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Ms. Tabb

What is your favorite memory with Ms. Tabb?

Ms. Holder - We were at a meeting and she was speaking up for what was right for students.

Ms. Hricay - My favorite memory with Ms. Tabb is the two or three years that we co-taught together.

Ms. Tabb is one of the most knowledgeable educators I have had the good fortune to work with.

Although we were both veteran teachers by the time we started working closely together, she taught me so many valuable teaching strategies that I have been able to incorporate into my work. Ms. Tabb's ability to connect with her students is second to none. She maintains high expectations of her students while simultaneously managing to meet them where they are academically. This enables her to help them achieve the academic goals that they may have been struggling to attain. Ms. Tabb is truly a master teacher who has exemplified educational excellence to her students and colleagues alike.

What are you going to miss most about Ms. Tabb?

Ms. Holder - She's just a champion for students. Also, her work ethic - she's a hard working teacher and she knows her stuff!

Ms. Hricay - I will miss so many things about Ms. Tabb! Our long conversations about work, students, teaching strategies, pop culture, our own children...everything! Ms. Tabb is such an interesting person who has such a down-to-earth personality. She has been my sounding board on many occasions regarding both educational and family issues. Ms. Tabb is one of those people that you could easily spend a full day talking to without noticing that hours have passed. I smile every single time I see her and will miss her funny, straightforward and honest stories and advice. She is one in a million!

Ms. Portanova - She has a great sense of humor!

What are your well wishes for Ms. Tabb for her retirement?

Ms. Holder - I hope that she finds another passion and that she gets to enjoy life outside of teaching. I hope that she gets to enjoy the rewards of her long and hard labor of teaching school.

Ms. Hricay - I hope that Ms. Tabb enjoys at least a few mornings sleeping in a bit and not driving on the Taconic so much, especially in the winter! I hope that she spends her time discovering new hikes that she loves and traveling to all of the many destinations that we have discussed over the years. Ms. Tabb is adventurous and endlessly cool - I have no doubt she will enjoy innumerable adventures after she moves on from Highlands!

Ms. Portanova - I hope she travels, relaxes, and enjoys her free time.

Mrs. Nissinoff

What is your favorite memory with Ms. Nissinoff?

Stella Khachetoorian - In Family Consumer Science last year, towards the end of the semester we did a lesson on identity theft and Ms. Nissinoff picked me to "impersonate" her. I got to put her name tag on and pretend to be her in front of the class. It was really fun, especially because I was having a bad day before that happened.

Mr. Steckler - My favorite memory was right before I was about to get married. I went to her classroom to ask advice about proposing to my now-wife. Since she is a motherly figure, I asked her if my idea was good. COVID had just happened and the original plan was to go to Greece - we couldn't go obviously, we were in lockdown. She was asking me questions, and was very interested in my life. Mrs. Nissinoff remembered from multiple years ago that I asked my now-wife to be my girlfriend in Maine, so she suggested I ask her to marry me in that same place. It was just really wise advice - that's a beautiful memory! The fact that she was so thoughtful and remembered. She's a good listener and is attentive. That's a good quality; when people actually listen to you instead of pretending. I would always go over to her classroom to talk, vent, and share stuff about life. Recently, it's coming full circle because her son is proposing to his future wife. Getting to share these experiences when she had helped me was just such a nice thing, especially as her "pretend son" of the building. She gives great advice, listens, shares good advice, remembers stuff from the past. We talk, have lunch together, and it's really nice just being her friend.

Mrs. Staar - I have known Ms. Nissinoff for a long time. However, having her as my community building partner this year was a wonderful experience. She is so kind, insightful and funny! My fondest memory is when she was explaining to the class about how often her name is mixed up with another teacher in this building due to the similarity. She was telling us how it made her feel after all these years in the district. It was a very reflective conversation.

What are you going to miss about Ms. Nissinoff?

Stella Khachetoorian - I am going to miss her sense of humor and how she is always cheerful, not to mention such a good teacher.

Mr. Steckler - Just that she's one of my really good friends in the building, and we get to talk about what goes on in our daily life. It feels good to be able to share your daily experiences with a friend, and that's what she is - a good friend. I like talking to her about what students said or did, which is really fun.

Mrs. Staar - Her humor! She is a very funny individual. She always looks at things from the other side and brings humor into that perspective.

What are your well wishes for Ms. Nissinoff for her retirement?

