

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

*Grove Street
Welcomes
Katie Cacace*

Front

Nature Journals

2

*Making Football
Safer*

3

*A Love of Cooking
Tinted Windows*

4

*Experiencing
Newark and NYC*

5

Community Service

6

January Graduates

7-8

School-to-Work

9

*Campus Chatter
Video Games
Review*

10

*Vermont's Drug
Crisis*

11

Choosing Our Pets

12

*Walmart
Supercenter*

13

Making Music

Artist's Corner

Back

Grove Street Welcomes Katie Cacace

By Sophia Clark

Katie Cacace's life is nothing short of interesting. She teaches a variety of courses here at Grove Street, including math, school to work, technology classes, and healthy living. However, her life is not only limited to her career. Katie also maintains an exciting personal life outside of school.

Katie grew up in Green Bay, Wisconsin, as one of four siblings: an older sister and two younger brothers. During her childhood, she enjoyed playing volleyball and spending time with her friends. After high school, Katie attended the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor where she pursued an education in Engineering. This is where she met her husband John who also studied Engineering. Katie and John moved to Massachusetts where they attended Harvard University in Cambridge. After attending Harvard, both Katie and John decided that engineering was not their passion, and switched their careers to teaching.

Katie and John were drawn to Vermont because of their love for skiing and hiking, as well as the opportunity to pursue teaching careers in Rutland. When she is not teaching or attending school events, Katie enjoys hiking, skiing, practicing yoga, and watching her children participate in sports. She has three children. Her oldest, Johnny, is a sophomore at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, and her two daughters, Skyla and Sammy, attend RHS.

Katie also loves to travel, and one of her most memorable trips was when she and John took a group of students on a month-long backpacking trip to Tanzania. During the trip, they participated in community service at a nearby school, climbed Mount Kilimanjaro and went on a safari with the students.

When reflecting about her first impressions of Grove Street, Katie shares, "My first impression of Grove was the calm, quiet, and organized atmosphere. The way in which students go through high school impressed me. The weekly contracts, the motivation to graduate, and the learning atmosphere are what intrigued me the most."

Looking back on her first semester at Grove Street, Katie says she would have tried to visit the school in June to familiarize herself with the classes she would be teaching and better prepare herself for the upcoming semester.

Katie prefers teaching at Grove Street compared to other schools she has worked in the past. She explains, "I like that Grove is a separate program. In my previous school, I worked in a combined setting where students were often distracted and struggled with the location in the larger high school. The curriculum at my old school was also very strict with what had to be taught. I like that Grove offers its own unique educational approach."

Finally, Katie said, "If I had to choose a reality TV show to participate in, it would be *The Amazing Race* because of my love for travel and the physical and mental challenge it takes to win."



Katie's family in Hampton Beach, NH



Katie and John in Tanzania

Nature Journals in the Spirit of Henry David Thoreau's *Walden*

Grove Street Campus students were tasked with composing a nature journal in the spirit of Henry David Thoreau's *Walden*. Thoreau, life-long writer, thinker, philosopher, naturalist, and Transcendentalist, spent two years, two months, and two days observing, describing, and reflecting on Walden Pond at various times of day and in different seasons.

We would like to share two of the nature journals written by Grove Street Campus students.

CLOUDED MOON



This photo was taken at the beginning of a beautiful switch to sunset over a full moon. The calmness of this moment was very peaceful, as all there was for sound, was the slight swaying of the trees, letting off a cool breeze. The grey clouds hovered in the sky, past the moon's sight creating a lovely image over the mountain side. The trees' foliage is beginning to fade from bright reds and oranges to dimmer yellow and browns. The pink sky illustrating the background to this photo is what truly puts it all together. What also helped, was the use of my aunt's professional camera, which takes much higher quality photos than a regular phone does. When I first took the photo, I feared that the clouds would cover the moon completely, ruining my chances at the perfect picture. But I was pleasantly surprised when I saw that it had come out better than hoped for.

