

# THE BULLDOG BARK



## SURVIVING AND THRIVING IN 7TH GRADE

### BREAKING NEWS: 7th Grade is Hard but Not Impossible!

Let me just start off by saying: if you're reading this and you haven't started 7th grade yet... buckle up. It's wild. Not like rollercoaster-at-the-carnival wild, more like "Oops, I forgot we had a math test today AND I left my Chromebook at home" wild.

As a 13-year-old 7th grader, I've just finished what feels like the longest, fastest, weirdest year of my life. Let me tell you all about it. From awkwardly bumping into other students to surprisingly deep life lessons, this year taught me more than just how to calculate surface area (although that was important too, I guess).

### The First Week: Where's My Locker Again?

The first week of 7th grade is kind of like being dropped into a video game where you know the controls but you forgot how to use them and you're just trying to remember how to use them. And you're also just trying to find your classes, and not accidentally walk into the 8th graders. I forgot my locker combination like 34 times and once I had to keep reopening my locker because I kept forgetting to grab something in there.

### Academics: The Struggle Was Real (But So Was the Learning)

Let's talk about the real MVP of 7th grade: homework. Just kidding. Homework is the villain of this story. BUT I will admit, even when I was up at 10:42 p.m. finishing an AVID assignment I forgot about, I learned some pretty cool stuff.

Math taught me that I should never underestimate the power of parentheses. Seriously, one tiny misplaced bracket and suddenly you're dividing instead of multiplying and your answer is 472 instead of 7.

English was one of my favorite subjects because we read some books that actually didn't put me to sleep (looking at you, *A Good Kind Of Trouble*). I even wrote a letter to Phineas Gage's mom which I was super proud of, until I realized I spelled "Phineas" wrong. Three times.

History was like watching an action movie, but with more dates to memorize. I learned about the Holocaust, world wars, and that apparently I can make a five-pager on the invention of the Cotton Candy from the Industrial Revolution unit.

Science was super fun (and much easier for me to understand this year), especially the labs where we got to do little experiments and feel like real scientists(not really). Some parts were hard though—like trying to understand cellular respirations without my brain melting! But other than that, I loved Ms. Futrell's class.

And AVID? I was in AVID this year—basically a personal trainer for your brain. We learned to stay organized (I'm still working on that), ask better questions, and plan for college (Field trips were the best). Tutorials felt like a detective team solving math and life problems. It was tough, but actually pretty awesome.

# Brooklyn Middle STEAM School

## Life Lessons I Didn't Expect to Learn

Besides academics, I learned some pretty important stuff this year, like:

- **Organization matters.** If you don't write things down, you **WILL** forget them. And your teachers will not be impressed with your excuse that your dog peed on your planner.
- **Friendships change.** Sometimes you drift from people, and sometimes you make unexpected new best friends in the middle of a group project about TRF's.
- **Asking for help is not a sign of weakness.** It's actually pretty smart.
- **Group projects are secretly survival challenges.** If you survive one without losing your mind, you should get a medal.

## Let's Talk About the Real Star of the Show: School Lunch

Okay, listen. I know what you're thinking: "School lunch? EW." But hear me out. At our school, the lunch is actually... kind of awesome.

The walking tacos? Delicious. The mashed potatoes? Fluffy. The pizza? Okay, they still need more topping on there, but it's cheesy and good (that's all that matters). There's even the Ala Carte where you can buy chips, candy, and drinks.

One time, we had Spaghetti and Meatballs, and I swear it tasted like something my mom would serve on a "fancy dinner" night. The cafeteria ladies are basically food wizards

## Teachers: The Real Superheroes

Our teachers deserve their own Marvel movie. They answer the same question 73 times and still manage to smile (sometimes). They put up with kids who forget their supplies, spill their water bottles, and turn in essays titled "Final Draft" with no name on them.

Shoutout to Ms. Futrell for always making Science class feel like a reality show and always checking up on me. And to Ms. Nordin for telling me my letters and poems were good even though I never thought so and also for being like a school mother to me. You believed in me.

## Drama? Oh Yeah, We Had That Too

Middle school drama is like a reality TV show, but with more glitter and less logic. There were rumors, friend breakups, made up rumors, dramatic Snapchats, and hallway stares. But in the end, most of it didn't matter that much. We survived. We learned. We moved on (usually).

## My Favorite Memory

One of the best moments of 7th grade was when me and my classmates were designing our door for the STEAM Creativity Fair and me and Binesikwe got paint and did hand prints all over our class door. Also when I got to help with conferences (it was actually really fun).