Stella Khachetoorian – I hope she is able to pursue other passions and be able to relax after working so hard as a teacher.

Mr. Steckler – I want her to do something she always said she'd do, which is to focus on herself. She's such a passionate person who takes care of other people first and tries to help her kids in the building. I want her to spend time on herself and do things she's been talking about. For instance, she wants to be able to walk every day, but doesn't have time to right now. I also want her to spend time in nature and cook fun dishes, which she doesn't do enough. A part of me wishes she wouldn't retire, because I'll miss her!

Mrs. Staar – This year, I learned that Ms. Nissinoff has had many jobs in her lifetime. I was so impressed by her resume. That said, I wish her a restful retirement filled with time to do the things she finds the most pleasurable.

Thank you to Ms. Tabb and Mrs. Nissinoff for your years of dedication and hardwork to White Plains Schools! Congratulations, once again!

We will miss
you all!
Have a *lovely*, and
RELAXING
retirement.

2023: The Year in Review June:

PRIDE MONTH

Pride Month at Highlands!

By: Riley Conley and Cristina Damato

Pride Month is a month that celebrates people who are in the LGBTQIAP+ Community. LGBTQIAP+ stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning, Intersex, Aromantic/ Asexual/ Aroace, Pansexual, and more. Pride month started in 1970, one year after the Stonewall Inn Riots took place. The first parade to memorialize the Stonewall Inn Riots was originally called the Christopher Street Liberation Day March after the committee that planned it. Committee member and activist Craig Schoonmaker was the first to suggest using the term "pride."

There is also a day in October (October 11th) called National Coming Out Day. This day was made to maintain positivity and celebrate coming out. October 11th was chosen because it is the anniversary of the 1987 National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay rights.

At Highlands, we are celebrating Pride Month in a couple of ways. On June 1st, our front entrance was decorated with these beautiful rainbow balloons. They will stay up for the remainder of the school year!

Also, every morning during announcements, we are hearing about different influential members of the LGBTQIAP+ community. Thanks to our Student Organization (SO) for organizing these events! We appreciate you bringing awareness to the Highlands Community.



June: The 8th Grade Dance!

The 8th Grade Dance Committee

By: Stella Khachetoorian

After nearly ten long, laborious months, we have reached the final stretch of this school year. In the case of our eighth graders, the last leg of middle school entirely! Many things come hand in hand with the end of the year, such as graduation, finals, and something many people have been looking forward to for a while: the 8th Grade Dance.

The Dance Committee here at Highlands has been working hard to make it the best dance possible. We asked them some questions to get insight into the process of planning the dance, and here is what they told us.

What are your plans for the dance?

Lia: There's going to be a DJ, a lot of different types of food, and a dance floor.

Remi: The theme is going to be Under the Stars, and we have this huge sheet of paper and it's going to line up against the bleachers, cover the bleachers and all the walls are going to be decorated.

Arleen: Well, my plan is to go and to have fun with my friends and eat.

What part of the dance are you most excited for?

Lia: I'm most excited for the DJ just because I love dancing and having fun.

Remi: Definitely the food because the catering from this Italian restaurant and it's going to be delicious.

Arleen: I'm most excited to see people's outfits and pictures.

How did the committee come up with the idea for the theme?

Lia: My friends and I came up with the theme, so we submitted two or three ideas and Mrs. V just picked the Under the Stars one.

Arleen: We had a survey and we looked up different types of ideas and decided.

What is the hardest part of planning for the dance?

Lia: Figuring out how much to buy and how much everything will cost and just things like that.

Remi: Probably making everything. We have to take out these little, tiny stars with string individually and it's a lot of work.

Arleen: Right now, I'm doing cardboard so cutting out hard things.

We all look forward to having a memorable night and are very grateful for all the work and dedication the dance committee and Ms. Varghese has put into making this dance wonderful!



May: Asian-American Pacific Islander Month

Asian-American Pacific Islander Heritage Month

By Cristina Damato

Since 1990, May has been set aside as Asian-American Pacific Islander Heritage Month (AAPI), a time to celebrate and honor Asian-American culture. The origin of the idea, however, goes all the way back to mid-1970s, when Jeanie Jew had an idea.

Jeanie Jew's great grandfather was a Chinese immigrant who came to the United States in the 1800s, and helped build the transcontinental railroad. After becoming a very successful businessman, he was killed in a racial attack.