Kianna Reed



Life will always find a way

Within the city, where some may have moved for greater opportunities and to grow as a person, there are other things growing as well. Plants, flowers, and all types of new growth. As Jurassic Park said in 1993, "Life, uh, finds a way." In cities there is no sure way to stop plants and animals from living here too. While out on a walk I noticed flowers growing even though there was a fence. They were beautiful, and made me take in my surroundings around me. It was damp outside, and the smell of fresh rain tickled my nose. I realized that we can coexist with nature, but we should find a more sustainable way to do so. Beauty is all around us, but sometimes life moves too fast to take it in. Going on walks around my neighborhood has shown me that even though some think cities are "gross and disgusting," each city is beautiful in its own right. They will get even prettier if we coexist with nature, and allow plants to grow, as we do.

Abby Whiting

Making Football Safer

By Payton Tufts

Football in this country is an extremely popular sport that attracts a huge audience. One reason for its popularity is the hitting and violence. Unfortunately this high level of contact has consequences. CTE, Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy, is caused by repeated trauma to the head and is most common in sports like football and boxing. It can also be found in military veterans.

The symptoms of CTE can be as minor as confusion all the way to dementia and eventually death. CTE has been found in people as young as 17 years old, and has been discovered in 345 out of 376 professional NFL players whose brains have been studied after death by the UNITE Brain Bank.

To address the issue, football coaches at all levels have modified their approach to safety. Mike Norman, the head football coach at RHS for 31 years, helps ensure his players' safety by sending his equipment to a company in Connecticut. If the equipment is determined to be unsafe, a new piece of equipment, such as a helmet, is purchased and customized to fit the player.

The safety extends to the way he teaches his players to tackle. "It is more like rugby tackling," he says. "Instead of a player leading with his head, he keeps his head back and leads more with his hands and shoulders."

Norman has also incorporated less contact during practices as another extension to player safety. Normally he incorporates only half an hour or less of contact during practices.

Another safety procedure is more medical protocols. Norman said, "We're fortunate here at RHS to work with Matt Gammons, a sports medical doctor at Vermont Orthopedics. He writes all safety protocols for the state of Vermont."

Norman also serves on the state's sport medicine advisory committee and works in collaboration with the Vermont Principals' Association. He said, "Our task is to make sure we have standards, rules and procedures in place."

This issue has also affected Conrad Tuerk, a Grove Street Campus teacher. His nephew, Max Tuerk, was an offensive lineman for the University of Southern California, and was drafted in the third round by the San Diego Chargers in the 2016 draft. During his rookie season, Max started exhibiting abnormal behaviors such as paranoia, mood swings, violence and depression. His parents were extremely concerned with Max's new behaviors, and confused about the cause.

Unfortunately, Max died suddenly in June, 2020, while hiking with his parents near their home in Southern California. His brain was donated to Boston University's Concussion Legacy Foundation and was found to have CTE Stage 1.

Since Max's death, his parents have been working closely with the foundation. "I admire my brother and sister-in-law," Conrad said. "They have used Max's death as a way to raise awareness of the CTE issue. Every year they organize a huge event called Max's March. They have turned a terrible tragedy into something positive."

Their main goal, Conrad says, is to create a version of football without contact before the age of 14. The Concussion Legacy Foundation has put together a playbook for CTE prevention. One of the suggestions is to raise the age of first exposure to activities that result in repetitive head impacts. Delaying the number of repetitive head impacts would be expected to reduce CTE risk. Most youth athletes do not play sports involving head impacts beyond the high school level. This means exposure to repetitive head impacts from organized sports could be limited to only four years for most athletes.



RHS Football Coach Mike Norman



This also sounds reasonable to Coach Norman. "I have no problem with kids not wearing pads until freshman year of high school," he said. "This way we can teach them the correct tackling techniques. They won't have as many bad habits."

Since football is not going away in this country, the best thing is to figure out ways to make it safer. Coach Norman and the Concussion Legacy Foundation are working hard to make this happen.

A Love of Cooking

By Issac Wilde



One of my favorite meals

Cooking is one of my favorite things to do. I started when I was around 10 years old when I would watch my mom cook in the kitchen. My stepdad also likes cooking. He makes steak tacos all the time and also likes to make deviled eggs.

I like cooking because I enjoy learning new things and trying new recipes. Not long ago, I made chicken parmesan for the first time. This is one of my favorite foods to eat.