I also got into GPS (which I almost thought I didn't get into) but I can't wait for the experiences that I am going to have next year.

## Final Thoughts From a (Slightly Wiser) 7th Grader

So here I am, at the end of 7th grade, a little taller (maybe), a lot smarter (hopefully), and definitely more confident than I was on that first nerve-wracking day.

I realized school isn't just about tests and grades. It's also about being a little weird, having fun, and making memories you'll laugh about in 10 years.

# Brooklyn Middle STEAM School

And I also learned that middle school is kind of like a pizza. It's messy, a little greasy, sometimes too cheesy—but overall, it's pretty great if you give it a chance.

If you're heading into 7th grade next year, don't stress. You've got this. Just remember your locker combo, try new things, and always spellcheck your titles.

Now, if you'll excuse me, I'm off to enjoy summer break. But first, maybe a nap. Because let me tell you: 7th grade is exhausting.

**BY BLESSING FOLLY**

## **A LOOK INTO THE FUTURE AN INTERVIEW WITH HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

I interviewed 5 high school students who went to Osseo Area Schools for middle school. I asked them a few questions about their point of view on middle school. Here are their answers.

Hiiro Maissey is a junior and goes to Park Center. Jaelynn Kokotovich is a junior and she goes to Park Center as well. Keira Clayton is a junior and also goes to Park Center. Meli Sanders is a junior and he also goes to Park Center.

**“What was it like being in our district for middle school?”**

**Jaelynn:** “It was great while it lasted, I went for 7 months then Covid happened”

**Hiiro:** “I went for a little before Covid started and it was fun”

**Keira:** “It was alright, they were less strict about phones and food”

**Meli:** “It was easy to get good grades I had great grades”

**“Do you have any advice for current and or incoming middle schoolers?”**

**Jaelynn:** “Stay on top of your work, even if its different from middle school, you're gonna have to get used to it”

**Hiiro:** “Do your work, try and form good habits for high school.”

**Keira:** “Middle school organization skills mattered more than I thought, take your time in middle school to do your assignments because you definitely will get assigned more in high school, not freshman year but Sophomore year”

**Meli:** “Focus in class and focus on your grades”

# Brooklyn Middle STEAM School

**“If you could go back to any grade in middle school, what grade would you go back to? Why?”**

**Jaelynn:** “I would go back to 6th grade because that's the year I went to Maple Grove middle school”

**Keira:** “I would go back to my 8th grade because 6th grade I still acted dumb and 7th grade I acted dumber”

**Meli:** “I would go back to 8th grade because I had all my friends in my classes”

**“Is there anything about Osseo Area Schools you wish was different?”**

**Jaelynn:** “School funding”

**Hiiro:** “Teacher communication is a little off from my experience”

**“What's one project or activity you clearly remember from middle school? Why is it so memorable?”**

**Jaelynn:** “8th grade when my science teacher going in a trash bag and it was vacuumed shut to where he looked like a skeleton”

**Hiiro:** “I remember clay projects from art because they were really hands on and fun”

**Keira:** “I remember a project I did in global studies on a study on countries' culture, we had to take photos of a countries cuisine, cultural outfits and war leaders. It was very fun to learn about.

**Meli:** “I remember making model rockets in middle school because we messed around with the spray paint”

**BY KEMIRA KING**

## SUMMER GLOW~

Summer is almost here, and if you want your skin to glow, I've got some simple tips that have worked for me and might help you too.

First, you need to understand your skin type because that changes how you take care of it.

Normal skin usually feels smooth, has few problems, and looks healthy with a natural glow.

Dry skin often feels tight and uncomfortable, and can look dull or flaky because it lacks moisture.

Oily skin looks shiny or greasy because it produces extra oil, which can cause buildup on your face.

Combination skin means some areas, like your forehead, nose, and chin, are oily, while other parts, like your cheeks, are dry.

Sensitive skin can be mixed with all four of those skin types too, but sensitive skin easily reacts to things like weather, products, or allergens, causing redness, itching, or dryness.

Acne-prone skin isn't a type but a condition where your pores clog, often leading to pimples, blackheads, or breakouts more than usual.

To figure out your skin type, try the blotting sheet test. Start with a clean face, but don't put on any creams or lotions. Wait about one to two hours for your skin to settle. Press a blotting sheet on your forehead,



# Brooklyn Middle STEAM School

nose, cheeks, and chin. If you don't see any oil on the sheet, you're likely to have dry skin. If there's only a little oil, your skin is probably normal. If the oil mainly came from the T-zone (forehead, nose, and chin), you have combination skin. If the sheet shows oil from all over your face, then you have oily skin.