This tragedy motivated Jew to bring the idea of a week celebrating Asian heritage to Representative Frank Horton, who later introduced the legislation that formed Asian Pacific American Heritage Week. Horton said, "Mrs. Jew turned a personal tragedy in her family history into a positive force." In 1990, the week was extended to the entire month of May.

Why May? The month wasn't chosen simply because every other month was already taken: two days in May, the 7th, and the 10th, have particular significance to Asian culture. May 7th marks the arrival of the first Japanese immigrants in 1843. May 10th is the date that the first transcontinental railroad, which was built in part by Chinese immigrants, was completed.

Asian-American Pacific Islander Heritage month is not just a month to celebrate culture – it's also a month to stand up against Asian hate. Each year, the Federal Asian Pacific American council picks a theme meant to inspire a goal for AAPI month. This year's is "Advancing Leaders Through Opportunity", which builds on a multi-year theme of leadership.

Asian-American Pacific Islander Heritage month is a time to celebrate Asian culture and tradition but also a time to celebrate diversity in the United States and stand up against Asian hate crimes and xenophobia. Hopefully we can continue to bring these celebrations to our school community!

Every day during the month of May, the SO shared information about influential members of the Asian-American Pacific Islander community. Here are some of these people:



Dr. Margaret "Mom" Chung was the first Chinese American woman to become a physician. She founded one of the first Western medical clinics in San Francisco's Chinatown in the 1920s.



Lou Diamond Phillips is a Filipino-American actor and film director. He made his Broadway debut in "The King and I". He has won a Tony Award and Independent Spirit Award and was nominated for a Golden Globe Award.



Suni Lee is a Hmong American artistic gymnast. She is the 2021 Olympic all-around champion and uneven bars bronze medalist. She was a member of the teams that won gold at the 2019 World Championships and silver at the 2021 Summer Olympics. Lee is a six-time member of the U.S. women's national gymnastics team and is the first Hmong-American Olympian.



Norman Mineta was the Mayor of San Jose, CA from 1971-1975. He was also a member of the U.S. House of Representatives representing California. He later served as the Secretary of Commerce in Bill Clinton's final months. He broke the barrier as being the first person of East Asian decent to serve as a United States cabinet secretary.



Patsy Mink was the first Asian American woman to serve in Congress. She helped create the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus. In 1972, Mink helped pass Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, which later became the Patsy T. Mink Equal Opportunity in Education Act. In 1974, she passed the Women's Educational Equity Act.



Lucy Liu has been an actress since the 1990s. She has starred in many movies and has been a voice actress. Liu has also won many awards: Critics' Choice Television Award and a Seoul International Drama Award. In addition, she was nominated for a Primetime Emmy Award.



In 1960, Dr. Sammy Lee served as U.S. Olympic diving coach to Bob Webster in Rome. Webster was the second man to win the gold for diving in two consecutive Olympics. In 1986, Lee raised funds for USC's new Korean Heritage Library.



Bhagat Singh Thind was an Indian American writer who served during World War I. He was involved in Supreme Court case over the right of Indian people to obtain United States citizenship.



Nicole Scherzinger was born in Honolulu, Hawai'i and raised in Louisville, Kentucky. Nicole began her acting career at the age of 14. She later studied musical theater at Wright State University. Nicole is an accomplished singer, dancer and actor, and producer. She won "Dancing with the Stars" in 2010 and is serving as a judge and a panelist on "The Sing-Off" and "The Masked Singer".

March: Moana & The Talent Show

Moana Jr.

