of the situation they're in; it affects neurodivergents negatively, too.

"People with ADHD often struggle with the skills needed to get tasks done. Their difficulty is sometimes mistaken for laziness. But that's often not the case," according to understood.org, a nonprofit devoted to helping those with neurodivergence.

The rhetoric of laziness has a detrimental impact on the motivation of neurodivergents.

A neruodivergent person is defined as "someone whose brain processes information in a way that is not typical of more individuals," possibly "a person on the autism spectrum" or people with "learning disabilities, attention deficit and anxiety disorders," according to www.washington.edu, the University of Washington's website for Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking and Technology.

"Struggling with these skills can make people with ADHD feel insecure. Being told to just try harder can make them feel like they're being judged," according to understood.org

Due to the lack of motivation caused by the rhetoric of laziness, some neurodivergents can become unproductive.

"Having low self-esteem can make it hard for anyone to want to push toward the finish line," according to understood.org.

> "The truth is people in the United States work hard, sometimes have multiple jobs, and still have trouble covering essential expenses: rent, utilities, health care, and groceries to last the week."
>
> **family-health-project.org**

The myth of laziness is an incredibly dangerous piece of rhetoric used to mask the reality of poverty in America.

"At the end of the day, however, particularly in a rich country like the United States, the persistence of extreme poverty is a political choice made by those in power," according to ohchr.org.



Get ready for shortest day

Dec. 21 marks winter solstice

By Neim Sejfulai
Staff Writer

People living in the Northern Hemisphere -- which includes Waterbury, Conn. -- will experience the winter solstice, the shortest day of the year, when half of Earth is tilted the farthest away from the sun, occurring Thursday, Dec. 21, 2023.

"Around Dec. 21, the Northern Hemisphere tilts the farthest away from the Sun. This is called the northern winter solstice, and it is when we have the least amount of daylight of any time of the year. During this time, the Sun appears lowest in the sky, with the least angle to Earth, and we receive less sunlight and warmth. This is also when the days are shorter and the nights are longer," according to www.ssec.si.edu, the Smithsonian Science Education Center, an organization located at the Smithsonian Institution dedicated to formal K-12 education.

During the winter solstice, the sun is closer to the Earth, contradictory to what some people believe, that the sun is further away during the winter, so why do seasons actually change?

"Instead, the seasons are caused by the Earth being tilted on its axis by an average of 23.5 degrees (Earth's tilt on its axis actually varies from near 22 degrees to 24.5 degrees)," according to www.ssec.si.edu.

Lastly, "on the winter solstice, the sun is positioned directly over the Tropic of Capricorn at 23.5 degrees south latitude. The southern hemisphere is therefore receiving direct sunlight, with little scattering of the sun's rays and a high sun angle producing long days. The northern hemisphere is tipped away from the Sun, producing short days and a low sun angle," according to www.weather.gov, The National Weather Service website.

So is the winter solstice typically on the same day each year?

"The winter solstice in the Northern Hemisphere, or northern half of the Earth, happens annually Dec. 21 or 22. It marks the shortest day of the year with the least amount of sunlight," according to www.nps.gov, The National Park Service website.

Features

What holiday traditions do you share with family, friends?

By Justin Montanez with Taylor Kunkel, Yami Gonzalez
Features Editor, Sports Editor, Staff Writer



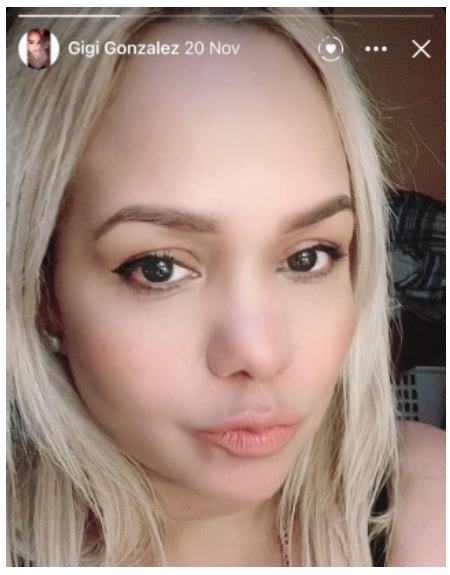
"We don't really have a tradition. We do something different every year. Either I stay home or go to my Grandma's house."
Laura Santiago, freshman



"Spending time with my family. Watching Home Alone, my favorite movie. First movie I watched as a kid."
Mr. Desjardins, ISS monitor (KHS graduate)



"The only tradition my family really does is opens presents really early in the morning, and then we go and visit my Grandma, my aunts and everyone else."
Nevaeh Dillard, WCA sophomore



"Christmas. It is Baby Jesus's birthday. Love to be with family making coquito y pasteles."
Miss Gigi, cafeteria staff



"We open gifts Christmas Eve instead of Day and Christmas Day we go to New York and hang out in Manhattan."
Divine Nwadike, senior



"My family and I have very usual traditions for the holidays. We wake up Christmas morning with presents under the tree. My family loves to make a lot of food so I always eat some really good food around this time." Ted Lami, WAMS



"Spending time with family and eating good food, (see) family and friends, watch Christmas movies, listen to good music, play board games, (and) catch up with old relatives."
Mr. Ridenhour, school resource officer

Move over criminal justice

By Nadia Rivera
Staff Writer

We've heard from one of the new English teachers (Ms. Doyle in room 110; see the September 2023 *Eagle Flyer* issue) but now it's Ms. Elliott's turn!

Elliott, age 25, is the new English 9 teacher located in the Math hallway, room 232. Elliott attended Tunxis Community College, where she earned her Associate's degree, but college wasn't really for her so she went back home to Torrington and thought about what she really wanted to do with her life so she chose English. She went back to school at Central Connecticut State University, where she earned her Bachelor's degree. Elliott didn't always want to be a teacher.

