



NEWSLETTER

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IGSMA 2024

BY WILLIAM GROH, SAMUEL MEHRABIAN, BEN TARBERT



On February 3, 2024, at Carl Sandburg Junior High School in Rolling Meadows, Illinois, many students from the Joseph Sears School participated in the Illinois Grade School Music Association (IGSMA)'s Northern Division District 8 Solo and Ensemble Contest.

IGSMA was founded in 1939 and has the goal of helping students achieve their best proficiency in the art of music. One way they accomplish this goal is by hosting Solo & Ensemble and Organization Contests and Festivals. At the most recent contest, students sang or played a musical instrument in front of a judge, who gave them a score and helpful tips. Students could choose to do a solo and/or an ensemble. In all, 45 students participated in the contest, performing a variety of percussion, string, woodwind, vocal, and brass pieces.

Sears teachers Bill Gordon, Spencer Frie, and Lisa Lehman Hunt helped students practice and prepare for the contest and attended the event in person. Mrs. Lehman Hunt commented about the festival: "The IGSMA Solo and Ensemble Festival is a great opportunity for our musicians to really challenge themselves."



Student artwork

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CONTINUED ON PAGE 4.

SPELLING BEE

BY LULU HUANG, LAILA MUTHIALU, AND PIPER NELSON



The spelling bee was one event we had this trimester. It took place at the Nygaard Auditorium on February 6 from 4-6 PM. It consisted of 20 students, mostly 4th graders. Each student is given a word to spell correctly in each round. If they spell it correctly, they move on to the following round. If they spell it incorrectly, they do not move to the next round and are out of the competition.

Students may ask for clarifying information when spelling a word such as definition, land of origin, using it in a sentence. They must say the word before spelling it and then again once they have completed spelling it. The words start off fairly easy, but then it gets more and more challenging.

Some words included “sky,” “hair,” “water,” “disdain,” and “photosynthesis.” Cecily Stone won first place, Will Cape won second place, and Clara Anderson and Sophia Conrad tied for third place. Since Cecily won first place, she competed, representing Sears in the New Trier District Spelling Bee. “It was fun but also sort of nerve-wracking,” Cecily commented. Some words included: “gullibility,” “morphological,” and “gaffer.” Cecily also stated, “The other big thing I’ll remember about it is that the vocab round was a real curveball.”



STUDENT VS. STAFF BASKETBALL GAME

BY EMMITT EMIGHOLZ,

The student versus teacher basketball game occurred on Friday, January 26, 2024. The game was a major school spirit event that the entire junior high school attended. The game consisted of the junior high teachers and a few of the eighth graders. In the end, the teachers won the game with a score of 47 to 35. The students played hard, but the teachers had their victory. The crowd showed their support for either their teachers or their peers with intense cheering and support on both sides. Junior high science teacher Mr. Beavin said, "I really enjoyed the student-faculty basketball game for a couple of reasons. First, the game enabled staff and students to interact positively in a fun, friendly competition that allowed us all to see each other in a different light. Secondly, I think the game also promoted school spirit and a sense of community, as the junior high grades and parents gathered to cheer on everyone." A 6th-grade student, Lily Orlovsky, said, "It was an amazing experience. My friend and I enjoyed watching the game together." This is a super fun tradition, and it also happens with volleyball teams in the winter," Orlovsky said. Go Panthers!



IGSMA 2024 CONTD.

They get to learn an extra piece of music and perform in front of a judge. These students are a great example of our Sears Fearless Learners! All of our students who participated did a great job at the festival and should be very proud of all of their hard work!"

Mr. Frie agreed, stating, "The Sears music teachers are very proud of the 45 student musicians who participated in our District 8 Illinois Grade School Music Association Solo and Ensemble festival on February 3. These students demonstrated persistence, motivation, focus, and skill as they prepared a piece of music throughout December and January. For many weeks, they came to school early, stayed late after school, and even practiced during lunch and recess in order to be as prepared as possible. Musicians learned more than the notes and rhythms; they dug into the nuances of their pieces and perfected the expressive elements. On the day of the Solo and Ensemble Festival, the nerves and excitement were evident, but all students did an amazing job. They are now better musicians because of their dedication and hard work."

In conclusion, Solo and Ensemble is a great opportunity for students to improve and showcase their musical talents. Sears students did a great job at the event!

SCAMPER 2024

BY SALLY MCENTEE, CECILY STONE, SAMUEL MEHRABIAN, AND BEN TARBERT

On February 2, 2024, there were two Scamper performances at The Joseph Sears School: one during the school day and one at night. The Scamper performance originated in 1943 as a way for Girl Scouts to thank the Kenilworth community for their support and for the purchase of Girl Scout Cookies. The tradition continued in 2024 as Girl Scouts in grades three through eight entertained through dance, song, and performance skits.

Some students enjoyed the event: "My favorite thing about Scamper is performing in front of an audience and practicing with my friends," says MaryRiley Boutross, a 7th grader. An 8th grader, Bay Lien, remarked, "I like the tradition and the community of it. I also like that it is very generational. It is going to be very emotional because everyone cries when the girls see their baby pictures. I can't believe it has been going on for 80 years." One popular performance from last year was "Cookies, Cookies, Baby" (Ice, Ice, Baby). Another new song that generated lots of excitement this year was Cookies No. 5.

Marjorie Bransfield was an eighth-grade Scamper mom from last year who grew up in Wilmette. She said in an interview that her favorite part of last year's Scamper was watching all the hard work of the other Scamper parents and herself being funneled into one big moment. "I think when you pass the magical line from the audience to the stage and backstage to the stage, there's a magical experience. And being seen can feel really horrible at times or really amazing. Because you're committing to singing and dancing— even if you don't sing and dance," she said. "You may not like it, but you're on stage, so you may as well see if there is something enjoyable about it."

Mrs. Bransfield also talked about tradition. "Tradition is a funny thing. People like to buck tradition and complain about tradition, but some traditions are very powerful and very important." This shows just how many Kenilworth residents cherish Scamper as not only a schoolwide tradition but as a part of the community as well.



In summary, Scamper is a cherished tradition that helps bring the community together in a fun and festive way. It allows Girl Scouts of all ages to take part in an event that has been a Sears tradition for 80 years and have fun with their friends at the same time.