Also I enjoy the process of cooking. Cutting vegetables is a great activity. It helps my ADHD because it forces me to move and is not too overwhelming.

Some meals I enjoy making are steaks and cheeseburgers. Though my stepdad uses the grill, I cook them on the stove in a pan. Often I make eggs, usually hard boiled and scrambled with cheese and bacon. I used to cook eggs for my brothers when we were younger. Someday I hope to cook a Japanese omelet over rice. I saw a guy making this on TikTok and it looked cool.

In the future I would like to go to cooking school and have a career as a chef.



A tasty omelet

Tinted Windows

By Payton Tufts

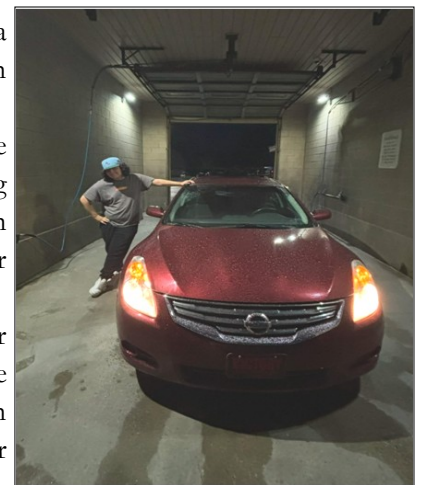
The stigma around a car's tinted windows usually implies that the car belongs to a suspicious person. Though this may sometimes be true, it may not always be the case. In my situation, I use window tint to reduce sun exposure and provide privacy while driving.

Earlier this fall, I applied tint to my two side back windows. I learned that the tinting process can be very tedious. The most annoying and precise part of window tinting is cutting the film to size the window. Sizing the window requires more precision than other steps, such as applying tint to the outside, moving it to the inside or removing air pockets.

Anyone can apply tint or pay to have it applied, but the tint's location on a car may be illegal. In the state of Vermont, window tint is legal anywhere except the front side windows and windshield. Front side window tint is illegal because the darkened glass can create a safety hazard by impeding a driver's vision. They may not be able to see other cars, pedestrians, poles or other objects.

Though many use tint for privacy or medical reasons, it remains illegal without proper documentation. To legally have tinted windows, a person must have proper documents provided by the Department of Motor Vehicles and filled out by a licensed physician or primary care provider.

Now that I have tinted my own windows, I have found security in the privacy the tint provides. The stigma around window tint being suspicious is inaccurate in most cases. Whether a car comes with tint, or someone decides to have their windows tinted after purchasing a vehicle, any legal tint should be considered reasonable. The decision to have tinted windows should rely completely on the driver's preference. Though window tint may diminish visibility it comes with the perk of privacy.



Payton styling with his ride

Experiencing Newark and New York City

By Sophia Clark

On October 19, 2024, I took a trip to Newark, New Jersey, and New York City. I experienced what it was like to live in an urban environment compared to rural Vermont. Newark is roughly Five hours from Rutland. The first thing I noticed when I arrived in New Jersey was the traffic. After living in Vermont for most of my life, experiencing the traffic of a heavily populated area was overwhelming. It took roughly one hour and a half to get through the traffic, and when I finally arrived, the neighborhood where I was staying was not what I expected.

Since Newark has a reputation for having a high crime rate and high drug use, it is typically not considered a hotspot for tourism in New Jersey. My experience in Newark was definitely a unique one, which I would choose to relive multiple times. The next door neighbors were very helpful. They pointed out the best places to eat and which trains to take into the city. There were many nice places to eat and shop, and it was cleaner than I anticipated.

While in New Jersey, I visited The American Dream Mall in East Rutherford, which is the second largest mall in North America. The mall has an indoor ice skating rink, a Nickelodeon Universe Theme Park, a Ferris wheel, an indoor mountain for winter sports, an indoor water park, one of the largest arcades in the world, more than 100 stores, and more than 65 places to eat. This was a highlight of my weekend because I had never seen a mall have so many things to do.