"I was actually in the criminal justice field but college didn't work out so I came home and thought about what I wanted to do. I was like, I'm good at English," Elliott said.

Elliott wasn't always an expert in the field of English, though. She said her second grade teacher told her parents she needed help and by the 9th grade she was reading Shakespeare. She also talked about her hobbies and what she does in her free time.

"I actually love art,..all kinds, knitting, painting, drawing. I also like to read, which is pretty boring for an English teacher," Elliott said.

When asked about why she chose Kennedy for teaching or even Waterbury, for that matter, this is what she said.

"I chose Waterbury because I knew the town; my Dad used to work here all the time, and here specifically (Kennedy) I chose because it felt homey, very comfortable," Elliott said.



WELCOME TO KHS English teacher Ms. Elliott can be found in Room 232.
Photo by N. Rivera/staff

Goal from Grade 2? Met!

By Nadia Rivera
Staff Writer

We've met the other two new teachers for this year but have you met Ms. Emily Benton?

Benton is a new math teacher; she teaches five classes. She went to University of Bridgeport for her undergraduate studies and she got her Master's degree and certification in two years. Benton was also an Eagle, yes, she went to school… here!

"I thought since I went here, as a student, I was like, let me start off with an environment I'm familiar with, so I can focus more on what I'm teaching instead of trying to get used to a whole new building, new people and stuff like that," said Benton

Benton said she'd always known she wanted to teach.

"Long story; I've always wanted to be a teacher, I've been saying it since the second grade, don't ask me why. I have no idea, I just wanted to and it stuck with me and then it wasn't 'til high school I had two teachers in math that made me realize math is what I wanted to do," said Benton

Benton also expressed the difference between being a teacher, at her old high school, and being a student.

"(It's) completely different; it still shocks me. It's nostalgic: there's some teachers that taught when I was here, so trying to transition into making them work colleagues instead of teachers that taught me is a little bit different, but it's still a family background and everyone treats me nice," said Benton.



WELCOME BACK Math teacher Ms. Benton is a Kennedy graduate.
Photo by N. Rivera/staff

Buy handmade holiday cards, support club

By Mia Cote
News Editor

It's time for the Eagles to get festive!

This December, for the second year in a row, Mrs. Naughton, a Speech Language Pathologist, is teaming up with Special Education students and the Robotics Team to create handmade Christmas cards, going three for $5, to sell and raise funds for the team.

"I think last year we raised a $100 and they donated it to the Community-Based Training program (CBT), and ... this year it's going to the Robotics Team," Naughton said.

Doing this fundraiser is very important to not only the Robotics Team, which Naughton helps advise, but also the students who are helping with the production of the cards.

"It's good for my Special Ed students. It helps them learn about following directions and working together," Naughton said.



Photo by L. Naughton/staff

This year, cards can be purchased in Room 130 as well as the Saturday, Dec. 16 Holiday Bazaar, sponsored by the Music Department. The cards can be purchased by both staff and students, and are three cards for $5. So, go get in the Christmas spirit with some handmade cards!

The school store is open in Room 125

during Period 3B for all lunch waves with soda, chips, candy, and bottled water for sale at $1.00 each. Candy is $2.00. All sales go towards the CBT (Community-Based Training) Program. We will also deliver items to classrooms. Please come to support our program.

Commentary

Staff Editorial

Celebrate season with evergreens

As 2023 comes to an end we look forward to spending a snowy, joyful month in December. Here's how Kennedy students can celebrate even if you are on a budget, no matter your beliefs. Consider decorating a tree of your own, which can be easy and worry free (see the lovely one in our school lobby decorated by the Beautification Committee).

Why not? Evergreen trees are said to be symbols of life, hope and even peace, according to the KCandles blog of Festive Figures.

If you are waiting to put up a real tree, or buy one that is pre-cut, you should still put it in water and then, before putting it in the stand, cut about an inch off the bottom to help open up the pores and absorb more water. Also, keep your tree away from a heat source so the hot air won't blow directly onto it. The top three best Christmas tree farms in the area are said to be Broken Arrow Nursery Farm in Hamden, Conn.; Country Farm ll in Guilford, Conn.; and Filanowski Farms in Milford, Conn, according to yel.com, which connects people with local businesses.

"Christmas tree farms across the state are expected to be busy weekend(s) as families head out for the experience of picking their own tree this season," according to nbconnecticut.com, a Connecticut news website.

Nearby cities and towns will also soon be putting out their larger Christmas trees and lighting them to celebrate the holiday season, adding appearances by Santa Claus, food trucks and even fireworks, to bring people together. For many, these tree lightings are among the holiday events that help to kick off the season. Check them out if you can!

"With care, decoration, and attention to detail, many of (these trees) can look beautiful," according to nytimes.com, the New York Times newspaper website.

Christmas, a Christian holiday honoring the birth of Jesus, has evolved into a worldwide religious and secular celebration. With that being said, Kennedy students can look forward to a jolly holiday with a beautiful tree, no matter what you celebrate. Want an artificial tree of any size that lasts? Stores ranging from Shop Rite to Dollar Tree have trees of all price ranges you can buy, plus affordable ornaments. Who knows, you may start your own new tradition!

"Americans built a Christmas tradition all their own that included pieces of many other customs, including decorating trees, sending holiday cards and gift-giving," according to history.com, the A&E TV network's website.



MERRY CHRISTMAS Senior Ryan Verdejo, president of the Beautification Committee, stands with the tree in the lobby club members decorated.

