



Bullis Student Tutors' Monthly Newspaper

# *The Torch*

Our Stories, Our Community



**December**

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Meet an amazing member of our dining hall team, hear from the backbone of Trone Center, learn about Bullis traditions, read an exclusive Alumni interview, and much more!



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# Bullis Traditions

*By Ellie C*

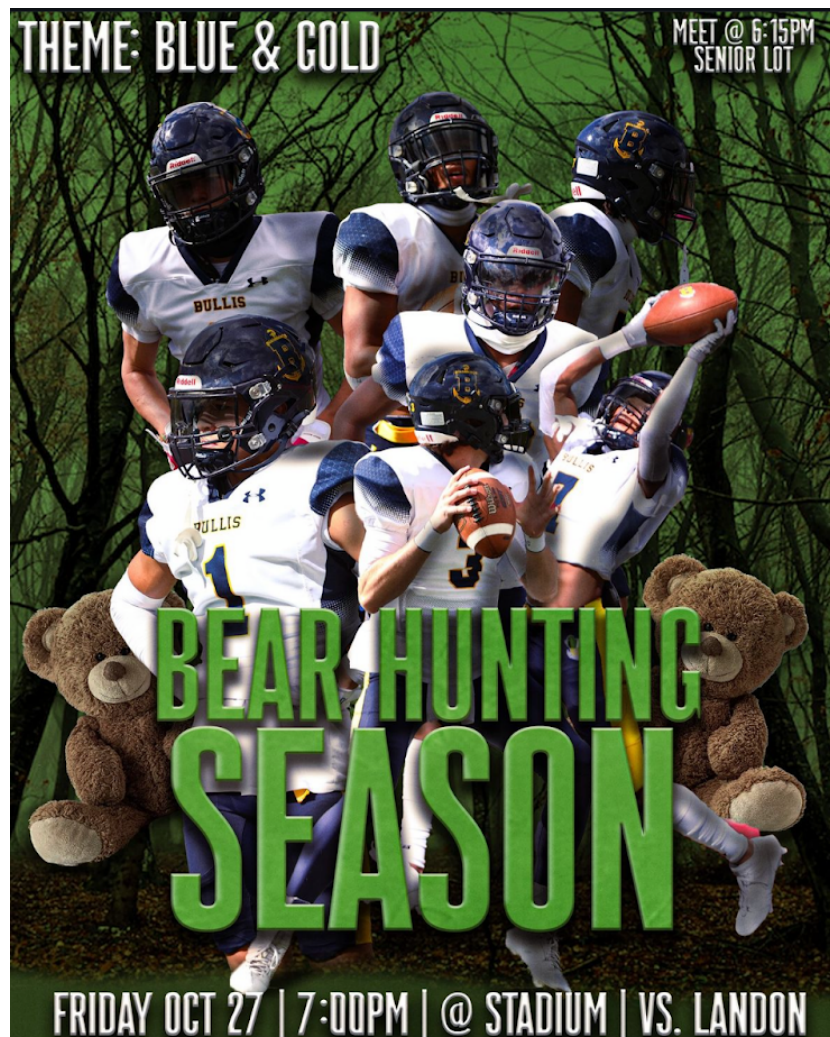
Dawgs, winter is here. Tis' the season of joy, reflection, and togetherness, marked by traditions that bring people closer and celebrate the warmth of community. From decorating homes with twinkling lights to gathering with loved ones for cherished meals, these customs remind us of the importance of connection and shared experiences. Just as us families and communities honor our own unique traditions during this festive time, Bullis has cultivated its own rituals that foster unity and school spirit. These traditions not only celebrate the values and identity of our Bullis community but also create lasting memories for students and staff alike, making them an integral part of the season's spirit.

One of the most special traditions of bonding for the senior class is Senior Buddies. All seniors are assigned a lower school buddy with whom they do activities together during specified community time, such as playing games, doing arts and crafts, and overall just getting to know one another. Senior Rebecca E. expresses that senior buddies are one of her favorite Bullis traditions because “it is so special to be able to bond with the kindergarteners and having the time to see how they see the world and spending time with them is amazing and so special.” This past Senior buddy time, Seniors and lower schoolers worked together to make snowflakes and other winter decorations for the holiday themed Friday home opener on Friday the 13th. These snowflakes will be used to decorate the athletic center and bring the holiday spirit of community to the first Friday home game of the season.