On the second day of my trip, I took the train from the Newark airport into New York City. When I boarded the train, there were at least 200 people already on it. I did not get a seat and ended up standing shoulder to shoulder with three other people. 45 minutes later I arrived in Times Square. Seeing Times Square for the first time is one of the best memories of my life.



New York City



Enjoying the sights

I have never experienced a city as busy as NYC. I was so excited to go inside all the stores and to visit the historical sights the city has to offer. One of the first things I did was try New York pizza for the first time. The pizza was crispy and flavorful with the perfect amount of spices. At the moment, I never wanted to leave New York and wished I could stay there forever. After eating, I visited stores for a majority of the day, including the huge Lego and Nintendo stores.

The last thing I did in New York City was take a peaceful ride down to the water to see the Statue of Liberty. Despite the dirty water, it was a beautiful sight with the setting sun and the statue.

Coming back to Vermont was difficult for me, and I definitely missed the city. I am grateful, though, for the calm traffic in Vermont and cleaner streets. Visiting an urban environment is a great experience, and I definitely recommend taking a trip to New York City, or even to Newark!

Community Service

By Alexi Reed



Rico, William and Ethan at CCV

On Monday and Tuesday before Thanksgiving break, the students at Grove Street Campus participated in community activities. On the first day, students toured the Community College of Vermont (CCV) in Rutland to gain a better understanding of how to reach a more affordable higher education.

We listened to presentations by three coordinators of student advising: Nathan Astin, Tammy Howard and Cody Miller. They explained the different programs offered by CCV and the financial help available. We also learned about dual enrollment for high school students who can take college courses at the same time.

After the presentation, we took a tour of the building. We saw stained glass projects in the art room, the science lab, and the lounge with vending machines nearby. Unfortunately the elevator doors were broken so we had to climb up and down the stairs.

This visit helped students realize the possibilities of further education. Mya Barber, a senior at Grove Street, said, "It was nice because I learned about their programs and how they can help. It inspired me to continue my education. Next semester I have signed up for an early childhood education class. I hope to earn a certificate eventually to benefit myself in the future."

On the following day, the students at Grove Street did different activities. One group wrapped boxes with teacher Katie Cacace to collect donations for the Rutland County Humane Society.

Posted on the outside of each box was a cute and Christmassy list of suggested items to be donated. After the boxes were completed, they were taken to their spots throughout the school district.

Many students found value in this activity. Andrew Bryant, another senior at Grove Street, said, "I like how we are helping the animals because animals are a big part of my life. If I could, I would adopt all the animals so they have a home, but for now this is my way of helping. I did not like how long it took to wrap the boxes, but it's worth it in the end."

Another group of students visited the Rutland Recreation Center with teachers Conrad Tuerk and Jamie Holt. They toured the center's facilities, including the gym, weight rooms, and handball courts. The students and teachers used the pool table, a punching bag and several agility machines.

Payton Tufts, a senior at Grove Street, was impressed with improvements at the Rec Center. He said, "One thing I liked was the weight room. There was new equipment since I'd last been there. They have also changed the rooms around and added an agility room. Colleen showed us the whole building, including a game room with comfy chairs and a Nintendo Switch with Mario Kart. She went over everything thoroughly and sold the Rec Center to us."

Though these two days were less academic, they allowed students to get more involved in their community. Students were able to experience a more practical, real-life education. This helped students get out into the city, without getting into trouble, and gave a good look to Grove Street Campus.



Mya and Alexi deliver donations to the Humane Society

Class of 2025

Advice from our January Graduates

"Keep your head above water and do your best not to let others drown you."

Alex Rainey (Emma)

"Honesty is one of the best traits you can exhibit at Grove Street. If you have done something wrong, it is better to be truthful and to face the due consequence, than to hide it and face a potentially harsher one later. Honesty will always get you farther than lies."

Abby Whiting

"The only advice I can give is work hard, stay on track the best you can and don't drop out no matter how bad you want to."

Jared Kravetz

"Don't focus on what's around you, focus on graduating with your class."

Alexi Reed

"You will learn who you are all through your life. You don't have to be afraid to make mistakes. I have met amazing people and opportunities through this program. I will always be so grateful for everything. I wouldn't be where I am today without all of the experiences. Life is always up and down, it's what you make of it that decides your future."