Photo by A. Cybart-Persenaire/staff

The Eagle Flyer

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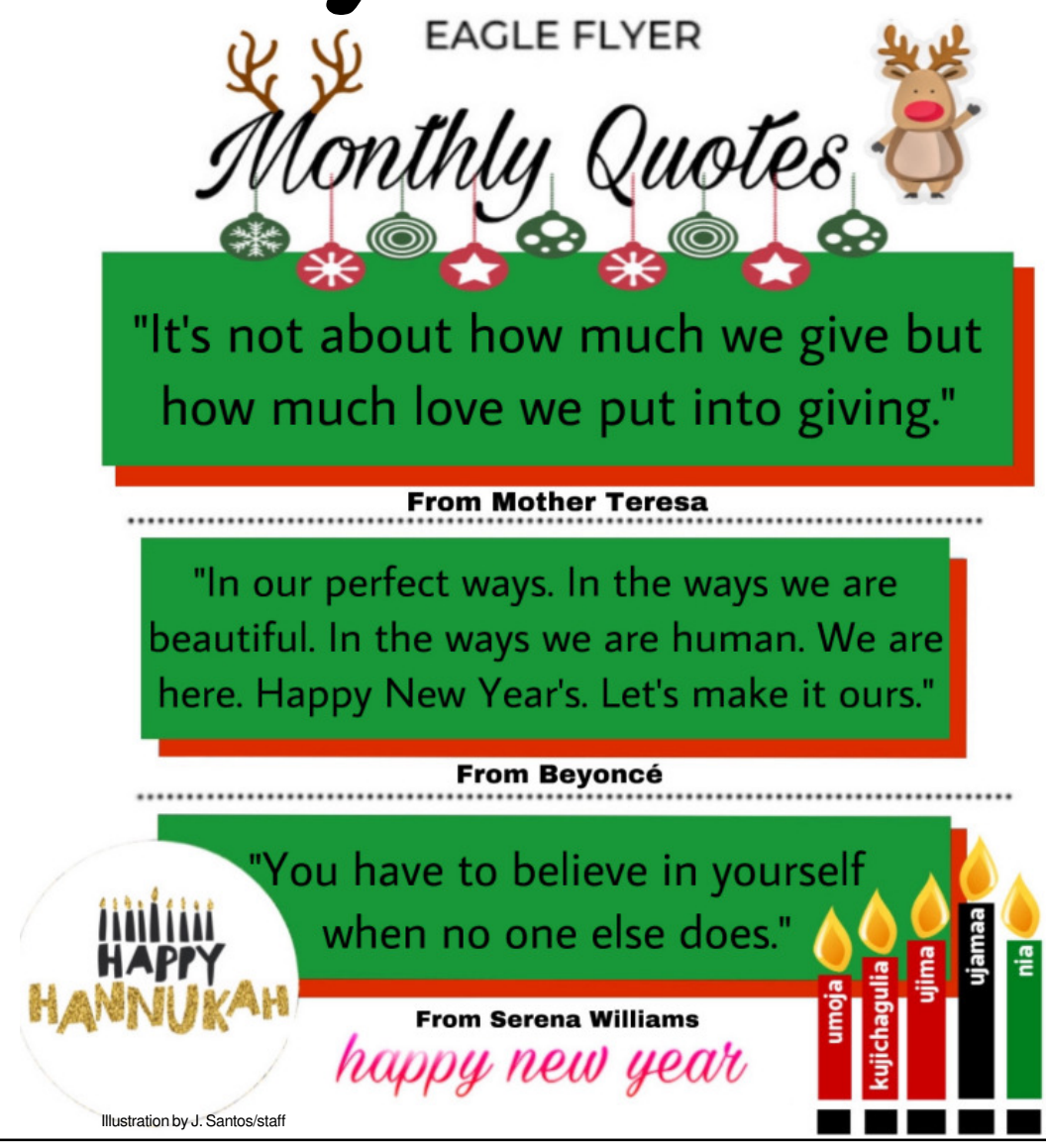


Illustration by J. Santos/staff

Leadership style? Authoritarians take charge

Everyone has leadership qualities: what's yours?

By Nirupama C. Nigam, Ph.D.
Science Professor

COMMENTARY

Authoritarian Leadership

A leader is someone who inspires passion and motivation in followers. A leader is someone with a vision and a path to realize that vision. A leader ensures that the team has support and tools to achieve the goals. Everyone has leadership qualities. These qualities are innate and also acquired through family and surroundings.

A leadership style is a classification of how you put your leadership skills into action. Leaders have many strengths. They spend their days on various responsibilities, from motivating others and thinking creatively to solving problems and taking risks. But, no two leaders are the same. How one approaches the same set of tasks can differ vastly.

Leadership is not one-size-fits-all. Every leader has their own personality and experience that influences their particular style. This style can evolve over time, so the leader you are today may be different from the leader you'd like to become. To help you better understand what your current leadership style is and how you can use it to empower your team to make an impact, we will study some common leadership styles and theories.

Authoritarian or autocratic leadership style

Authoritarians have high command and control over the teams. Decision-making is centralized; the leader makes the critical decisions. An authoritarian leader has a clear vision of the overall picture, but only involves the team on a task-by-task or as-needed basis.

Authoritarian leaders will be personal when giving others praise or criticism but clearly separate themselves from the group. While you might assume an authoritarian leader would be unpleasant, this isn't typically true. Rarely are they openly hostile. Instead, they're typically friendly or, at times, impersonal. Their own learning is more important than the team. In disagreements within the company, their view is typically the right one. Opposing opinions on a project don't matter; the autocratic leader has the last word.

Pros of an authoritarian leadership style: Authoritarian leaders have the ability to complete projects on time. This style is helpful when decisive action is needed. Autocratic leadership is successful if the leader is the most knowledgeable member of the group.

Cons of an authoritarian leadership style: This style doesn't promote creativity. Leaders can be viewed negatively and as overbearing or controlling with difficulty trying another leadership style and are set in their ways.