Rebecca E. with her Senior Buddies

Another of my favorite Bullis traditions is winter sports. Speaking of basketball games, my personal favorite tradition is the Bullis vs. Landon game. It's not just one basketball game, it's an anticipated rivalry that students and faculty look forward to each season. Whether football in the fall or lacrosse in the spring, the Landon-Bullis rivalry is my favorite tradition because it embodies the spirit of community, competition, and camaraderie that makes Bullis athletics unforgettable. The feeling of excitement when putting on my hunting gear and painting my eye-black is electrifying; this is what inspired me to become DAWGPOUND Co-President. Dressing in camouflage symbolizes our collective unity as a student section and determination to "hunt down" the Bears on the field/court, turning the game into an unforgettable spectacle of friendly rivalry. The chants, the painted faces, and the overwhelming support from the Bullis community make the experience thrilling. It's not just about the game itself—it's about the preparation, the anticipation, and the pride of standing together as Bulldogs ready for the challenge. The shared memories and excitement of these matchups are moments I'll carry with me long after high school.



A poster for the Bullis Landon football game

# A Day-To-Day of a Member of Bullis' Cafeteria Staff

*By Emily W*

Many students at Bullis have found a friendly face in facilities staff that work on our campus year-round. One, in particular, stands out to many students, whether that be to talk during lunch, stopping by the 1930 Grille after school, or seeing her around campus. Ms. Mimi has earned the reputation of being easy to talk to no matter the situation, time of day, or person.



Ms. Mimi in front of the 1930 Grille

She starts her day at 4:00 am, waking up and preparing to leave. She leaves her house at around 4:40, arrives at the Bullis campus at 5:30 am, and gets ready for the day ahead. She starts her day of work at the Grille, greeting students as they arrive at school for a snack or drink before the day's first class. Always in a chipper mood, Ms. Mimi gives positive words to each student she encounters. Sophomore Maia Chawla said, "She just made me feel special, and she made me feel loved on campus."

Her next task of the day is getting lunch ready to be served. Checking the temperatures for the food to ensure everything is hot, ensuring there are never any empty stations in the lunch line, and making the signs are just a few of her many responsibilities during the day. I have also witnessed the number of people who visit Ms. Mimi to talk with her and update her on their lives. "She brings joy and laughter to any conversation she is in, simply by her smile, humor, and kind words," says Sophomore Jordan Grosh.

On game days, she stays on campus from 5:30 a.m. to around 9:30 p.m., tending to the concession stand in the Athletic Center or at Kline Alumni Stadium. While on campus, she always stays cheerful, bringing smiles to the Bullis community no matter their age or time. She is a beloved member of the Bullis community, and no one's day would be the same without her presence.

## A Day at the Heart of Trone Center: An Interview with Mrs. McKnight

*By Ethan Y*

If you've ever walked through the lobby of the Trone Center, or accidentally lost your AirPods like the other 700 Bullis students, you've likely seen Mrs. McKnight— a welcoming smile, a calm presence, and an uncanny ability to juggle a dozen tasks at once. As the coordinator of the Trone Center's front desk, Mrs. McKnight is a vital part of the Bullis community. I had the pleasure of sitting down with her to learn more about her journey and her unique role on campus.

**Can you tell me a little about yourself and how you came to work at the Trone Center front desk?**

Mrs. McKnight's journey at Bullis began in 2011 when she enrolled her daughters as incoming 6th and 9th graders. Like many parents, she started as a volunteer serving on the PA Board, being a host parent for international students, and chairing the school's annual

gala two times. Her dedication didn't go unnoticed and she eventually served as a Trustee for the school from 2012 to 2017. During this time, she was involved in the capital campaign for the Trone Center. As the construction came to a close, Mrs. McKnight, as a passionate Bullis parent, decided to take on a faculty role when she learned of a position available in the Trone Center.

With both daughters deeply involved in the campus life, specifically performing and visual arts at Bullis, transitioning into a faculty position felt natural. "It was nice to see my daughters and their friends on campus every day," she shared, "they were so used to seeing me on campus as a parent so it wasn't a difficult transition for them, and all of them still called me Mama Tam Tam instead of Mrs. McKnight, because that's who they knew me as and I still miss that."

### **What does a typical day look like for you?**

"No day is typical," she laughs, gesturing to the busy lobby. The Trone Center's front desk is a hub of activity. From organizing events to assisting the head office, her responsibilities are wide-ranging. On any given day, she might help coordinate a campus-wide event or jump into larger projects hosted in the Trone Center. "It's a little bit of everything," she says, "which keeps it interesting."

### **What do you enjoy most about your role here at Bullis?**

For someone as social and community-focused as Ms. McKnight, the best part of the job is, of course, our amazing student body. "I get to interact with students and faculty from every division, which doesn't happen often in other roles," she shares. "I know just about everyone on campus, and I love helping people."

Her passion for helping people also leads her to research lots of information every day, whether a staff or student is looking for help, she is always there to lend a helping hand and that comes with a benefit. Through these daily interactions, Ms. McKnight is able to retain lots of information she's researched and becomes very informed about everything on campus, which is another part she loves about her role.

### **What's the most rewarding part of interacting with students every day?**

Over the years, Mrs. McKnight has built a special rapport with students. As you all may know, the lobby of Trone Center is the social hub of our community, and her desk is often a first stop for students seeking help or a friendly face. While she's been offered administrative roles elsewhere on campus, she's chosen to stay at the front desk. "Helping

students is so rewarding,” she adds. “No other position could offer me the chance to be interacting with so many people throughout the day.”



Mrs. McKnight

## **How do you handle difficult situations, like emergencies or stressed-out students?**

For Mrs. McKnight, the first step is always empathy. “When I first started working at Bullis and students still knew me as a parent, many would come to me when they were stressed,” she recalls. Whether it was offering a quiet moment in the bookstore or simply listening, she’s always been a calming presence.

In emergencies, Mrs. McKnight draws on her experience and level-headedness. She recounts one particularly memorable storm that required a real shelter-in-place order. “In situations like that, you have to put yourself in the students’ shoes,” she explains. “It’s all about making them feel safe.”

## **What are some ways students and teachers can help make your job easier?**

Mrs. McKnight’s answer is simple: “If everyone just does what they’re supposed to do.” She chuckles, adding that she dislikes yelling or filing incident reports. Her deep love for the community means she approaches her role with understanding, but she emphasizes the importance of cooperation. “This community is incredible,” she says. “I just want to see everyone thrive.”

## **A Community Anchor**

Mrs. McKnight’s role at the Trone Center front desk goes far beyond scheduling, answering questions, and of course helping panicking students retrieve their lost possessions. She’s a trusted confidante, a source of stability, and a friendly face for everyone who walks through the doors. Her commitment to Bullis, its students, and its faculty exemplifies the spirit of Bullis School: Caring, Challenging, Community.

# **An Interview With Dr. Kroll**

*By Elizabeth B*

Dr. Kroll joined the Bullis community, specifically the Bullis English Department, in the fall of 2022. He currently teaches English II and English IV. Dr. Kroll says he became a teacher because he’s always loved reading and writing and wanted to pass that on to his students. He says one of his favorite parts of his job is interacting with the students and seeing their passion for books and poetry grow. One of Dr. Kroll’s favorite things about Bullis is the diversity of the student body. He says, “[Bullis’ diversity] Is something you can’t find at a lot of other independent schools. I love the commitment to the community. It’s one of the pillars of the school, and people are focused on it.”



Dr. Kroll

One assignment Dr. Kroll enjoys giving to his students is a presentational speaking assignment about students' favorite children's books. Students create a slideshow presentation about their favorite childhood book and present it to the class to try and convince them and Dr. Kroll that their favorite book is the best. Dr. Kroll says, "It allows students to dive back into their childhoods. It's also a way for them to connect with their family, a loved one, or someone they read the book with." English IV teachers intentionally give this assignment to seniors, and Dr. Kroll says, "It's an interesting time to do it with seniors. They're looking forward and looking at what's next. So, it's a nice time for reflection. I hope that in the next four years or chapter, they will read a book that changes their lives like their favorite children's book did."

Lastly, when asked about his favorite books, poetry, or pieces of literature in general, he says, "I think it is every human beings duty to read the Complete Works by Plato. It's absolutely

necessary.” Additionally, Dr. Kroll recommends Virginia Woolf’s *To the Lighthouse*. He says, “My late grandmother and I connected over [*To the Lighthouse*]. It is a subtle, slow burn; it’s not very long, and not much happens. But it’s challenging and makes me cry every time I read it.” Finally, he suggests anything from the 20th century. “There’s too many to name, but if I had to mention one thing, there’s a school of poets called the Black Mountain Poets.” The group was based in North Carolina and known for their nontraditional take on 20th-century poetry.

Having only joined a little over two years ago, Dr. Kroll is a beloved teacher and mentor for his students. His passion for English and teaching, along with the attitude he brings to his classroom, creates a safe, fun, and unique learning environment where students can grow and be challenged.

## A Holiday Special: How Brooke T. and the Christian Affinity Group Are Celebrating The Holidays

*By Ethan R*

I had the pleasure of interviewing Brooke T. on how she will be celebrating this holiday season. Brooke is the leader of the Christian Affinity Group at Bullis.

### **What does Christmas mean to you?**

In a materialistic or secular sense, Christmas is often a time when you get gifts, and you can spend time with your family, but for me it’s really the birth of Christ. A common saying regarding Christmas is Jesus is the reason for the season which implores Christians to not let the materialistic sense of Christmas over shadow the true meaning: celebrating Jesus’ birth. I like that it’s “Christ”-“mas”, so in Spanish there’s Christ and mas, so to say more Christ! Easter is arguably the “more important” holiday because without Christ’s resurrection there would be no eternal life and salvation but Christmas is often the more extravagantly celebrated holiday, so I prefer Easter in a religious sense but Christmas highlights the incredible nature of God. We often take the blessings of Jesus and his miraculous birth for granted everyday, but Christmas allows us a chance to honor God properly.



The Christian Affinity Group's Easter potluck last year

### **How would you recommend Christians or people interested in Christianity should celebrate Christmas?**

If you're Christian and celebrating Christmas, I think going to church is important. Our relationship with Christ is a personal experience so I can't say exactly how people should celebrate, but I know that Matthew 18:20 teaches that "For where two or three gather in my[God's] name, there I am with them." When you go to church, you're able to celebrate Christmas with others which is how I believe God intended it to be.

I like candlelight services, which is where everyone has a candle and you pass the flame down the pew to light each other's candles, which I think shows community and solidarity in Christianity. Additionally, Christmas services are often some of the most extravagant and well thought out, and the sermons are often very powerful because Christmas yields a big turn out, and so I think that Christmas and Easter are the perfect

times to invite a friend to church, so if I were to encourage Christians to do one thing it would be to invite a friend to church!



The Christian Affinity Group

### **What has the Christian Affinity Group been up to this year?**

Last Thursday, we had a Christmas potluck in the cafeteria, and it was nice because people were able to share their testimonies (personal stories about how God has impacted them), oftentimes at our meetings it's so rushed because of the short amount of time we have, (about 20 minutes), so we seldom get to talk altogether. Even though we meet often, sometimes weekly, people are still very shy and don't always share, but in a less formal setting like a potluck, people feel comfortable. We didn't only talk about religious things, we just generally got to know each other better and celebrated.

This whole year, since the second rotation after the club fair, we've met every day seven, and we do different things but normally we have a scripture, and we'll have questions on that, we'll either do small groups or individual. We've had prayer journals or prayer

boards for each other, we've shared testimonies in general--a lot of athletes have shared their testimonies, for example Ethan [L.] shared a testimony about an injury, a lot of people share their stories about how Christ changed their life or helped them through a tribulation. A lot of times in class you don't necessarily know people as Christian, you just see them as people, but oftentimes bonding over religion allows you to get to know people on a different level. The friends I have who I'm the closest with, I'm close with partly because I can talk to them about Christianity, and since religion is so personal and so close to your heart it helps you to know people like that.

We are planning on having a field trip--I mean, I'm planning on having a field trip, I have to talk to administration and such, but we're hoping to visit The Bible Museum in DC. Also, we hope to do an Easter potluck and more potlucks in general, because those have been very successful.

### **What are common ways Christians celebrate Christmas?**

Common things that Christians will do include attending a candlelight service, or just some sort of Christmas Eve service. One thing that people who aren't Christian might not know is that before Christmas, there is the whole period of Advent, which is four weeks. There are four candles which represent peace, joy, love, and hope, and each week you try to reflect on that while you prepare for Christ's coming. Oftentimes churches will do a specific sermon series on passages related to Christ, because in the Old Testament, there's a lot of prophecies related to Christ's birth, as throughout the year services may be related to the holy trinity and Christianity as a whole, so they may take some time to focus on Jesus. Community service is especially important during this period because Jesus' whole ministry revolves around helping the poor and needy, among other things. For example, 1 Timothy 6:18 states "They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share." By being charitable during Christmas, we can honor Jesus who gave the greatest sacrifice: giving himself for us by dying on the cross. There's also the advent calendar, which can definitely be secular, but Christians will often have a religious advent calendar. Christians will often do a daily devotional all December about Jesus, and general religious journaling. There's also a lot of fasting, people often fast from specific foods. For Christmas, there's the fasting of Advent, and for Easter there's the fasting of Lent, and Lent is a 40 day fasting period, it can be from food entirely but oftentimes people fast from certain foods, one year I think I fasted from mac and cheese, I'm not sure why, I don't even really like mac and cheese like that, but I gave it up, and it was hard because my lunch always had mac and cheese. People may often "fast" from vices, such as alcohol, cigarettes, or technology, last

year my “fast” was social media. Fasting is never required, but it’s an option if you want to draw closer to God.

Overall, Christmas is a period of introspection, oftentimes religion can be outward facing, but Christmas is a time where people may face inwards.

### **What are your final thoughts?**

If anybody is looking for a safe space or to have fellowship with others Christians then I definitely would recommend our affinity group. We do games, bible studies, activities, potlucks, we’re planning a field trip, and I think it’s a great way to meet people and grow closer with others. If you’re interested, email [Brooke Talbott@bullis.org](mailto:Brooke_Talbott@bullis.org), [Rebecca Roberson@bullis.org](mailto:Rebecca_Roberson@bullis.org), or [Regina Chiuminatto@bullis.org](mailto:Regina_Chiuminatto@bullis.org)

Finally, I would like share my favorite bible verse: “If God is for you, who can be against you” ( Romans 8:31.)

## **A Holiday Special: An Inside Look At The Jewish Affinity Group and the Jewish Holiday Celebration**

*By Rebecca E*

In a school as diverse as Bullis, affinity groups play a vital role in fostering community and celebrating cultural identity. One such group, the Jewish affinity group, provides a space for students to connect over shared traditions and values. I had the opportunity to speak with Adam U, a senior and active group member, about his experiences and what makes being Jewish so meaningful to him! Here is a glimpse into our conversation!

Adam’s pride in his Jewish heritage radiated through every answer, starting with his favorite aspect of being Jewish. “It’s the unique culture and traditions that I get to celebrate with a

smaller community,” he shared. For Adam, Judaism isn’t just a religion; it’s an identity and a way of life rooted in connection, unity, and love for being Jewish.

One of his favorite family traditions underscores the uniqueness and individuality of being Jewish. Each Hanukkah, his family’s dog, Winnie, joins in on the festivities by “lighting” the candles—a fun and cherished moment that perfectly illustrates the joy of his celebrations.

Food, too, plays a significant role in Adam’s Jewish experience. When asked about his favorite dish, he didn’t hesitate: “Matzo ball soup,” he said, “because of the warmth it brings to the meal.” This comforting dish is made using his mom’s special recipe and is part of his family’s traditions.

For Adam, the rarity of being part of the Jewish community adds to its significance. “What makes being Jewish so special,” he reflected, “is how few of us there are in the world and how proud each person is of their identity.” This pride fuels his love for Jewish holidays, especially Purim. Purim is known for its festive vibe and the powerful story it commemorates, and it stands out as a time of celebration and unity.



The Jewish Affinity Group

Through our conversation, Adam's words vividly depict how culture and identity intertwine. His passion for sharing and preserving Jewish traditions within the affinity group is a testament to the importance of community in nurturing individuality.

In addition, we asked Evan G. how he'll be celebrating this holiday season:

*"This break, I will be celebrating Chanukkah. Chanukkah is an 8-day holiday and is the festival of light. Chanukkah starts on the 25th of Kislev (Hebrew Calendar). We light the menorah throughout the holiday, sing songs, chant prayers, and eat fried food. We also play dreidel where you gamble with gelt (gold chocolate coins) and play with your friends and family."*

As Bullis continues to celebrate and learn from its diverse student body, Adam's traditions and memories and Evan's holiday plans remind us how important it is to understand and listen to our peers! Happy Holidays!

## A Holiday Special: Ms. Worthy Teaches About Kwanzaa

*By Ms. Worthy*

In the African language, Swahili, the word kwanzaa means, "first fruits." All throughout the continent of Africa, among the diverse cultures across the continent, the first fruits of the harvest are celebrated with huge festivals. In an effort to connect ourselves with the various cultures we were disconnected from, an African American scholar, Maulana Karenga, created a celebration in the United States in 1966 called, Kwanzaa. Kwanzaa is simply a celebration; it is a time to reflect and connect with our families, center ourselves on our growth and new goals, and have fun together as we contemplate the 7 principles of Kwanzaa. It is not a religious holiday. It is our way of remembering our ancestral heritage and values, for our traditions are key to our joy.

Every year, Kwanzaa begins on December 26th; it is a 7-day celebration of our values or principles, which we call the Nguzo Saba. Similar to the menorah, we have the kinara, which means "candle holder" in Swahili. The kinara holds our 7 candles, three red candles, three green candles, and one black candle; each of the candles represents the 7 principles of Kwanzaa. Each night of Kwanzaa, we celebrate the principle of that day by lighting a candle

and reflecting on the meaning of the principle of the day. On December 26th, we light the black candle in the middle of the kinara for Umoja, which means “unity.” Then, the candles are lit alternately, left to right from inward to outward. Thus, the next candle to be lit on December 27th is the red candle for Kujichagulia, which means “self-determination.” On December 28th, we light the green candle on the other side of the black candle for Ujima, which means “collective work and responsibility.” On December 29th, we light the next red candle for Ujamaa, which means “cooperative economics.” On December 30th, we light the next green candle for Nia, which means “purpose.” On December 31st, we light the last red candle for Kuumba, which means “creativity,” and finally, on January 1st, we light the last green candle for Imani, which means, “faith.”



Ms. Worthy and her students celebrating

Ever since I was a toddler, I have been celebrating Kwanzaa with my family and community. In fact the kinara I own today has been in our family for over 40 years. Traditionally, whenever you see someone on any of the days of Kwanzaa, we ask, “Habari Gani?” which means, “What’s the news?” We then respond with the principle of the day. We prepare meals and come together each night to light the candle and reflect on the principle of the day. We also bring one gift for each day for our loved ones, many times, the gift represents the principle of the day. Within our community, there are always events planned to celebrate each principle. Events include singing of Kwanzaa songs, dance recitals, spoken word, children's presentations, entertainment, theater performances, panel discussions, African dance and drumming, community service, and Karamus, which literally means “joyful gathering place,” but it has come to stand for parties. There are a lot of smiles, hugging, dancing, and love throughout the week of Kwanzaa. It is a time of year that many African Americans look forward to showing gratitude for the previous year and optimism for the new year, and giving and receiving love from our family and community. Happy Kwanzaa!

## An Update From The Winter Service Learning Group

*By Macy B*

Last Thursday, the Winter Service Learning group took a trip to the Arcola Elementary School Food Bank, where we contributed to the fight against food insecurity in our community. Upon arrival, we were welcomed by a staff member who was a Bullis alum! This warm greeting added a personal connection to the experience and set a positive tone for the work ahead. We were assigned to various stations, where we gave food to families in need. Each station was stocked with essential grocery or personal care items, and we worked efficiently to ensure the process ran smoothly. In addition to distributing food, we helped maintain the area by taking empty boxes out to the trash and keeping the workspace organized and functional. The experience provided a hands-on understanding of many families' challenges and highlighted the importance of programs like these in addressing food insecurity. Students left the food bank with a sense of fulfillment, knowing their efforts had made a tangible difference for the local community. This trip to the Arcola Elementary Food Bank was a memorable and meaningful part of the Winter Service Learning program's efforts, and it underscored the value of service in building stronger, more compassionate communities.



Go DAWGS! Great work giving back to the community!



# Bullis' Make-A-Wish Drive

*By Elizabeth M*

I'm sure you've heard of [Make-A-Wish](#) foundation granting terminally ill children the ability to meet different celebrities, go on vacations anywhere around the globe, and do just about any simple or extravagant wish you could think of. However, this holiday season we all got an opportunity to bring joy to a child that is suffering. During the week of December 9th-13th, we were called to action to share the seasons joy with someone and do some early holiday shopping for those less fortunate than us. Throughout the week, people donated many toys and earned a raffle ticket in exchange. Then, at the end of this gift-giving week, those who donated entered the raffle for a fun prize that was drawn during the halftime of the silent night game. To all of you who donated, thank you for making this holiday season magical for all the children these toys reached! For those of you who know of other toy drives in December of next year, please reach out to the SGA so that we can help out that organization as well!

**STEPPING STONES SHELTER**  
MOVING FAMILIES FORWARD

**URGENT NEEDS**  
DECEMBER 2024

**MOST URGENT**

- CASES OF DISPOSAL WATER BOTTLES
- LYSOL & CLOROX CLEANER
- KITCHEN SPONGES
- PAPER TOWELS
- SWIFFER WETJET SOLUTION & PADS
- LYSOL DISINFECTANT SPRAY
- LAUNDRY PODS & DRYER SHEETS
- ALUMINUM FOIL & PAPER PLATES
- BROOMS & MOPS
- BABY WIPES AND DISPOSABLE DIAPER SACKS

**URGENT**

- Twin & full bed sheets or comforters
- Twin & full mattress encasements
- Bathroom sets (that include shower curtain, rings, bathroom mat, etc.)
- Disposable Coffee Cups
- Body & hand towels
- Plastic silverware & Paper plates
- Gallon & snack size Ziploc bags
- Kitchen & black heavy duty trash bags
- Dawn dish soap
- Women's & Men's bodywash, deodorant, and moisturizing lotions
- Hair care (i.e., shampoo, conditioner, leave-in conditioner, mousse, gel, hairspray, etc.)
- Hair Care Products for textured, coily, and curly hair.
- Snacks (i.e., assorted chips, granola bars, fruit snacks, crackers, etc.)

**GIFT CARDS**

- Uber & Lyft
- Gas gift cards
- Giant, Safeway, & other grocery stores
- Target & Wal-Mart

**HOMEGOODS**

- Toasters or Toaster Ovens
- Pots and Pans Sets
- Dishware sets
- Microwaves
- Cooking Utensils
- Coffee Makers

SCAN THE QR CODE TO ACCESS OUR AMAZON "URGENT NEEDS" LIST

**GET IN TOUCH WITH ANY QUESTIONS**

301-251-0567 / [marcedes@steppingstonesshelter.org](mailto:marcedes@steppingstonesshelter.org)  
/ [www.steppingstonesshelter.org](http://www.steppingstonesshelter.org)

## The Stepping Stones Drive

In January, the tenth grade will participate in an advisory-based necessities drive for [the Stepping Stones Shelter](#). This shelter helps all kinds of people, families included, who are in dire need of housing accommodation. In this drive, each advisory will be tasked with collecting a specific number of an item that the shelter needs like paper towels, shampoo, etc. If anyone who isn't a sophomore would like to contribute to this drive, feel free to reach

out to one of the tenth-grade SGA Representatives. You can find a list of the items that they currently need above. Stepping Stones also has other volunteer opportunities for students. You can make or buy a meal that you can bring to their shelter or volunteer during their tutoring/child care times on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 7:00pm to 8:00pm in order to earn community service hours. Furthermore, if there is another drive that you would like Bullis to contribute to, please reach out to Ms. Finigan, who is in charge of community service at Bullis.

## Zoe M's Travels Throughout Spain

*By Zoe M*

One of the many interesting parts of my year abroad program is our frequent trips. So far, I have been fortunate enough to travel to Tarragona, Bilbao, San Sebastián, Madrid, and Olette with my school. However, recently, we have been granted the privilege of traveling independently, unaccompanied by our teachers.



Gran Vía, Madrid

This past weekend, my friends and I took advantage of this opportunity and decided to go to Madrid for two days, the maximum number of days the school allowed. We had previously taken a day trip to Madrid with our school, but because the visit was so short, we decided we wanted to return. However, the process was more challenging than simply deciding.

Permission to travel was not simply handed out randomly; it had to be earned. Speaking in Spanish, maintaining good grades, and fostering a relationship with one's host family were just some things the school kept in mind when granting permission to travel. However, after one was given the OK, more was needed. Finding hotels accepting minors was challenging, and getting all the necessary signatures was also difficult. Against all odds, though, all seven of my friends and I completed the forms by the deadline and could travel!

We took the train to Madrid in the morning, only an hour from Zaragoza, my city of residence. After dropping off our bags at the hotel, we went to find a cafe for breakfast.



Breakfast in Madrid

Breakfast consisted of things we only sometimes ate in Zaragoza: vegetables and eggs. It was refreshing to have fresh produce after going two months without it. Following breakfast, we decided to walk along one of the most central streets: Gran Vía. We strolled for a while, wandering in and out of shops that caught our eyes and stopping to pick up cookies that looked eerily similar to Levain's.

Succeeding our late lunch, we decided to pop into arguably one of Spain's most famous museums: El Prado. We had previously visited the museum on our trip with the school but felt compelled to revisit it. It was an insightful and calming visit where we saw some of Francisco Goya, an artist we had been learning about in class, most renowned and famous paintings.

Overall, Madrid was entertaining and informative, and it was undoubtedly a memorable trip I will cherish for years to come.

## The Alumni Corner with Ashley H.

*By Ethan R*

For our second edition of the Alumni Corner, the choice of interviewee was obvious: Ashley H, a former co-director of BST. Ashley was critical to BST's growth and success last year, and found great success herself, and is currently attending Princeton University in Princeton, New Jersey. We are so appreciative of Ashley's time and willingness to share insights with us.

**How did your time at Bullis prepare you for college? How did you adjust geographically, socially, and academically?**

After spending ten years at Bullis, transitioning to college was definitely an adjustment. Since arriving, I've come to appreciate how well Bullis prepared me. The strong relationships I built with my teachers made asking for help feel easy—especially in STEM courses. The material in college is challenging, but the foundation I built, especially in classes like Mr. Moreau's, made it feel more manageable. While New Jersey isn't too different from Maryland geographically, living, studying, and socializing all on the same campus has been a unique experience. I've made amazing friends at Princeton, been able to travel, and try lots of new things!

**What was the most important and memorable lesson you learned at Bullis, and how has it helped you after high school?**

The most meaningful lesson I learned at Bullis was the importance of always offering a helping hand. Junior year coursework was tough, and the college admissions process was stressful. During those demanding times, I realized how essential checking in on and supporting your friends is. College is difficult for everyone in various ways, and I've learned that just asking how someone is doing can make all the difference. Even though there's always a lot to do, I've prioritized checking in with friends and offering my support whenever possible.

**How has BST helped to set you up for success in college? Was your time as a Co-Director key to that development?**

BST has been instrumental in setting me up for success. As a tutor, I learned to empathize with others, improving my ability to support classmates and diversifying my own approach to learning. As a Co-Director, I developed vital time management skills, learned how to prioritize, and improved my ability to collaborate with others. I used my experience working closely with teachers, like Mr. Eist, to feel more comfortable approaching professors in college. All in all, BST was undoubtedly a significant contribution to my preparedness for college.

**If there was one thing you've found inspiring or helpful in college that you wish you'd had/experienced in high school, what would it be?**

One of the biggest lessons I've learned in college is that what feels like "the end of the world" in the moment often doesn't matter in the long run. In high school, I put too much weight on poor grades, missing deadlines, or winning superficial awards. Since coming to college, I've realized that putting your mental, physical, and social health first is much more important and that everything will work out one way or another. I learned that stepping out of your comfort zone is crucial and can lead to growth and the most incredible experiences!

**What final piece of advice would you give to current students at Bullis?**

My advice for Bullis students is to stay open to exploring new hobbies and activities. Since coming to Princeton, I've joined several clubs and organizations and met amazing people through them! I'll be traveling to Spain over winter break to tour with my a cappella group, and I also have the chance to visit Israel over spring break with our Chabad on campus. Every day brings unique opportunities that you should take advantage of. College

offers so many unique opportunities that weren't as accessible in high school, so I encourage you to step out of your comfort zone and try new things. College is your oyster!



Ashley H. enjoying Princeton

Ashley, we appreciate your time, wisdom, and the legacy you created at Bullis. We wish you the best in your future endeavors!