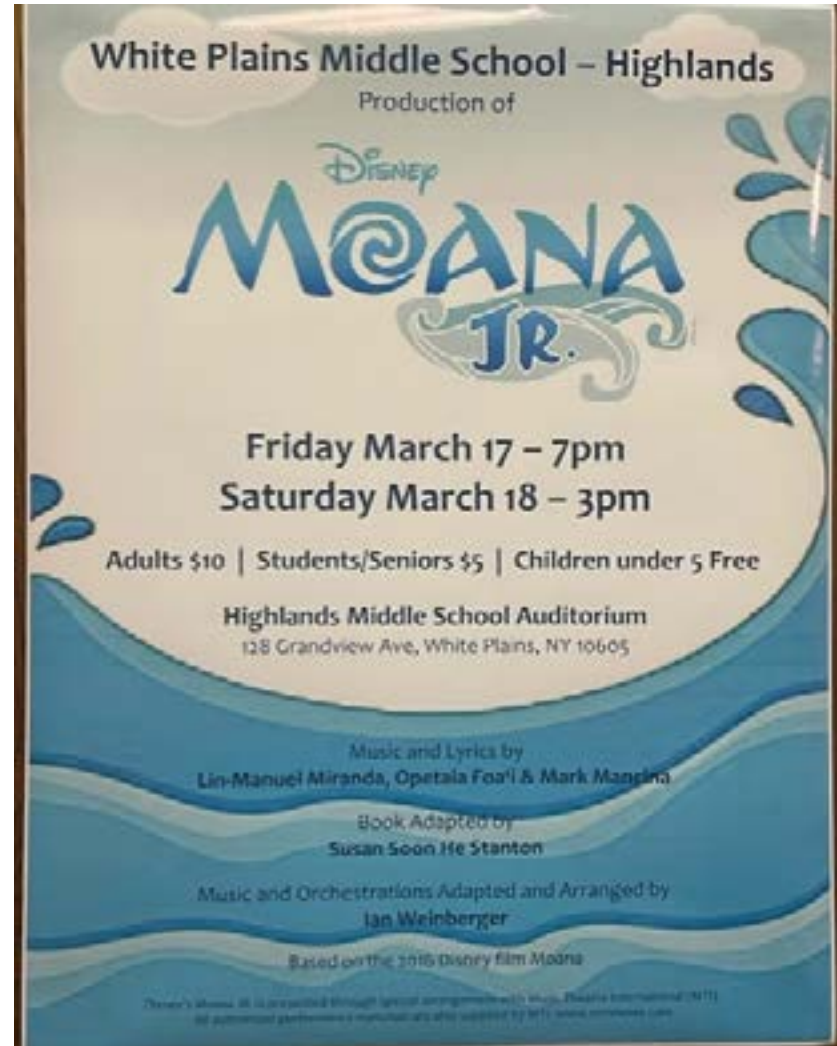
By: Riley Conley

The Moana Jr. Musical was quite a success. It ended up bringing in a big audience and raised lots of money for the Highlands Theater Group. However, within the musical, there were struggles, both with the stage crew and the actors themselves.

Musicals take a lot of hard work, and we actors experienced this during the three months of dedication we put into it. To learn the songs, we had to learn Samoan and Māori, languages that are commonly spoken where Moana takes place. There were 22 songs in total, and a lot of them involved these two languages. There were multiple parts of each song, and everybody had to learn which part they were - either alto, mezzo-soprano, or soprano (low, medium, high). It was especially difficult because sometimes you were next to someone who was not in your part, say an alto next to a soprano, and the alto or soprano would start singing the other part, messing up the harmonies. In addition, we had to put a lot of time into this musical. Most days in January we would rehearse until 4:15, and in February and March we would rehearse until 5:00. Two nights (one in February, one in March), we rehearsed until 8:00pm! The entirety of Tech Week (the week of the show) we rehearsed until 7:00 or 7:30. Also, we had to spend lots of time on the choreography that made the show so incredible. There were two ensembles, the Ocean Ensemble, and the Ensemble, which made it twice as hard for our choreographer, Caren, to teach us all of the amazing dances that you saw in the show.

Sarah Ragusa reflected on her time as a member of stage crew:

“This year was my first year being on stage crew. It was a lot of work and tons of fun. To get involved with stage crew, you have to go to the interest meeting. Mr. Lupia tells you all the details and you ask questions. We started out by picking jobs. At



first, Mr. Lupia just randomly assigned them, but if you didn't really like your job he would let you switch. I was assigned as a triangle but then I switched to the boat. Samantha, Dominick, and I were on the boat. The first few rehearsals were a struggle, and don't even get me started on tech week. We had to work, work, work! We rehearsed the play about 2-3 times A DAY! When the day came, me and my crew mates were not completely prepared. Michelle, the stage manager, helped everyone get through it very smoothly. The boat wheels ended up breaking and we had to improvise. Overall, we had so much fun!

Thank you to Mrs. Irlen for all her hard work on this wonderful performance!



The Talent Show!

By: Miles Washington

The Talent Show: it took place right before break and was extremely well done! Excellent performances were given by everyone involved. The talent show was for everyone to express their unique creativity and skills. It gives anyone the opportunity to feel the spotlight and have a moment to shine.