Examples of leaders who have used authoritarian leadership: Adolf Hitler, Benito Mussolini and dictators.

Jobs for autocratic leaders: correctional officer, warehouse supervisor, restaurant manager, and surgeon.

Autocratic leaders can make it difficult for employees to express their opinions. These leaders often take all the credit for their team's work and discourage employee input. They also recognize and enjoy what they have done without giving any consideration to other people involved in projects. In many situations, having just one person making the decisions can lead to employees carrying out projects they disagree with or do not think will work.

Autocratic leadership can still be a model for success in contemporary times if leaders combine their strong decision-making abilities with respect for coworkers, communication with teams, practice of consistency, and take opinions on board. Treat coworkers as colleagues and not as subordinates and show them due respect. This will create mutual respect and harmony. Explain instructions instead of issuing orders. This ensures cooperation. A fair and consistent approach toward all goes a long way in mitigating distrust that authoritarian leaders experience. Encourage co-workers to share their views. It expresses respect towards the co-worker even if suggestions are not implemented. All benefit from taking charge of their own personal growth and development.

Poetry Corner

Just Because
By Sophia Ortiz

Just because I'm a woman
doesn't mean I have to have your idea of a perfect body
doesn't mean my skin is perfect
and doesn't mean my value is determined by my physical appearance

Just because I'm a woman
doesn't mean I'm overly emotional
doesn't mean I cannot lead
and doesn't mean I cannot accomplish the same as or more than a man

Just because I'm a woman
doesn't mean I'm dressing to impress you
doesn't mean I'm trying to attract you
and doesn't mean I can't say no

May I dress without your objectifying gaze?
May I cry without it defining my strength?
May I lead without whispers of doubt?

Poetry Corner

You

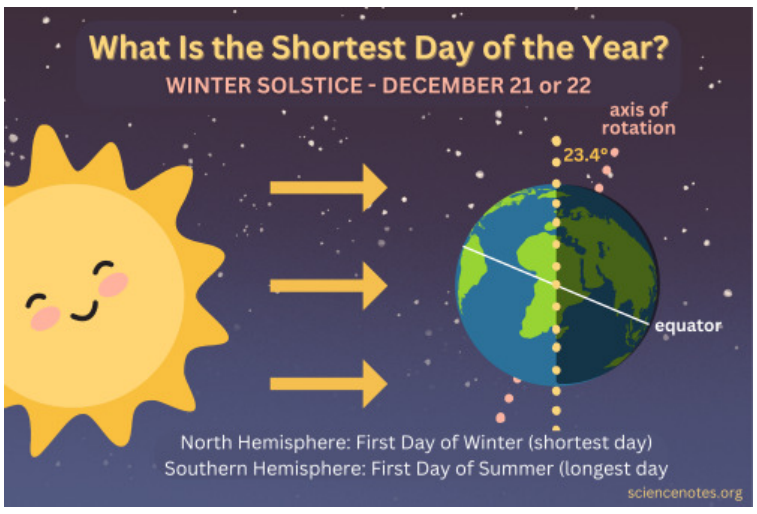
By Neliani Martinez-Malavet

Sometimes life doesn't bring the best
As a person living life you try to make the best of it
Insecure people will always bring you down
But what matters is that you stand back up
If you let it get the best of you
It'll take over way too soon
Nobody can change you
For you are the only one who can
Never stay shut
When you need a helping hand
Even when it feels like you let yourself and others down
All you need to do is turn around
May there be someone to guide you
And help pick up the pieces along the way
Don't ever give up on the real you
And no one shall give you a reason to
For life isn't always easy
But always be someone who's caring
And may the favor return back to you
No matter where you go
Or what you do
Remember one thing
Never give up on you.



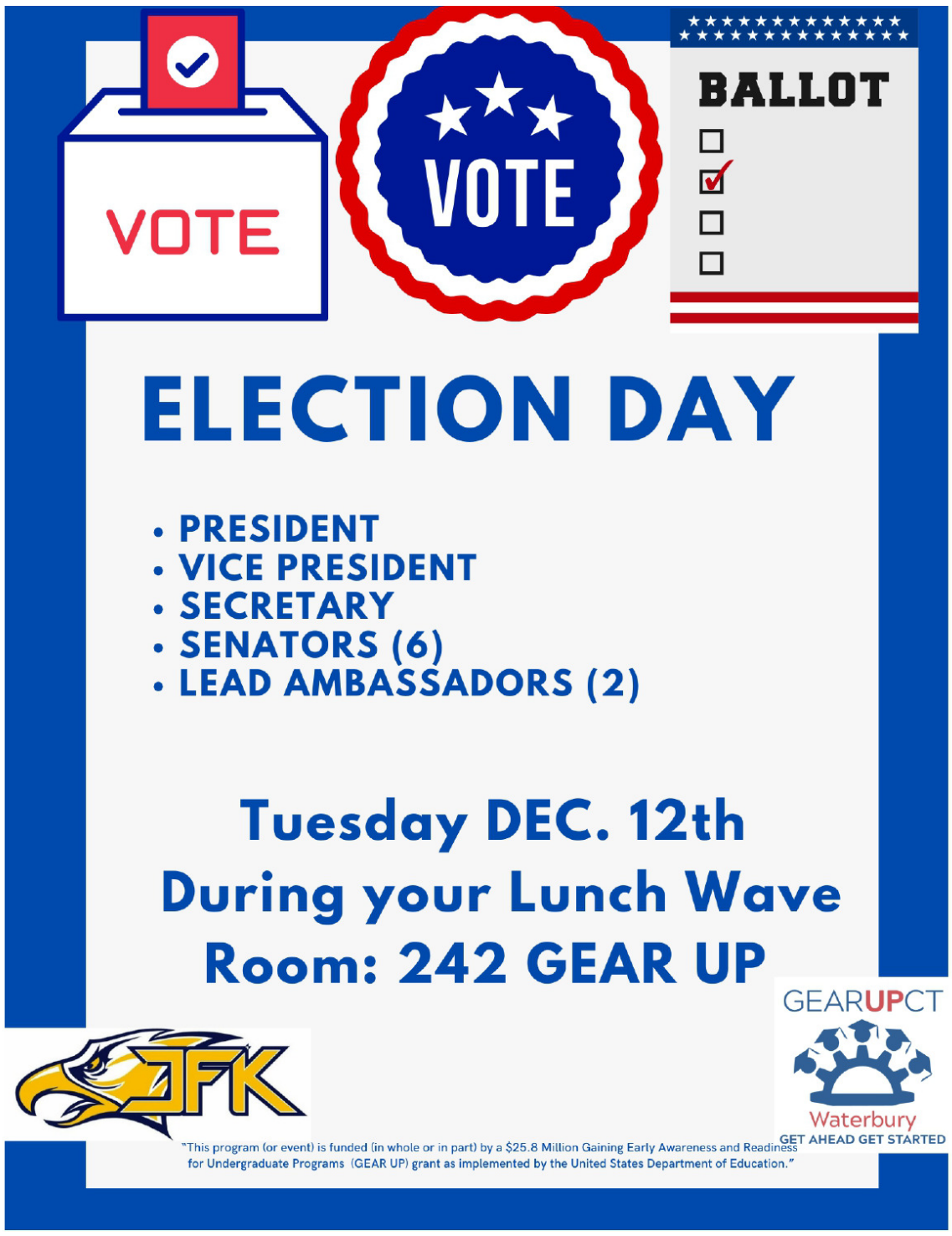
STAMFORD, CONN. PARADE Kennedy's marching band was invited to attend one of the nation's largest parades, with an "estimated 100,000 people in attendance," according to Connecticut. news12.com, a local news website. Many colorful floats were featured.

