Dear Como Community,

February is Black History Month. As a black male principal, I’m constantly thinking about my responsibility to the Como Park community as we celebrate and remember the contributions of African Americans in this country. It continues to be my personal goal to interrupt the predictable outcomes that have prevented many in this community from getting a quality education.

Although we are in distance learning, Como Park continues to be a great place to go to school, work and live. We strive to be an inclusive and welcoming environment for all learners. When we work together, our students will be on the road to becoming lifelong learners and develop as contributing members of our community. I ask you to partner with our school in this work together so that all of our students can achieve greatness. It really does take a village to raise a child/student/young adult.

Monday, February 22nd, from 12:30-3 PM, Como Park will be starting our in-building On-Site Support (OSS) for academic assistance for some of our invited students. The Como staff is continuing to communicate with families who were selected to attend. We look forward to seeing some of your learners in person next week. It has been too long since we have had students in the building.

Como is still supporting a Positive Behavioral Interventions Supports model for OSS. Staff, students, and families can learn about positive school culture and how we can create a space that is aligned with SPPS’s Rights and Responsibilities Handbook. You can also request a copy of the handbook from our school by calling 651-293-8800. If you have questions about our On-Site Support, please contact your student’s counselor.

In partnership,

Kirk Morris, Principal
Three Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS) teachers are candidates for 2021 Minnesota Teacher of the Year. They are:

- Eugenia Popa, Harding High School
- John Horton, J.J. Hill Montessori School
- Kathy Romero, Como Park Senior High School

Ms. Romero!

We are very fortunate to have you at Como!

See why Como Park Senior High School is the best place for your student!

Click here to view Como Park Senior High's video Showcase!
CONGRATULATIONS JERRY ON YOUR RETIREMENT!!

Jerry started his career back in the summer of 1984 and did a couple of months doing restoration cleaning of two other buildings in the district, one of which was Como Elementary. After that he ended up at CPSHS for the start of the 1984/85 school year and has been in the building ever since. 36 graduating classes later he has probably seen over 10,000 children walk across the stage into their future. Some of which ended up back here to work alongside him. His years of dedicated service show in the smiles on the faces of the people he greets and the work he performs. He has rarely missed a day and even been forced to take time off so he wouldn't lose vacation time. He will be sorely missed, but no one deserves this more than the kind, gentle, man I am honored to call my friend, Jerome J. Hastreiter.

Adam Szymanski

COUGAR GRAMS are on sale through the month of February. Send a COUGAR GRAM to a special friend or a favorite Como staff! Check out this video by Ms. Somerville:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-DD9omARJE0qwmrELSNPjN6MCMBE0BDG/view?usp=sharing

Click here for the COUGAR GRAM form.
STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Please welcome our new Biology teacher, Ms. Julia Brunner

I was born and raised in St. Paul where I live with my husband and two sons. I graduated from St. Paul Central and got my teaching degree from Metropolitan State University. This is my 6th year of teaching, I started my career teaching in South Saint Paul.

I am passionate about Biology and helping students understand the world around them and their role in it. I love gardening, cooking, and enjoying the outdoors. I am so excited to be part of the Como community and teach my favorite subject, Biology!

A message from our nurse, Lori Nakamura

As we look forward to having students return to the building for on-site support:

Please thoroughly review the SPPS COVID-19 Student and Family Guidelines (Updated 1-20-21)

Please keep your child home if they are sick and experiencing any of the symptoms outlined in the screening guidelines.

For more information, please contact nurse Lori Nakamura at 651-888-7614.
Updates from the Counseling Department and the Como Career & College Center (CCC)

IMPORTANT UPDATES

Earn Free College Credits with PSEO (9th-11th graders) It’s time to start talking to your student about applying to PSEO. Post Secondary Enrollment Option, or PSEO, allows 10th-12th grade high school students to take classes at local colleges and receive both college and high school credit. PSEO covers the students’ costs associated with tuition, books, and fees, saving students thousands of dollars in earning their college degree. PSEO is also a great way for students to gain experience and responsibility as a college student before graduating high school. **9th-11th grade students must notify their school counselor by May 30 if they want to participate in PSEO for the 2021-2022 school year.** CLICK HERE to check out the Como PSEO Presentation and Recording on the CCC Website and talk with your student about applying to PSEO.

ACT Update for Juniors The ACT is scheduled for March 2. Students should plan to be at Como Park High School from 8am-3pm. We’re trying to gauge how many of our 11th grade students will be testing in the building. If your student is a junior, please have them complete this form even if they’re not planning to take the ACT: [https://forms.gle/xbf4WoXkWx8MbiyU8](https://forms.gle/xbf4WoXkWx8MbiyU8). All students interested in taking the ACT should attend the **ACT Info Session on Wednesday, February 24 at 2pm.** Log in using Google Meet Code: CPHSACT. For more information, visit the [ACT Updates page on the CCC website](https://forms.gle/xbf4WoXkWx8MbiyU8).