What was your favorite part of the talent show? Mine was the Street Wear Fashion Show. The designs were remarkable, even said so by the director herself, Ms. Davila! We ended up getting a part two, which focused on formal wear.

That was not all. Not only did we get to see, but we also got to hear! For example, the remarkable singing from Molly, and the improv band, Dylan, Abraham, and Adin!

The SAIL class students also got to do three performances. The Incredibox, Just Dance, and the beautiful song for someone's mom!

As for what Ms. Davila has to say, "This year's talent show was fabulous - with great performers and a terrific stage crew backstage! With the streetwear and the singing! Although there was one problem, as the mics for our MCs have been having difficulties. We will try our best for next year to improve them."

We also want to say amazing job to Esperanza, Isabella, Hayley, Gabby, Amelia, Layla, And Gavin with the funny roasts, cutscenes, and the amazing mini games that teachers and students got to participate in for prizes.

Mr. Lupia had participated and was really surprised to be called up. He got excited, and you could immediately feel the competitiveness with him and Mr. Barnes.

"I was excited, although I felt bad that we had beaten the student team. It is hard to not try my best," Mr. Lupia said. "I saw this before on the internet and used a strategy where you check the surroundings for the cotton balls, and then scoop up the money!"

Everyone did amazing jobs!

We know next year's performance is going to be just as great!



March: Women's History Month

Women's History Month

By Ava Sanchez, Sara Raguso, Joshua Mui, and Cristina Damato

Women's History Month is a celebration of women's contributions to our country, both past and present. In 1978, the city of Santa Rosa, California declared the week of March 8th Women's History Week. Two years later (in 1980, for those mathematically challenged), the organization that is now the National Women's History Alliance successfully lobbied for the week to become a nationally recognized celebration. At the time, Women's History Week involved essay contests, presentations at schools, and parades. As years went by, popularity spread, and in 1986 Congress expanded the week to an entire month.

To celebrate Women's History Month, Highlands put on a school-wide scavenger hunt, which was in large part organized by Mrs. Hricay. Several teachers and staff members dressed up as influential female figures, and students were tasked with identifying the person they dressed up as. We asked Mrs. Hricay a couple questions about what went into the scavenger hunt:

What made you decide to do the scavenger hunt?

A student named Fatoumata Jallow - she's your SO president - remembered a similar contest we had last year for Black History Month. She went to Mrs. Daly and proposed that we do it again, and Mrs. Daly came to me.

How many teachers will be participating?

Twenty staff members, not just teachers, will be dressing up as the notable women who have been in the announcements. However, many more have been working behind the scenes to make this happen.

Is this based off of last year's Black History Month scavenger hunt?

Yes, it is, but we've expanded it and improved upon it from previous years.

Do students who get the answers win a prize?

Yes! There's going to be a grand prize, which I don't believe I'm at liberty to explain, but it's worth it. There will also be five consolation prizes.

The Courier thanks all the amazing people who helped to make this scavenger hunt happen!

Sources: history.com; womenshistory.org



February: Black History Month

The History of Black History Month

By Halle Archer



Black History Month was established in 1969 by Carter G. Woodson. He devoted the month to recognizing and appreciating African-American culture because he believed that young African-Americans in the early 20th century weren't being taught of the great achievements of their ancestors.

The first celebration of Black History Month took place in the US at Kent State University, Ohio. After this, other countries heard about it and dedicated a month to it. Canada, Ireland, and the UK all observe Black History Month.



People around the world can celebrate Black History Month by supporting black owned businesses, supporting and learning about black women, and donating to charities that support anti-racism.

Black History Month is a month that everyone should celebrate because it's a great opportunity to learn about powerful black role models who have a great impact on our world.

Martin Luther King Jr: A Close Save!

By Niek Erkkila



We all know of the tragic event of April 4th, 1968: the day that Martin Luther King was assassinated while looking out his motel balcony. However, most people don't know that Martin Luther King was nearly killed by an assassination attempt nearly 10 years earlier, on September 10th, 1958. Let's see the details of what nearly killed him and what ended up saving him.

It all happened in a Harlem department store. All the way in the back was the typical shoe section in which Martin Luther King was signing books for "Strides Towards Freedom", a memoir about the Montgomery Bus Boycott. While Martin Luther was signing books, a middle-aged African-American woman with cat-eyed glasses went up to him, skipping a majority of the line. She asked, "are you Martin Luther King Jr?"

Martin replied with a yes.