Photo compiled by J. Eusebio/staff





TALENT GALORE Can you crochet or knit like this talented student? Join the Crochet Club and more -- check out the Club Hub bulletin board outside the School Counseling Office to learn about the clubs and activities Kennedy offers. What are you waiting for?



December

WORD SEARCH

Find the following:

CAPRICORN
NARCISSUS
SAGITTARIUS
WINTER
CHRISTMAS
NORTH POLE
SANTA
FESTIVE
PRESENTS
TANZANITE

By Brooklyn Escobales
(using puzzlermaker.com)

S U S S I C R A N K E G L T Z
S I O Y A V E Y X C L Y U B V
I A W I N T E R H S O N V O M
N V G F X C T R Q B P J P T D
N L B I J V I O K A H X O M E
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Y S N L V Z Y I I G A V S I Z
M H G E A S Z P L U Q W R C O
O M U N S G G Y T G S G Y O O
M U I I H E I X T O B S Z R E
V T W N C Z R Y N Y V Z Q N V
E D Z F I Q Q P F G S U Q V F

Scrambled!

By Brooklyn Escobales

Unscramble these five words or phrases related to December.

1. LOLJY
2. ASMCTHSRI
3. ELNO
4. ESTVIITISFE
5. ROHTN ELPO

Email answers to acybart-persenaire@waterbury.k12.ct.us
First to email receives a $5 DD gift card.
Separate prizes for students & staff!

It's official: celebrate Rosa Parks Day in December, plus February

By Aryana Rivero
Managing Editor

Should Rosa Parks Day be recognized around the world?

Rosa Parks Day is a holiday observed in some areas of the United States that gives Parks recognition for her civil rights activism, so people can educate themselves in commemoration for this holiday celebrated Feb. 4 in California, Missouri, New York, and Dec. 1 in Alabama and Ohio.

"Rosa Parks Day is an American observance to honor civil rights activist Rosa Parks, who was known for refusing to give up her seat on a bus," according to www.timeanddate.com, the world's top-ranking website for time and time zones.

Who exactly is Parks, and what made her have her own holiday?

"African American seamstress Rosa Parks was (traveling) in a Montgomery City bus when the bus driver asked her to vacate her seat for a white man" then "Parks refused to leave her seat on the grounds of fairness, freedom and equality. As a result, she was arrested."

Parks, represented by Fred Gray, challenged her conviction.

"She appealed her conviction and formally challenged the legality of segregation" which led to "(c)ivil rights activists, including Martin Luther King Jr. boycott(ing) the Montgomery bus system," according to www.timeanddate.com.

The boycott lasted 381 days, and ultimately started a rise of civil rights protests. While not recognized by every state, Democrat Terri Sewell is trying to change that.

"This is not just about Black History. It's about American History," said Alabama Rep. Sewell at a news conference, according to www.cnn.com, the world leader in online news and information that seeks to inform, engage and empower the world.

Sewell explains the importance of making it a holiday, such as remembrance. It will also mark the first federal holiday that celebrates a woman.

"The proposed holiday, Sewell added, would ensure Parks' sacrifice is remembered. It would also establish the first federal holiday honoring a woman," according to www.cnn.com.

Rosa Parks Day is celebrated Feb. 4 in some places, which was her birthday, as well as Dec. 1, the date of the bus incident in Montgomery, Alabama. How can you celebrate Rosa Parks Day?

"Learn more about Rosa Parks, her role in the Civil Rights movement" as well as "(d)iscover how the Montgomery Bus Boycott affected the bus system" plus "you can also visit the Rosa Parks Museum at Troy University," according to wwww.nationalday calendar. com, a virtual website covering holidays.

You can also read books or watch films that highlight the importance and values of Parks and her actions.