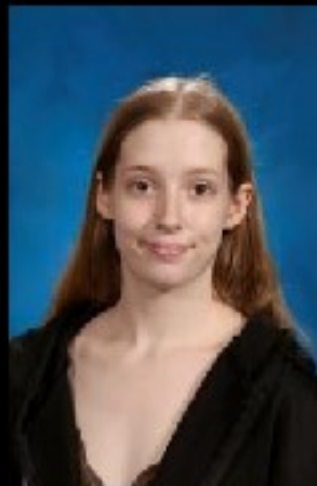
Alukah Owens

"Go to school, do your work and you will be successful. Make sure you show up."

Kade Chadburn

"My advice is not to focus on talking to friends or messing around, and to focus on your work. The sooner it gets done, the sooner you leave on Fridays."

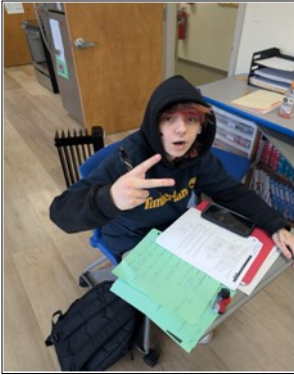
Davonte Ackley



Campus Chatter

What is your favorite holiday and why?

By Kim Bishop

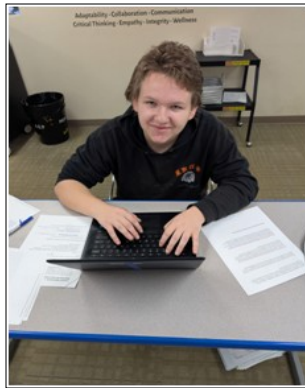


"Mother's Day because we don't appreciate women enough."

Issac Wortman

"I like Christmas because of the snow, and everybody gets presents."

Jonathan Czarnecki



"My favorite holiday is Halloween because I love the season and all of the spooky decorations, and getting to dress up and go trick or treating."

Jalessa Ballard



"My favorite holiday is Christmas because I like to spend time with my friends and family, and I like the Christmas lights that people put out."

Aryanna Cofrancesco



Video Games Review

By Issac Wilde



My favorite video game is called Black Ops 6. This game has a few different game modes: Campaign, Multiplayer, Zombies and Warzone. They are all pretty fun, and a player can get different skins on their guns. Skins can only be bought while camos can be earned by completing different challenges for different game modes.

Campaign is the story game mode of Black Ops 6, in which a player fights AI. The player chooses the difficulty. It can be set to easy or to a harder level of difficulty. The game mode can be played while offline.

Multiplayer is a game mode with maps and some of the maps can be very small. This game can be played with friends or random people.

Zombies is self-explanatory. Players play against zombies and try to reach the highest round they can. Also they can do a type of puzzle called an easter egg, which adds a story element. The game becomes harder the more rounds players do. I like this game best because it is easier and I can just relax and play.

Then there is Warzone, where players jump out of a plane and land on a big map. There is a zone that shrinks down to make the map smaller, and this forces players to fight other players. They explore the map trying to find guns, shields, and vehicles. Also they fight players to become the last team alive. And the last team standing wins.

Black Ops 6 is part of the Call of Duty franchise that was made in 2002. There are two main branches of Call of Duty: Black Ops and Modern Warfare. Also there are smaller branches, like Call of Duty Ghosts and Call of Duty Infinite Warfare.

Zander Michaud, a junior at Grove Street, prefers Black Ops to Modern Warfare. He said, "They both have good stories, but I like Black Ops better because of all the campaigns."

Zander's favorite game is Marvel Rivals. "I like it because it's very competitive," he said, "and there are lots of characters with unique abilities. Not one singular character is the best. They can all be good if you put in the work to learn the character."

He also likes Marvel Rivals because it is free. "In my opinion, Call of Duty has become a cash grab," he said.