Class Registration for the 2021-2022 School Year (9th-11th graders) Information about class options and class registration at Como Park will be made available by the end of March. Planning ahead will help your student make thoughtful, informed decisions. Now is the time to start talking with your student about their academic and/or career goals, the classes they are interested in taking and the credits they need to graduate. Students are encouraged to talk to their current teachers about what level classes they should consider taking next year. Stay tuned for more information on class registration!

[Click HERE](https://forms.gle/xbf4WoXkWx8MbiyU8) for more information on College Resources + Events, Student Career Resources, Family Resources, and Paying for College

CONTACT US

[College Resources Website](https://forms.gle/xbf4WoXkWx8MbiyU8)
[Career & College Center Website](https://forms.gle/xbf4WoXkWx8MbiyU8)
Breakthrough Twin Cities is taking applications for their summer program for students that want to become teachers, the best job there is (according to Miss Colestock)

https://www.breakthroughtwincities.org/the-teaching-fellowship/

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FREE mini-medical school event through the U of MN - a couple sessions on Monday evenings - the topics are COVID related. Are you interested in Healthcare? Check it out.

http://view.ecommunicate2.umn.edu/?qs=b68ca013371092a853da2452bf678a8ac801fe428f47c439dabd5089dda6f2593425b910ee9d4ddd9fb9c24fcc44a9f035859f48cd711b8a95c5296a7bd5df073389bd9abf49ed45a972e6780919850

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Engineering Contest? Why not? Work in teams of 3 - 10 to solve a problem in transportation.

Email me for more information or email the contest directly -

engineering@mnsu.edu

https://engineering.mnsu.edu/engineering-machine-design-contest/
JA Inspire Virtual Career Expo is an interactive online career fair for middle and high school students made possible through a collaboration of educators, industry leaders, and Junior Achievement. This powerful event will prepare and inspire youth to explore career paths they never knew were possible.

March 23 - March 25, 2021

Why JA Inspire Virtual Career Expo? Together, we can create equitable access to career mentorship opportunities for today’s young people. Students will turn abstract career notions into real insight on career industries, job opportunities, and education paths to reach their goals. Businesses can support youth on this journey and build the workforce of the future.

Virtual Career Expo Highlights:
- Interactive showcase of local and regional careers by industry
- Online student self-guided or teacher-led pre & post event JA curriculum available
- Downloadable career information and on-the-job videos
- Virtual backpack allows students to save what interests them
- Gamification adds fun and increases student engagement
- Extended student access - 3 hours on event day, plus 24/7 access for 3 additional months!
- Online software is compatible with multiple devices: computers, tablets, mobile phones
- Adeptable for in-class or remote learning

Registration Now Open:
jaum.wufoo.com/forms/ja-inspire-virtual-career-expo-registration/

For more information, contact Sharon Severson at sharon@jaum.org
Gain professional and business technology skills while earning college credit.
Receive coaching on professional skills such as communication, teamwork, and troubleshooting.
Learn technical skills such as project management, Microsoft Suite, and data security.

Earn $15,000 through a year-long internship.
Get paid to intern at a top Twin Cities company such as Target, Ecolab, or Medtronic.
Build your professional network through job shadowing, informational interviews, and relationship-building.

Receive post-high school planning support.
Partner with Genesys Works to complete college admissions, financial aid, and scholarships.
Receive help realizing your post-high school pathway, such as college, military, and the workforce.

Application Deadline: March 7, 2020
Juniors, sign up for more information at rebrand.ly/GWTCClass2022 or apply online at genesysworks.org/twin-cities.
For more information, email gwtrecruitment@genesysworks.org.
YOUR FUTURE CAREER IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

The following resources will guide you through the many skilled positions in the construction industry, including job outlook, salary, and how to get started.

Click here for more information and resources

SUMMER PLANS?

DISCOVER YOUR CAREER PATH WITH

Saint Paul youth ages 14-21 can apply online February 1st - February 28th at:

RIGHTTRACK.STPAUL.GOV

Join us to develop your employment skills, build your network, and earn money. For more information, visit the online FAQ or call (651) 266-6363.

@RightTrackSP

RightTrackSP
True to the second verse of the Marines' Hymn (*In the snow of far-off Northern lands*) the MCJROTC "PT" took to training outdoors this past weekend in frigid temperatures to prepare their Male and Female "PT" teams for the upcoming 2021 Regional Marine Corps JROTC Youth Physical Fitness Postal Championship. The "PT" team is led by Sophomore Cadet Private First Class Ve Shar.
The Como Park MCJROTC JLABER’s team (Alex Le-10, Sophia Moore-10, Jesiah Mason-10 and Nayblut Kusuh-11) have successfully passed round one against more than 250 other Marine Corps JROTCs across the USA. They are now ranked in the top 10% for round two and a chance at the Junior Leadership Academic Bowl Championship in Washington D.C. this summer. Semper fi & alive - the team captain is Cadet Lance Corporal Alexander Le (10).