Some choices for those interested are as follows:

Books
Quiet Strength: The Faith, the Hope, and the Heart of a Woman Who Changes a Nation
by Gregory J. Red and Rosa Parks
Rosa Parks by Rosa Parks
She Would Not Be Moved
by Herbert R. Kohi

Films
Boycott (2001)
Selma (2014)
Source: www.nationaldaycalendar.com

Girls' basketball features 5 seniors

By Me'Kayla Caraballo
Staff Writer

The girls' basketball team started Monday, Nov. 27, 2023 and although the season games have not officially begun, the team is practicing after school and playing some scrimmages led by Coach Mike Forgione. There are plenty of new ladies who have joined, ready to play. The team is getting ready with their practices and hopefully could win some games during their season.

When Did Girls Basketball Start?

They started practice Monday Nov. 27, 2023.

Did the Season Start?

The season did not officially start yet however, there are multiple scrimmages being played by the girls.

Who is the Team Led By?

The varsity team's head coach is Mike Forgione with a new assistant, Alethia Hibbert, physical education teacher, for both varsity and junior varsity teams.

When is the First Game?

The first game is Friday, Dec. 15, 2023 away against Oxford High School

Who is on the Team?

Saniyah Brown, Jayda Graham, Kamaria Az-Ibo, Madelyn Kieras, Mya Caraballo, Me'Kayla Caraballo, Maxine White, Cyncere Stephens, Jade Ramroop, Kamari Mcclendon-Johnston, Harmony-Monike Martin, Keylani Garcia-Bobet, Raquelly Guedes E Silva, Alyssa Bracken, and lastly, Jashmean Aytch are on the team.

Are There Any Seniors?

There are five seniors: Madelyn Kieras, Mya Caraballo, Jayda Graham, Kamaria Az-Ibo, and Saniyah Brown. (All are on varsity as well.)

When is Senior Night?

Senior night is Feb. 9, 2023 against Derby at Kennedy High School.

Boys' basketball shares motivation

Coach inspires team to be 'better people'

By Sophia Ortiz
Staff Writer

The boys' basketball team began their season Thursday, Nov. 30, 2023, entering the court with much motivation and hope, with practices playing a crucial role in refining their skill, held from 2:15 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

"I want to try to win (a) NVL championship and state championship but I mostly just want to get as far as I can with the team," said junior and captain TJ Morrison.

Every player has something that inspires them, a motivation and a reason to strive for greatness. Tyler Morrison, a freshman, talks about what keeps him in the game.

"My motivation is my family members on the sidelines; my mom is always there, I always hear her yelling for me, and my coach on the bench with my teammates," said Morrison.

As an athlete, everyone has different upbringings and challenges. For sophomore Brandon Brooks, these challenges became a catalyst for personal transformation and intensified his dedication and passion for the sport.

"I was new to basketball like two years ago and I didn't make the team so it just fueled me. I started working harder and I fell in love with basketball," said Brooks.

Exploring the lessons that come with being part of a team, both on and off the court, Coach Terrance Morrison expresses what he hopes his players take away from their time on the team.

"Being better people, not necessarily as basketball players but as human beings," said Coach Morrison.

Indoor track praises family, coach

By Nadia Rivera
Staff Writer

The indoor track team started their season Nov. 30, 2023 with a warmup for their upcoming meet. A few team members stated their first practice was fun but very hard work, and they also shared their love for the sport.

"My Dad's side of the family is very athletic; they grew up doing track, so I (want to) continue the tradition but because I really like it and I'm also good at it," said captain, junior Erica Austin.

Multiple members also expressed track is hard work but if you do what's needed, you'll get where you want to be. They also expressed it is not a sport for everyone.

"The harder you work the better you get… but also I think the environment for track is different than any other sport," said senior and captain, Dontae Roman.

When asked what motivates them, most members said family, partners, and friends but one said Nicholas O'Brien, 'Coach Nick.'

"My coach motivates me… he keeps a steady pace with me and reminds me of where I'm going," said junior Samuel Rivera.

Cheer team hopes for wins, safety

Continued from page 8

"We practice once a week on Mondays from three to five," said junior Sarah Wilmot.

These practices are in preparation for the upcoming season, but they will not cheer at every game.

"We will only cheer at home games but there are a lot of home games," said Wilmot.

Regardless of not cheering at every game, the girls wish for a good season free of anything bad happening.

"I hope we make it far enough to cheer at NVLs and for a good season and nobody to get injured because there were injuries at football," said junior Yelsi Vega.

The others agreed they hope for a successful season.

"I hope we get as many wins as we can and have as much fun as we can," said Newman.

However, the overall most important thing is to support school teams this season.

"I hope there are a lot of people showing up to the games and I hope that people show some Kennedy spirit and support the Kennedy cheerleaders and basketball players, and I hope cheerleaders have fun cheering at the games," said Wilmot.







2023 Christmas Gratitude List



By Amesha Mulla and Joslyn Tremblay with Aiyana Rivero and Melissa Guajardo
Staff Writers, Poetry Editor

'Tis the season!
The Eagle Flyer Christmas Wish List has been a tradition for the past 36 years (at least). While we appreciate presents, we also appreciate the **presence** of all the staff members at Kennedy. Without you, we would not have our school! While in years past we asked staff for their 'wishes,' during the pandemic, students decided to focus on being grateful for each member of the staff. This list is our attempt to recognize and thank those who make us the Eagles' Nest. Please excuse any errors. Now, let's welcome 2024!

Principal
Robert A. Johnston

Assistant Principals
Matthew Gwiazdoski - (A-Gonz)
Karlyn Fitzpatrick - (Gonz - O)
George Smalley - (Pa - Z)

Secretarial Staff
Denise M. Cooke- school secretary
Melanie Andrash - v.p. secretary
Wendy Cronk - clerical
Desiree Hartley - clerical
Kelly Hinton - school counseling secretary

Allied Health
Eileen Costa, R.N.