School-to-Work

Job Hunting for Teens

By Alexi Reed

Getting a job as a teenager these days is difficult. Many employers reject teen applicants who do not have their own cars, are still in school, or are not willing to overwork themselves for minimum wage with few breaks. Employers usually want teens that have a completely open schedule with no obstacles or challenges. This is not possible when most teens attend school and live with their parents. Recently it took me over seven months to find a job that would work for me. I applied for approximately ten jobs, including Walmart, T.J. Maxx, restaurants and warehouses before landing a position at the Lookout Tavern in Killington as a dishwasher.



The Lookout Tavern in Killington, VT



Emma McPhee

I was able to get this job because my stepdad works there, and he said I would be a good candidate to hop into dishwashing. On my first day of work, I told the managers my availability and school schedule, and they worked with me to figure out what would be best. This is how employers should respond, instead of declining or ignoring teens because they are not interested in making arrangements to suit younger workers.

Emma McPhee, a junior at Grove Street Campus, also had trouble finding a job. She applied for several jobs in the Rutland area and hoped for replies. She said, "I heard nothing back from potential employers until I applied at Walmart. Fortunately I got the job, but this was after two months of looking."

Employers should be more flexible in their hiring practices of teenagers. Despite having experience or a nice resume most teens are still treated as a brand new worker in the field. Many of us are eager to work, but lack transportation and flexible schedules. Hiring more teens would be good for local businesses.

Hannaford Supermarket

By Issac Wilde

I have worked at Hannaford Supermarket in Rutland for over one year. I got the job because my friend works there and gave me a reference. Normally I work about 20 hours a week.

My main tasks are bagging groceries, collecting carts and returning goods to shelves. I enjoy doing carts because the bus comes every hour so I can tell the time this way. Also I like it because I can be outside more.



Overall I like the job, but not when customers complain or supervisors make employees do all the work. The customers annoy me sometimes because after I bag their groceries they will remove everything so I will have to rebag it.

My favorite parts of the job are the money, my co-workers and the good food. Hannaford has some of the best produce, bread and meat. I also love their chicken and sushi that I buy sometimes with coupons.

Another thing I enjoy is talking to people I know or see every day. For example, I have gotten to know an older man who is funny and makes my shift more enjoyable. The job has taught me a good work ethic and social skills, which are very important in life.

From Serenity to Struggle: Confronting Vermont's Rising Drug Crisis

By Sophia Clark



Burlington VT Battery Park in 2015

I have been a Vermont resident for my entire life, and not once have I considered it an unsafe place. Although now this is a different story. Walking down the streets of my hometown Rutland, I am sometimes greeted with drug needles littering the ground and unhoused people on the influence of drugs asking me for money. It has been humbling, and has made me wonder what has become of such a beautiful state.

Other areas of Vermont, particularly Burlington, have also been overtaken by drug use. According to former Burlington Mayor Miro Weinburger, "Between January and July of 2023, the Burlington Police Department responded to a record of 265 overdoses, already surpassing the prior year's total. Overdose responses increased by 75% between 2021 and 2022, and could increase as much as 100% between 2022 and 2024."

Many Vermont residents are questioning how this drug crisis began and what to do about it. According to The National Institute of Health most of these issues started during the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic made it difficult to retrieve proper treatment for health complications due to overpopulated hospitals.

Socialization was also very limited during COVID which made it easier to fall into addiction. The Vermont Department of Health stated that in a study recently performed, 60% of participants noted negative effects of the pandemic on their physical, emotional, and social well-being. The study claimed that "a sizeable proportion of past 30-day substance users reported increases in substance use since they learned about the coronavirus pandemic"

Mia Hughey, a local student attending the University of Vermont, highlights the reality of many Burlington residents. She said, "I feel unsafe leaving my dorm to get to work in the morning. Some days I wake up to people trying to open my car doors and get inside. It's to the point that I added three additional locks on my door just to ensure my car isn't stolen. I shouldn't have to feel unsafe when I'm at school."

Though the current challenges facing Burlington are difficult, the city might be able to collaborate with other communities in Vermont to find effective solutions. These include increased funding for treatment centers, better housing options, drug use education and strong preventative measures.

By implementing these strategies, Vermont can provide a response to its drug crisis. Not only will this address the immediate needs of those directly affected, but will also foster a healthier and more informed community. Through sustained investment in treatment, collaboration, and education, the state can help create a more comfortable future where individuals feel safe and supported in their recovery.