If your skin is normal, use a gentle cleanser that helps remove dirt and sweat without stripping away natural oils, keeping your skin balanced. Follow that with a light moisturizer to keep your skin hydrated without feeling heavy or greasy. Finish with a

sunscreen that has at least SPF 30 to protect your skin from harmful UV rays that can cause aging and damage.

If your skin is oily, choose a gel or foaming cleanser that helps remove extra oil and prevents clogged pores. Use an oil-free or water-based moisturizer that hydrates your skin but won't add shine or clog pores. Apply a matte finish sunscreen with SPF 30 that protects your skin and helps control oil and shine throughout the day.

If your skin is dry, use a creamy or milk cleanser that gently cleans without removing moisture. Follow with a good moisturizer that deeply hydrates and soothes dry patches. Use a moisturizing sunscreen with SPF 30 so your skin stays protected without feeling tight or dry.

For combination skin, try a balancing cleanser that cleans oily areas without drying out the drier parts of your face. Use a lightweight moisturizer to hydrate your skin evenly. Don't forget a sunscreen with SPF 30 for daily protection.

If you have sensitive skin, keep your routine simple by using fragrance-free and gentle products that won't irritate your skin.

If you are acne-prone, cleanse twice a day with a gentle cleanser to remove dirt and oil that clog pores. Look for products with ingredients like salicylic acid, which helps unclog pores, benzoyl peroxide, which kills acne-causing bacteria, and tea tree oil, which is a natural antibacterial. Avoid heavy oils, which can worsen acne, alcohol-based toners that dry out skin, and exfoliating too much as it can irritate and worsen breakouts.

Some basic skin tips for everyone:

Cleanse your face two times a day to remove dirt, oil, and impurities. Moisturize daily to keep your skin hydrated and healthy. Always wear sunscreen with at least SPF 30 in the morning to protect your skin from sun damage and premature aging. Try to get enough sleep because it helps your skin repair itself and stay glowing. Avoid touching your face often to prevent spreading bacteria and causing breakouts. Exfoliate your skin one to three times a week to remove dead skin cells and brighten your complexion but don't overdo it as it can cause irritation and dryness. Always do a patch test by applying new products to a small area like behind your ear and wait 24 to 48 hours to check for any reaction before using it all over your face.



**BY SUNSHYNE VANG**

## 7TH GRADE'S FAVORITE TEACHER

Are you in 6th grade, wanting to learn about your future teachers, in 7th grade, wanting to learn about your current teachers, or in 8th grade, wanting to learn about your past teachers? No matter why you are reading this article, here is the 7th grader's favorite teacher from this year.

Over a couple of days, I polled 30 7th graders and asked them who their favorite teachers were from this year. There were 11 total teachers that the students voted for. The 3rd place runners-up were Mrs. Green and Mr. Myer, with 3 votes each. The second place runner-up was Mr. Brown, with 4 votes. The winning teacher, with 10 votes, is Mrs. Nordin.

I interviewed Mrs Nordin about her being voted the Favorite 7th-grade teacher, although she has already been interviewed this year. I asked her some basic questions about her being appreciated, but if you want to learn more about her you should feel free to read her other interview.

**Mrs. Nordin, your students say you're their favorite teacher, how does that make you feel?**

"I feel honored and humbled"

**What do you think are some good teaching strategies you used this year?**

"I think that some good strategies I used are making learning fun and engaging, trying to include all of the students in conversations, having fun with the curriculum, and supplementing creative things into our readings"

**Is there anything you are going to do differently next year?**

"Yes, next year we might be taking out a unit and adding indigenous text, which will be fun"

**What teacher was your favorite, or inspired you the most?**

"Mrs Hosley, my 7th grade English teacher. She taught me a whole lot, and made learning interesting. I actually learned a lot of my grammar and good writing skills from her, because I didn't know much before I had her"

**What would you like to say to kids that you have inspired this year?**

"I would tell my students who I inspired to never stop reading or writing. I would also like to thank them for being self motivated and coming to class every day and wanting to learn and be educated on the importance of reading, writing, and grammar"

**The last question I have for you, and this is the most important, is do you have a favorite student this year?**

"No, every student is my favorite student."

**Is this at least your favorite year, or your favorite students in general that you have taught?**

"This has been an awesome year. It's my first year at BMS, and it's probably my favorite school I have taught at."