Art Department
Nichole Titley-Amodeo
Marnie Carpinella
Bjorn Enquist
Stefanie Porcaro

Athletic Director
Kieran Shippee

Audio-Visual
Kevin Danaher

Business Department
Jeanne Sasso, Dept. Chair
Richard Burns
Pedro Dossantos
Robert McGrath
Roxana Pagnini

Cafeteria Staff
Marcia Jolly, Cafeteria Manager
Antonia Cavallo
Cathy D'Aversa
Sandra Dery
Yulfo Fallon
Mildred Johnson
Yvonne Smith
Suzan Stricaland
Gigi Torres
Rahdel Wright

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Chris Palangio, Head Custodian
Luis Gracia
Adam Brunelli
James Raspo
Second shift
Carlos Alejandro
Kyle Barry
Leon Lawrence
Ed Riley
Angel Torres

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Tara Cusack
Katie Doyle
Emily Drewry
Kristen Elliott
Kelsey Hartsoe
Michael Pannoni
Kara Sullivan
Matthew Wiener

ESL/Sheltered Department
Myra Lopez
Mildred Martinez
Javier Otero
Dino Pantoni

Family & Consumer Sciences
Nicole Caron-Lichaj

Foreign Language Department
Rosanna Cinquegrana
Denise Gianelli
Diana Grullon
Maura Kearns
Robert Likorama
Catalina Rincon
Dr. Mary-Ann Sagnella

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Shareza Jalaludin

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Emily Benton
Kevin Edwards
George Flaherty
Marlena Scialla
Carly Sullivan
Brigitt Szwaba
Sukru Unluturk

Multi-Media Center
Leanne Lizak, Librarian

Music Department
Nick Drabik
Anne Pape

Physical Education
Elena Cumbo
William Ferrare
Alethia Hibbert
Mark LaChance
Kieran Shippee
Michael Stango

Para Professionals
Nancy Cocchiola
Iris Cosme
Justine D'Amelio
Shawntina Hodges
Ferba Johnson
Amy LaFountain
John Phelan
Mary Samaha
Sharon Sweatt

Parent Liaison
Ann Marie Brites

School Counseling Department
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Ashley Moutinho
Craig Poulter
Maria Sanchez
Caryn Stellmach
Charneil Bush, College and Career Coordinator

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Stacey Gaynes
Jessica Gomulinski
Deanna Hassan
Meghan Rodriguez
Cynthia Scrivano

Technology Education
Kevin Danaher
Heather DeVeau
Christopher Perkins
Christopher Saraceno

Talent And Gifted Program
Michael Clark

Nurse
Lois Breton, R.N.
Jessica Estrada, Nurse's Aide

School Resource Officer
Devon Ridenhour

Specialists
Jake Desjardins, ISS Monitor
Charles Digsby, Hall Monitor
Jessica Doyle, Hearing Impaired Specialist
Ashley Ezekiel, Behavior Specialist
Carla Guglielmo, Social Worker
Carmela Iannicelli, Social Worker
Heather Jacobson, School Psychologist
Tina LoRusso, School-based Therapist
Terrance Morrison, Behavior Specialist
Lisa Naughton, Speech Language Pathologist
Betsy Sarris, Behavior Specialist
Sheila Sarris, Interpreter For The Deaf
Mary Beth Sideravage, Attendance Counselor
Jennifer Way, ABA

Substitutes
Joseph Galante
Esmeralda Hernandez
Beth Naylor
Robert Rego

West Side transplants
Robert Cammelletti, security
Peter McCasland, principal
Robert Readel, security



Special thank you to Mrs. Denise Cooke for helping us put together this wonderful list, Mr. Christopher Palangio for his help in making Kennedy custodians shine, Mrs. Marcia Jolly for her help in sharing her list and making sure that every person in the cafeteria is known, and last but not least to Dr. Cybart-Persenaire for supporting and encouraging us to publish a school newspaper;
thank you!
Please excuse any errors.



Sports

Football wins Thanksgiving Day

By Taylor Kunkel
Sports Editor

Team transforms: six consecutive wins

Strong. Passionate. Competitive. Fun. Hard-Working. Confidence. Committed. Family. These are the words seven football players and one coach used to describe the 2023 players and their successful program.

This year's varsity football program has changed for the better. As of Saturday, Nov. 11, their record was 5-4 with all five wins being back to back when these interviews took place. The Eagles won Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 23 against Crosby's Bulldogs 26-20 at the Jimmy Lee Stadium in Waterbury, missing the chance to advance to the state playoffs which has never happened for a Waterbury public school.

"We were tired of losing. Losing every year was a big problem. We wanted it. We wanted it more than the other teams did. With conditioning and plays in practice we put in the work and it showed in the games. It showed who we are now," said Alazaron Roberts, a senior on the team.

Many of the seniors have been a part of the football program since freshman year. They never got the chance to play that year because of COVID-19 . They wanted a great last season and were motivated to win.

"I feel better than the seniors that came before me. They pushed us up to be winners. Winning will show how far we have come. Coach Sarlo told us not to let Crosby take this opportunity away from us," said Matthew Barton, a captain and a senior.

With COVID-19 ruining their freshman year, the team was now that much more motivated. It would have been the first time a city public school in Waterbury has made it to playoffs, and the first time since 2014 that the Eagles have had a positive record, meaning more wins than losses.

"It would mean a lot to get to the playoffs. We had a really bad record and to turn it around would show everyone how far we have come," said Roberts.

How was the team doing mid-November?

"The team and the season are going great. We focus more in practice. We have everything together and we are more confident. Everyone knows what we have to do," said Nickoi Leveridge, a team junior.

The Eagles started with three losses, but in the week four game against Oxford High School, everything changed for them.