Burlington VT Battery Park in 2024

Choosing Our Pets

By Payton Tufts

The age old question: cats or dogs? Which household pet do people prefer? Which one is easier to maintain? A majority of people interviewed for these questions have claimed that dogs are the preferred household pets. Are cats or even guinea pigs comparable? What are the pros and cons to both dogs and cats?

A majority of people prefer dogs because they are usually bigger. Dogs also require more attention and return it more than other household pets do. According to Ethan Keough, a senior at Grove Street Campus, dogs give more of a sense of companionship. He has three German Shepherds and three Siamese cats. Ethan claimed, "Cats are easier to maintain and they let you know when they need something. But I prefer dogs because I can bring them around Rutland with me."

Dogs can also be used for protection and as service animals. Since dogs require more exercise, they might be better for people who like to walk or hike. This is the case for Conrad Tuerk, a teacher at Grove Street. He said, "I love walking with my dog. She gets me outside and out of the house, no matter the weather. She also connects me with nature. When she chases a chipmunk up a tree, I am more keenly aware of that chipmunk and tree."

Not everyone prefers dogs. If a person wants a pet that requires little exercise and is more independent, a cat may be for them. Cats also usually cost less to maintain than dogs. But this lower maintenance and cheaper food also comes with attitude. Cats will not bark when they are hungry, but they might knock things over or scratch up furniture if they do not get their way.

Ellada Siliski, a teacher at Grove Street, adopted two cats from the Rutland County Humane Society. She said, "I've always loved going to the Humane Society and adopting older cats. One cat we adopted is 7-8 years old. We decided to take her in because the Humane Society said she didn't have a liking for other cats and we didn't have any at the time." Ellada also adopted a younger cat, full of energy. She has never had a dog but would enjoy having one.

Ciara Chamberland, a senior at Grove Street, owns two cats. Scrim is one year old and Izzy is ten months old. She also owns a three-year-old dog named Buddy. Ciara says her cats are lower maintenance than her dog because her cats are very independent and do not need constant attention. When asked what advice she would give those looking to get a pet, Ciara said, "Adopt a cat. Adopt an old one because you'd want to get chosen too before it's too late."

Katie Cacace, another Grove Street teacher, has never had cats before. Katie's impression of cats is that they hide under beds and are not around as much as dogs. Katie's experience with dogs is that they are bigger and more active and a person can do more with them. Katie has two dogs, a 14-year-old mutt and a puppy.

Surprisingly, though, Katie best likes guinea pigs. She said, "When my kids were younger, we had guinea pigs. My son at one point had six guinea pigs and I liked them. They were small and we could hold them in our laps. We'd feed them a carrot and they'd sit there and eat the carrot. And if you pet them, they kind of purr like a cat. Sometimes it's a lot having to walk dogs but guinea pigs live inside and you only have to clean their cage once a week."

As one can see, there is no definitive answer to cats or dogs. The only answer to the question is personal preference. Some people prefer cats over dogs but others prefer dogs over cats. And some even prefer guinea pigs.



Ciara's cats, Scrim and Izzy, in sweaters



Ellada's cat, Loona

Walmart Supercenter

By Alexi Reed



Walmart, Rutland Shopping Plaza

On September 24, developers announced to Rutland's select board that the Diamond Run Mall will become a Walmart Supercenter. They hope to open the new store by 2027. According to Joe Anthony, co-founder and CEO of A2Z Realty Inc., Rutland is perfect for this project. "This is one of the few places in the country that is underserved by retail," he said. "I know there are people from Rutland driving to (the closest Walmart Supercenter, 41 miles away). This will keep more dollars home. It'll keep more tourist dollars here."

Rutland Selectwoman Sharon Russell said she thought the project would "change the face of Rutland."

This announcement caused an uproar of conversations and questions for students and staff at Grove Street Campus. Many students wondered about public transportation, especially for employees. Before the Diamond Run Mall closed, the south extension bus that now stops at Dick's Sporting Goods, used to stop at the mall. Mya Barber, a Grove Street senior, proposed that the city "reroute the south

extension bus to stop at the Super Walmart."