The MCJROTC "PT" team continues to train by enduring the frigid weather (-10) this past Saturday by enjoying a snowshoe trek across school grounds. Up and down the snowy hills and ending it all with the courageous snowshoe jump into powder. A real hoot and Semper fi - staying alive.
The Como Park debating duo of Chikamso Chijioke and Sam Skinner concluded their junior year of competition as participants in the Minnesota State High School League Tournament. They’ve made steady progress through high school, from participating in the novice division as freshmen, to junior varsity as sophomores, before succeeding at the varsity level this year.

Debate at Como Park is organized by veteran teacher Ms. Deb Hansemeier. She’s happy to have support from partners in the Urban Debate League, who provide additional coaching staff and resources. The community coach working with Como was Josh Lamer, a University of Minnesota student with a passion for policy debate.

That passion has been developing within both Chijioke and Skinner. As they dove deep into research for this year’s topic, they enjoyed building their cases and producing compelling arguments for both sides. To prepare for each tournament (all competitions at all levels were virtual this year), they refined their positions on the resolution: the United States federal government should enact substantial criminal justice reform in the United States in one or more of the following forensic science, policing, sentencing.

“We constructed affirmative arguments advocating for ending the death penalty, abolishing ICE, and educating people about jury nullification,” Skinner said.

“We always thought about what the other side could say, and how we could defend against it or use it to our advantage,” Chijioke said.

Coach Hansemeier explained how prepared and adaptable debaters must be to succeed. “They don’t know what side they’ll have to argue until right before the debate. Then they present evidence and have to argue why their side is a better choice for the judge.”

The top two teams at each section tournament qualify for state. Chijioke and Skinner felt good after each round. When they secured second place after two days of competition, they were rightfully proud.

At state, they wound up winning two of five debates against the premier competition across Minnesota. But the trophies aren’t why they compete. Nor are they the highest point of pride.

“They don’t have a good round. We don’t even have to win. If I felt I did a good job, I was proud. If I learned something that I can use later on, I was proud.” Chikamso said.

“My baseline for an accomplishment was feeling that I did my best, did not give up, and used my skills and knowledge in an efficient way,” Skinner expressed similar sentiments. But most of all, he’s grateful for the collective experience of debate with a dedicated group of Como peers.

“I am most proud of how the debate team has grown this year,” Skinner explained. “We expected that the COVID-19 pandemic would lower participation, but instead our numbers have grown. Each of our teams have performed consistently well at all levels of debate.”

Como’s junior varsity debaters this season were Kayla Kerr, Lily Anderson, Caitlyn Coyce and Allie Regnwald. Novice debaters included Colleen Reynolds Shaw, Ibrahim Mohamed, T’Yanna Booker, Thay See, and Eisa Owol.

Two years ago, Chijioke and Skinner debated at the novice level. For those willing to put in the time and practice, there’s clearly a path for growth at Como in the team’s supportive and collaborative environment.

“ Debate can be a home for anyone seeking education, competition, and/or community,” Skinner said. “Its inclusivity and opportunity is unparalleled.”

**ACT IS MARCH 2, 2021**

The ACT is being administered at Como Park on Tuesday, March 2. This test is available to all 11th graders. There are 5 sections: Reading, English, Science, Math, and Writing. Students should arrive by 8:15 if they are transporting themselves. Students eligible for SPPS transportation will be provided with it. Testing will begin between 8:30-9 and will end by 2:45. If a student arrives after the test has begun, you will not be able to test and will be sent home. A meal and snacks will be provided.

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, we know there are mixed feelings about returning to the building. We will be following SPPS COVID-19 Safety Protocols during the test. Students must wear a mask while testing, and students will remain socially distanced while in the building.

If you or your student are uncomfortable or do not feel prepared to take the test at this time, you may opt to take it at a later date. **Please have your student fill out this form to indicate if they will test on March 2:**

[https://forms.gle/LnTMueH7fHEkp71N8](https://forms.gle/LnTMueH7fHEkp71N8)

**There is an info session for students on Wednesday, February 24 at 2:00 pm.** The meet code is CPHSACT. If you have any questions, you can contact Becky Mendoza (rebecca.mendoza@spps.org) or Ashley Rignell (ashley.rignell@spps.org), Como’s ACT coordinators.
What a catch! The new cohort of students in the SEAK program attended their first in-person event hosted by Minnesota Trout Unlimited. While enjoying an afternoon of introductory ice fishing on Lake McCarrons, students learned about ice safety and explored issues of water quality using a tool known as a secchi disk. SEAK youth are already gearing up for their next in-person event, a snowshoe program in February!

Did you know that required school documents can be translated upon request or interpreters made available? For more information please contact Jamie Hoffman at jamie.hoffman@spps.org.