"Oxford week we lost but we played a great game and that brought our momentum. It was a group of things. A lot of running and conditioning leading up to that week's game that brought us into the right shape," said Jayvon Watts, senior, and star o-line and d-line player on the team.

With the team's record last year being 3-7 and the year previous being 2-8, there have been misconceptions on who the team really is and what they stand for.

"The misconception is people think our kids are all talk. We are the underdogs, we always have been but once our kids see it, they want it and they show that out on the field," said Joseph Galante, head coach of boys' JV football, varsity assistant coach.

With their record being 5-4 as of Saturday, Nov. 11, there has to have been some changes. And there has been. Jayden Lopez, one of the captains, a sophomore on the team, and the star starting quarterback as well as Oscar Vargas, one of the captains, and freshman on the team, are that change.

"Jayden and Oscar. It's their first year playing football but they are always at practice, always have the right attitude, always show up ready to go, and always give 100 percent because they want to win. They are the team leaders," said Galante.

Not to leave anyone out, but Coach Galante also shouted out Javion Watts and Travis Figueroa for their great unofficial leadership roles on the team this year.

"Travis is one of the most physical players on the team. He picks up the plays fast and has learned the ball really well this season. He is always the one you can lean on. Javion is also up there. He is in the best shape ever this year. He always has the right attitude and makes everyone laugh and has a good time. He is definitely always a leader," said Galante.

At the start of the season the team put together both personal and team goals.

"Team goals this year were to go positive and always show up. My goals were to get a touchdown, I got four this season, and 200 plus yards, I received 300 total yards this season," said Figueroa, senior on the team, and star running back.

Figueroa broke his leg running the ball in a play in the game against Wolcott High School in week seven. One thing the team does for motivation is 'why' statements.

"We have 'why' statements so, 'why' we want to win. One of our teammates, Travis, broke his leg in the Wolcott game. He was on his way to have a great season. We have to make sure we play our best for him," said Jordan Jefferson, senior on the team.

In closing, Coach Galante said this:

"I know I yell, but our guys have the potential and ability to do anything they set their minds to. I get on them for that reason. I don't yell because I'm mad. I see their potential. I am so proud of all of them and how far they have come. To the players: thank you for all the hard work you put in. You have laid the groundwork for all the younger guys. We really appreciate it," said Galante.



Marching band performs in Stamford

By Jamaylie Eusebio
Staff Writer

Nov. 19 parade features large crowd

COMMENTARY

Kennedy's marching band has been nothing but successful since we started the program, whether from performing at football games, to participating in the 2023 Fourth of July parade in Washington, DC. Recently we were invited to perform at the Stamford, Conn. Thanksgiving parade. Buses filled with band members and staff, and parents volunteered to help Sunday, Nov. 19.

It was phenomenal! I felt very good to be part of something so great. Although it was very cold, we all held our own and continued to do our job as a marching band.

The sidelines were filled with hundreds of people ready to see what we came to bring. They were all cheering and rooting for us, and I know it made most of us feel special.

I felt so happy and joyful to be able to dance with my team, plus the love we received from everyone there was beautiful. We loved every inch of it. I would 100 percent do it all again. Also during the parade there were many cool floats, with different characters from different shows.

The marching band has had many great performances but I think this has been our best one so far. We all felt good about ourselves and the crowd just made it better.

Overall the parade was a success and we had as much fun as we could.





THANKSGIVING HONORS
Kennedy's marching band (seen in top photo and photo at left), which includes color guard and dancers (see photo bottom left), were invited to perform in Stamford, Conn. at the annual Thanksgiving parade Sunday, Nov. 19, 2023. It is said to be one of the nation's most well-attended parades, with an "estimated 100,000 people in attendance," according to Connecticut. news12.com, a local news website.

Photos compiled by J. Eusebio/staff

Join boys' swim: gain life skill, full body workout

By Sophia Ortiz
Staff Writer

Team practices weekdays 2 - 4 p.m. in school pool

The boys' varsity swim team, led by two captains, began their season at the school's John Reardon pool Nov. 30, 2023 ready to improve technique and drop times with practices held Monday - Friday 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. and Saturdays from 8:15 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.

As the team dives into the season, captain and senior Jordan Jefferson highlights the vitality of swimming.

"I would recommend people should join the swim team because swimming is a great full body workout and is a very important life skill," said Jefferson.

Swimming, though demanding, is rewarding and encourages determination. Another member gives his advice to newcomers or students who might want to join.

"Definitely don't quit; last year we had about 10 kids but we ended up with about four and a lot of kids had potential to get better but they decided that they didn't want to do it," said Isaac Alvarez, senior.

Finding inspiration can be transformative; it can be the beginning of a successful journey whether it be in swimming or elsewhere.

"My main inspiration is my brother; he swam for the team from 2016 to 2020. Freshman year he didn't even know how to swim and that's kind of like me right now so that's my motivation," said Emre Azizoglu, freshman.

As the team initiates their season, it seems they all have one common goal in mind: constant improvement. Senior and captain Jacob Balikian shares his.

"My hopes are: to get more swimmers for next year's team, for the new members to get better, and at least win some races," he said.

Cheer eager for winter season

By Jillian Santos
News Editor

Team performs only at home

Kennedy's cheer team is ready to cheer this upcoming winter season!

The team, made up of 16 members, led by captains Isabella Rybczyk, Eva Pineda, and Biannca Souz, are practicing and preparing to cheer at home games for the 2023-24 varsity boys' basketball season.

"I am excited to be back; I am back because Sarah and Yelsi convinced me they were having so much fun that I decided to be back," said junior Jisela Newman, a previous team member who rejoined the team.

This fun can be see within the team's continued practicing.

See CHEER, page 6

Check out more sports on page 6: girls' and boys' basketball, and indoor track.