Clearly, Mrs. Nordin is a great teacher and you should either be honored to have had her, wish you had her,

hope you have her next year. Mrs. Nordin is not a stranger, so make sure to go say hi and congratulate her in room 206! And, don't forget to be kind and show appreciation for all the teachers you had this year, not just your favorites. All of our staff work super hard! See you next year, Have a good summer!

BY BROOKLYN STROM

## HOW MY GRANDPARENTS IMMIGRATED TO AMERICA FROM THE PHILIPPINES

Nita and Orlando Ventura came to the United States, along with their family, Alan (16), Anna (14), Andrew (12), and Alwin (4) from Modesta Village, Philippines, in 1986 when Nita was 40 and Orlando was 45 years old. They came to the United States and lived in Jersey City, New Jersey, where they stayed for the first 3 years before moving to Piscataway, New Jersey. In 2012, when their last son had gotten married and both Nita and Orlando had retired, the couple themselves moved to Las Vegas, where they currently live.

There are a couple of reasons why they moved to the United States. Orlando wanted to find a better job and for his kids to have a better education. Alan, the oldest of the kids, wanted to participate in a foreign exchange program. So, Orlando and Nita thought they would move to the USA anyway, because it was cheaper and because of all the new opportunities.

Another reason they moved to the USA is because a friend of Orlando's had encouraged him to move. I asked both of them why they wanted to move to New Jersey specifically. They said that because Orlando had already applied to a couple of jobs in that state, and got one, he said it was the easiest job to find in engineering, and Orlando's cousin also lived there.

There was only a small window to go to the US, so they had to decide fast. The couple could have gone to Canada or Kansas City, but they needed better timing, and it was hard getting approval. They had already applied for jobs in New Jersey, so it was just another reason they could not move to Kansas or Canada.

Once they had moved, Nita remembered hearing their 4 kids, Alan, Anna, Andrew, and Alwin, saying they "were all unhappy because they just wanted to go home," One of her favorite stories to tell was during the recital of the Pledge of Allegiance as she was being sworn in as a citizen, when she had accidentally raised her left hand instead of the right. Her youngest son, Alwin, had said, "No, Mom, it's your right hand!"

It took about a year for the family to adjust and get used to a new country, and it was especially difficult moving because they had four kids. I asked them, if they were given the chance back then, would they move to a different country other than the USA? They told me no, because they were not familiar with other countries, like Europe. They had also already planned to go to the USA, and they spoke English. Nita and Orlando contacted their family members and friends back in the Philippines by calling them on the phone and mailing them letters. They weren't able to text them because texting had not been invented yet. Since their whole family already spoke English, because it was their second language back in the Philippines, neither Nita, Orlando, nor any of their kids had trouble speaking the language when they moved to the USA.

Something the Philippines had that the USA did not was the food. Both Nita and Orlando said they missed the food back home, and Orlando specifically said he missed lumpia from the Philippines. They liked a few things about living in the USA that were different from the Philippines, like the way they lived. The USA was cheaper and had more items available to the middle class. For example, only rich people in the Philippines could buy things like grapes, but in the USA, it was cheaper and more affordable for everyone.

There were also more opportunities in the USA than in the Philippines. Another thing the family liked



# Brooklyn Middle STEAM School

about the USA was the indoor plumbing. In the Philippines, you had to bring in water from a well to flush the toilet, take a shower, or wash dishes. Most of the time, the shower water would be cold because they had to get the water from the well, and there was no other way to heat it, besides boiling it, and that took too long.

The family had to get rid of a lot of things, like the kids' toys, and had to leave everything else behind in the Philippines. They mostly just brought clothes, and that was it. At the time, it wasn't super expensive to move to a different country, but it was hard for Nita and Orlando to leave their friends and family in the Philippines.

After 39 years of living in the United States, I asked each of them what their favorite food was from the Philippines and the USA. Nita's favorite Filipino food is pancit, which is a type of noodle, and her favorite American food is a burger. Orlando said his favorite Filipino food was pancit and adobo, which is a marinated stew, and he didn't have a favorite American food. I asked Nita what her favorite food to cook is, and she told me pancit and lumpia, which are a kind of eggroll, are her favorites. Orlando's favorite thing about Las Vegas is that there is no snow! I asked both of them if they liked the Philippines or the USA, and they both said the USA!

BY AUDREY VENTURA

## **2024-2025 BULLDOG BARK STAFF**

**AUDREY VENTURA**

**BLESSING FOLLY**

**BROOKLYN STROM**

**DAVID HAYNES**

**SUNSHYNE VANG**