In the blink of an eye, she went over the desk, and stabbed a letter opener into Martin's chest. She stabbed him so hard that the handle of the letter-opener snapped. Bystanders rushed over to help Martin and to restrain the assassin. After the assassination attempt, she shouted, "I have been after him for 6 years! I am glad I have finally done it!" Later, it was discovered that the woman's name was Izola Ware Curry.



During the horrifying ordeal, Martin was conscious and aware of the situation and managed to stay calm to console his frantic supporters. After Izola was restrained, there was much debate about whether to pull out the letter opener. Luckily for Martin, this did not happen – turns out the letter opener was nearly touching the aorta, a blood artery that connects the heart to the rest of the body. If they tried to pull out the letter opener it could have proven fatal.

Martin was later carried to the hospital by ambulance, letter opener still lodged in his chest. Upon arrival, he found himself face to face with the woman that nearly killed him.

She was brought in for identification and interrogation, during which it became clear that she was mentally ill. She rambled on about how Martin and his supporters were working with communists and conspiring against her to prevent her from having a steady job.

After the interrogation, several highly trained surgeons who were specialist in stab wounds came in to remove the letter opener



that was still in Martin's chest. Trying to remove it from the front was dangerous, so they cut open his chest and removed two ribs in order to safely dislodge the letter opener.

The operation was a success, and a decade later, on April 3rd, he remarked on his near-death experience. He said, "I want to say tonight, I, too, am happy I didn't sneeze, because if I had sneezed, I wouldn't have been around in 1960, when students all over the South started sitting in at lunch counters."

He then revealed that if he sneezed on that one fateful day, he would've never seen the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 or the March on Washington, during which he delivered his famous "I Have a Dream" speech.

Years later, while standing on a motel balcony, he was shot. Killed by assassin a decade later.

All information came from history.com.

19-year old Avery Seuter Unicycles From
Maine to Florida
By Cristina Damato



2,400 miles. A precious few people on this planet can ride a unicycle 10 feet, but 19-year old Avery Seuter rode one 2,400 miles. Connecting 15 states and 450 towns, the East Coast Greenway is a walking and cycling trail that spans the entire East Coast. The Greenway is designed to protect walkers, bikers, (and unicyclists) from the dangers of the highway. It also encourages environmentally-friendly transportation alternatives. The Greenway’s overall goal is to improve public health and environmental sustainability.

When Avery Seuter first learned about the East Coast Greenway when he was a toddler, he fell in love with it. Over a decade later, he found himself becoming an “end-to-ender” – someone who goes from one end of the trail to the other - but on a unicycle. Seuter left his home in Wells, Maine, in September. Averaging 20-30 miles a day, he has since ridden almost the entire trail. Though he made it all the way to Florida, he technically still has a couple hundred miles left to finish the entire Greenway, which he intends to do in the spring.

Only 3 to 4 out of 1,000 people worldwide can ride a unicycle, and even fewer can ride it well. Unlike a bicycle, a unicycle only has one wheel, and no handlebars. To ride it successfully, your center of balance has to stay in a precise position – one wrong move, and you tip over. Learning to ride even short distances successfully can take months – that’s a lot of falling!



Quotes from our Writers

“Be who you are and say what you feel, because those who mind don’t matter, and those who matter don’t mind.” Bernard M. Baruch (Cristina Damato)

“I made a book, and so can you.” -Miles P. Washington

“If your friend says they’re toxic, trust them because they probably are.” -Esperanza Cylich-Schneider

“It’s Good Enough!” Niek Erkkila

“There are only two things that you can control in life: your attitude and your effort.” - Marc Blum (Sabrina Blum)

“When it rains look for rainbows, when it’s dark look for stars.” Stella Khachetoorian

“Ok.” -Halle Archer

“When it rains look for rainbows, when it’s dark look for stars.” Stella Demilio



“Things may be difficult but you’re allowed to ask for help. The people who care about you will want to help you. You don’t need to do this alone and if things aren’t okay, you don’t need to make it okay. You can be sad but don’t give up. Try to be better, help others, help yourself and stay safe. You are loved<3”

“I might have only attended once, it was my first and last. But oh boy oh boy, it was worth it.” (Damien Huaman)

“One Fish
Two Fish
Red Fish
Blue Fish”
-Dr. Seuss (Joshua Mui)

To my 8th graders: Thank you for your hard work these last two years. Continue to work hard, and you will continue to shine! - Ms. Tschinkel