While public transportation is needed, Grove Street senior Liz Concepcion worries that there is only one entrance to the mall right now, and when Super Walmart opens this could become a major traffic issue.

Liz also wants a better selection of stores and restaurants to join Super Walmart. "I actually wanted a Target instead," she said. "The mall needs more variety that Rutland doesn't have."

Andrew Bryant, another Grove Street senior, agreed with Liz. "We need more stores and attractions. There's nothing to do here. We should add a Texas Roadhouse, Chili's, or Golden Corral."

Another issue is what will replace the current Walmart in the downtown plaza when it closes. Some students mentioned adding a higher-end store like Five Below or Victoria's Secret. They also mentioned a movie theater but Andrew Bryant did not think it was a good space for a theater. "It's too big," he said.

The announcement of a Walmart Supercenter is exciting news for Rutland, but there are many questions that need to be answered.



**Future Walmart Supercenter
Diamond Run Mall**

Making Music

By Rico Ley

Making beats is one of the most difficult but important parts of making music. The beats give music a rhythm, flow, and tempo. I have been making my own beats for over five years. I started in seventh grade with two websites called Soundtrap and BandLab. When I began studying a program called FL Studio, I realized its capabilities and switched to it.

I did not start composing and writing music until my freshman year of high school when I met my friend Jango and began making beats with him. Once I saw the potential of lyricism, singing and flowing on the beat, I made songs and eventually an album. I liked how it sounded overall but felt like the album was missing something so I ended up deleting it to give me a fresh start.

Then I used everything I learned from the old soundcloud and put it into a whole new album with Jango. One song on this album did extremely well with over 18,000 plays. This may not sound like much, but for a song with no promotion and just two unsigned guys making music in their bedrooms it is very good. This is when I figured out that we need to keep the music coming.

Making beats can be expensive and confusing. A Digital audio workstation (DAW) is a computer program that stores sounds that are built, shaped, and recorded. Though this is expensive, there are better solutions that are cheaper and free.

Another expense is software that provides a library of sounds. A drum kit is also needed. Drum kits are not expensive unless they have trending sounds or are made by a famous producer who wants to sell his library of drum kits that he created. Drum kits provide hi hats, bass/808, kicks, vox, and clap.

Recording is fairly simple but mixing is difficult. Now that I am more experienced, I can mess around with different sounds and shape them in ways other people have not to create my own sound. Learning to make beats is a process that takes time and effort. But the reward of a great song makes it all worthwhile.

500 Degrees by Rico Ley

You don't want no smoke with my
Yea!
I'm not 500 degrees yea!
Degrees yeah
Degrees yeah
I go up yeah never look down
Keep my head up from the ground
I hot I'm 500 degrees yeah



Artist's Corner

The Power of Drawing

By Rico Ley

Learning to draw is cool and fun, but can also be a good career. Many artists like to make illustrations or drawings that catch the attention of people because of their unique and creative style. Experienced artists can put themselves out there by having auctions, selling to local businesses, creating comics for newspapers or illustrating children's books. They can also display art in local galleries, like the Chaffee Art Center in Rutland.

I began drawing when I was young so I have a good amount of experience. When I started, I drew cars and traced in coloring books to help me draw easier. What helped me the most, though, was watching tutorials on YouTube. They taught me different techniques to become a better artist and draw interesting things. Every tutorial is different and unique in some way.

Some people fear that this unique style might be taken over by Artificial Intelligence (AI). I do not believe this is true because AI is still in its beginning stages, and has no ability to draw fingers or make small details visibly drawn. Also AI has no soul. Rather than use hard work, time and vision to make art, it only finds different pictures, slaps random things on a canvas and calls it done. This is not true art.

I love drawing because it allows me to be creative and mindful. If I want to clear my mind, I can just draw. Mainly I draw comic strips, anime, graffiti and cartoons. I do not like drawing real people because it is too complicated, but I once drew a picture in cartoon style of Mr. Vandall, my Social Studies teacher at the high school, and it really looked like him.

From the sketchbook of Rico Ley:

