

November 2024

N^{HSD}ews

Homecoming Parade Tradition Draws Large Crowds in Support of HSD

A Hazelwood School District tradition continued throughout October as Hazelwood West, Hazelwood Central, and Hazelwood East all held their annual homecoming parades. Bands, floats, banners, and cars filled the parade routes to represent schools in all three corridors. Impeccable weather on all three days added to the festive atmosphere.

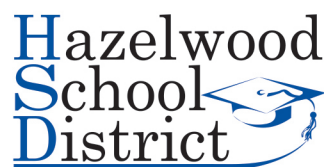
Hundreds of spectators lined the routes on these three beautiful fall mornings to watch the parades, which consisted of students, homecoming kings and queens, cheerleaders, bands, alumni, community partners, HSD faculty and administrators, and each corridor's middle schools and elementary schools, all enthusiastically showing off their school pride.

Up first was last year's traveling trophy winner, Hazelwood West. They were followed by Hazelwood Central the next week, with Hazelwood East concluding the celebrations.

"The annual homecoming parades are a highlight of every school year because they give students, parents, staff, and the community a chance to come together on a large scale to share pride in our schools," stated HSD Superintendent Dr. Nettie Collins-Hart. "It was a joy to see the big turnout at all three parades and to see such enthusiasm to support the district. These types of community activities help support a positive culture for our schools and with our community."

This year's parades were a rousing success, and we send a huge thank you to all who helped in the planning and execution, as well as those who came out to show their school spirit!





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Hazelwood School District

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Greetings Hazelwood School District Community,

With the 2024-2025 school year well underway, we have welcomed our students back, and I want to thank our families and staff for your support and hard work in making this such a positive new school year. After working through obstacles and challenges that come with the start of any school year, we feel that we are on the right course to provide tremendous opportunities for learning and growth for our students throughout the district.

Our main theme for this year is "Rebranding HSD," with a focus on improving climate and culture. We aim to amplify and promote the student successes and inspirational stories that permeate HSD and that are happening on a regular basis. We are also working on initiatives and programs that we believe will bolster the environment and reputation of the district. We solicit your active participation in this endeavor as we forge ahead.

The latest addition to our thematic schools, Hazelwood Central High, has had a successful launch. Enhanced by the Real World Learning and Innovative High School Project, students are getting a head start on their college and career paths with initiatives such as more hands-on academic learning experiences, field experiences, guest presenters, and taking

From the Desk of the Superintendent

courses on a college campus. The thematic schools continue our efforts to engage students and meet the evolving needs of our school community with innovative programs.

I would like to thank everyone who attended the recent State of the District Dinner Meeting, which was held at the Hazelwood East Early Childhood Center. We invited a group of elected officials, dignitaries, community members, and faculty to hear our plans for the District and to participate in discussions on how the community can contribute to the success of our students. The evening was a success and provided useful feedback in our continuous quest to provide a top-notch educational experience for all of our students.

We were also pleased to see the enthusiasm throughout all three corridors during this year's high school homecoming parades. The routes were lined with cheerful supporters showing pride in their favorite schools throughout the district. This is just one of many celebrations where the community can unite and support our students and staff. A huge "thank you" to everyone who participated and made this year's parades a success.

Speaking of success, this year's Fall Family Festival has been another highlight of the season, with over 1,000 people participating. The festival is an opportunity for families to not only have fun with games, prizes, and entertainment, but also to meet representatives of area community organizations and secure resources and information. Congratulations to Brown Elementary, North Middle, and East High, the winners of the 3rd Annual Family Community Involvement Challenge, which was awarded at the festival for the school with the highest parent participation in September and October.

Let's keep the positive momentum going throughout the 2024-2025 school year. We are excited about the start of the school year and are energized for what lies ahead!

Sincerely,

Dr. Nettie Collins-Hart

Hazelwood School District Superintendent

HSD News is a news magazine created by the district's Communications and Public Relations Department.

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Fall Family Festival Produces Over 1,000 Community Participants



The Hazelwood School District's Fall Family Festival was an unforgettable event that united community

members new and old. Over 1,000 people attended. The festivities brought joy and excitement, creating lasting memories for families.

"The Fall Family Festival is a wonderful HSD tradition," Dr. Audrey Wittenauer, federal programs specialist, remarked. "It's a fun night for the whole family! There's entertainment from our talented student performers, a community resource fair, a complimentary dinner, games for the younger students, and free books to take home. There is something for everyone!"



The event showcased various community resources and honored the HSD Family and Community Involvement Challenge winners, recognizing the schools with the highest levels of parental involvement at each educational level. East High, North Middle, and Brown Elementary secured first place, Central Middle and Barrington followed in second place, while Arrowpoint and Larimore tied for third.

Among the attendees was nine-year breast cancer survivor April Isaac, a newcomer to the Fall Family Festival. She appreciated the HSD hospitality that was on display. "As soon as I pulled up, everyone was friendly. They introduced themselves, gave us a sign of everything, and showed us where to go," exclaimed Isaac.



Fall Family Festival Continued on Page 15

HSD Celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month and Jamestown Elementary's Successful Spanish Program

Hispanic Heritage Month is observed annually from September 15 to October 15. As is tradition, the Hazelwood School District joined the celebration this year with festivities in several schools, including decorations, games, food, and learning activities to celebrate the district's commitment to cultural diversity.

One of the biggest celebrations was held at Jamestown Elementary School on October 2nd. The festival featured performances by students and staff, an art show, and food, with about 500 people attending. Anthony Robinson, Jamestown Elementary principal, touted the benefits

HSD Celebrates Hispanic Heritage Continued on Page 11



Twillman Social Worker Shines a Spotlight on Food Market with Presentation to Foodbank Board

As a second-year social worker at Twillman Elementary School, Jordan Young's schedule is consistently busy. But she has added one special duty to her plate—she runs the food market program at the school. The program, in conjunction with the St. Louis Area Foodbank, provides food resources to families in need while offering job experience opportunities for students. The market also aims to reduce the stigma around needing assistance, allowing students to gain confidence and learn responsibility. Through this work, Young recently made an engaging presentation to the St. Louis Foodbank Board of Directors.

"This was a one-time presentation to the Foodbank Board to provide insight into how the school markets operate from someone directly running one," she explained.

Young spoke to the board at the request of one of the food bank board members who was familiar with her previous experience in working with food markets. She presented details about the program to the food bank board, highlighting how students apply, interview, and work in various roles such as inventory management and customer service. Young shared student quotes expressing pride in their work and the desire to help others while highlighting the remarkable offerings and community impact of the Twillman Market. Students' insights



shed light on the vital role the market plays in supporting those in need, leaving the audience informed and motivated to continue to make a difference.

"The way the market operates by involving students has helped diminish the stigma around needing assistance, as families feel proud coming in and interacting with the student workers," Young emphasized. "It is amazing to see how proud the students are of their work in the market."

"Our partnership with the St. Louis Foodbank introduces our scholars to the powerful concept of service learning at an early age," Twillman principal, Carla Leggett, explained. "They take pride in their roles, knowing that their efforts matter. Starting this journey in elementary school helps shape their character and builds a sense of responsibility and commitment to the community. Their contributions inspire others, creating a ripple effect of positive change that strengthens the community."

Jordan Young is an example of the Hazelwood School District's commitment to raising awareness of community issues while providing students with valuable real-world experience.





East High's AMPED Course Provides the Perfect Mix for an Engaging Learning Experience

At Hazelwood East High, the Algebra in Manufacturing Production Engineering and Design (AMPED) course is not just another class—it's an innovative program that seamlessly combines the worlds of algebra, business, and manufacturing. Students dive into real-world applications, allowing them to see how math drives successful enterprises and production processes.

"The most rewarding part about teaching the AMPED course is when students have the 'aha' moment and understand how to apply the concepts to real-world situations, making connections between classroom learning and future careers," business teacher, Roderick Allen, explains.

AMPED is open to juniors who have completed Algebra 1 and 2 (students need those prerequisites to apply the algebra concepts to production design). Projects include building roller coasters within a budget, analyzing trajectory and resistance for slingshots, designing gliders to understand

aerodynamics, and creating product prototypes to analyze market share and potential earnings. Additionally, students apply math concepts through hands-on projects such as t-shirt design and printing, gliders, and product prototypes.

"This class is a shining example of the real-world experiences that we want to offer more to our students," Hazelwood School District Superintendent, Dr. Nettie Collins-Hart, explained. "Not only do students find these classes more engaging, these experiences help students make connections to why they are learning what they are learning."

The class is designed to prepare students for real-world applications and foster an understanding of business strategies, market analysis, and product development. As it continues to provide valuable skills and access to specialized equipment, Allen hopes to make this an elite class that students compete to enter.



HSD PROUD PASS

The HSD Proud Activities and Athletics Pass is one way the Hazelwood School District says thank you for your support of our schools. It allows active HSD Hero Readers, active HSD Ambassadors, and district residents aged 60 and over free access to high school and middle school events. HSD Proud Pass holders may receive one free food item and one free drink per event from a concession stand.

For more information visit www.hazelwoodschools.org



Central High's Tawana Spencer Honored with Apple for the Teacher Award

Hazelwood Central High School's Tawana Spencer is celebrating her 25th year in education with quite an accomplishment — she is the recipient of the prestigious Apple for the Teacher Award! The award, presented by the Zeta Chapter of the Iota Phi Lambda Sorority, recognizes outstanding educators in the St. Louis area. Spencer, an 11th-grade counselor for Central High, has been nominated twice.

"This award has graciously reminded me that my work has not been in vain," Spencer shared. "I love connecting with my students and am hugely invested in their social and emotional well-being. I am elated, honored, grateful, and humbled to celebrate my 25th year in education with this award."

Among her accomplishments as counselor, Spencer is most proud of collaborating with her team to raise Internal Improvement Review scores and increase graduation rates. She has mentored several new counselors and teachers in the field and district. She, along with the team, has created a culture of belonging in the department to lower turnover rates. In the 2024-2025 school year, Spencer is happy to be a part of the new Central High Thematic School, teaching a Smart Start Class at St. Louis Community College Florissant Valley Campus.

HSD's Dr. Evelyn Woods Named MOASPA HR Administrator of the Year

The Missouri Association of School Personnel Administrators (MOASPA) recently revealed their Human Resources (HR) Administrator of the Year Award winner, and this year's recipient was Hazelwood School District's own Dr. Evelyn Woods. Dr. Woods currently serves as the district's director of human resources.

The prestigious HR Administrator of the Year honor is awarded each year to a member who has made significant contributions to the district and its constituents. The recipient is also recognized for aiding the betterment of human resources, district leadership, and education locally, regionally, and on a state level.

A tireless champion for employees, Dr. Woods has amassed an impressive list of accomplishments as the director of HR (a role she's held in HSD since 2018). These accomplishments include redeveloping new teacher orientation programs, implementing the new Human Resources Information System, leading the expansion of the district's Aspiring Leaders program and Teacher in Residency Apprenticeship program, creating a partnership with the University of Missouri St. Louis to recruit and retain teachers, and the monitoring and execution of

nearly \$700,000 from the Grow Your Own Program and Recruitment and Retention Grant.

Reflecting on her win, Dr. Woods remarked, "Human Resources is not just about policies, procedures, or recruitment. It's about people—their well-being, growth, and potential." She continued, "But, as with any recognition, this is not just my achievement. It is the result of the collective efforts of a phenomenal HR team. Every day, I'm reminded of how privileged I am to be in a role that allows me to connect with individuals, help shape their careers, and foster an environment that supports student achievement."

Keith Bausman, HSD assistant superintendent of human resources, noted, "Dr. Woods has consistently demonstrated an exceptional ability to identify a problem and create a novel way to fill the gap, which has significantly transformed the educational landscape in the Hazelwood School District."

Please join us in congratulating Dr. Woods on this amazing and well-deserved recognition.





Real World Fridays Anchor Central High's First Year as a Thematic School

With the start of the 2024-2025 school year, Hazelwood Central High became the district's fifth thematic school. A key part of the program is Real World Fridays. The Real World Learning and Innovative High School Project at Central High offers students the opportunity to engage in learning experiences that align with their interests, academic and social emotional needs, and college and career pathways. Student and staff schedules have remained the same Mondays through Thursdays, but the real-world learning activities take place on Fridays.

"Thematic school gives the students the 'why' — why school is important, why education is important," explained Dr. Veronica Macklin, Hazelwood Central High principal, during a recent Real World Friday. "It helps them find the purpose — and find themselves," she added. "When students leave our school, they are equipped to be able to survive and thrive in the global market."

For students who are on Central's campus on Fridays, multiple learning experiences are provided, such as real-world academic lab experiences, diverse field experiences, apprenticeships, internships, career explorations, guest presenters, and projects all tied to their current coursework and Missouri Learning Standards.

Teachers, counselors, and social workers work to plan, lead and facilitate hands-on learning experiences. The field experiences bring students face-to-face with a wide variety of professionals and organizations to provide first-hand insight into an extensive range of career options. For instance,

during one recent outing, a group of students received the opportunity to tour the Hazelwood Transportation Department facilities and learn from the Director of Transportation and the staff about their responsibilities and their career paths. These experiences expose students to careers they may not have previously considered or even knew existed.

Field experiences and partnerships this year have included visits to the St. Louis Zoo, The St. Louis Art Museum, the Kemper Art Museum, University of Missouri-St. Louis, and St. Louis Community College with upcoming trips scheduled for a refinery and a federal courthouse.

Guest speakers have also shared their career experiences with the students right in the classroom. Students have listened to presentations from a bank manager, a firefighter, a playwright, an early childhood educator, as well as hearing from representatives from the Missouri Botanical Gardens, Mercy Hospital, Edward Jones, and professional staff at the Learning Center.

Dual enrollment at the St. Louis Community College is also a key component of Real World Fridays. Selected sophomores, juniors, and seniors applied to complete dual enrollment and dual credit coursework at St. Louis Community College-Florissant Valley. The Hazelwood School District provides transportation, student lunches, and tuition for designated coursework.

Over 120 students take advantage of this opportunity.



Hazelwood West Students Attend the Missouri Scholars Academy

The summer months are typically reserved for students to have fun and recharge their batteries, but two Hazelwood West students also used that time for learning and personal development. Alexis Wahome and Kyler Whitehead were among the 330 students who were chosen to participate in the Missouri Scholars Academy (MSA) last June.

The Missouri Scholars Academy is a three-week residential program for select members of the state's academically gifted students entering their junior year of high school. The Academy has been held every summer since 1985 on the campus of the University of Missouri.

The Academy provided Alexis and Kyler the opportunity to be a part of a unique learning community that includes interdisciplinary courses and an assortment of extracurricular

activities. The experience allowed them to spend time on a university campus, navigate the transition to college, and it offered guidance on academic and social aspects of higher education.

Both students enjoyed the new experiences. "I got to see a live performance from a professional harpist, visit and see a nuclear reactor at the research center, learn about Ancient Greece, learn about space travel from an experienced astronaut, do tap dancing and square dancing, and get an introduction to blackholes and special relativity — which blew my mind," exclaimed Alexis. Kyler added, "Shakespeare class was the best part of MSA. I made a lot of friends, and I was able to do and try things I have never done before."

The benefits extended beyond the classroom. Kyler noted, "The MSA enhanced my communication and socializing skills." Alexis explained further, "MSA helped me gain the confidence and courage to be more outgoing and sociable. This has prepared me for leadership roles in extracurriculars such as president of the robotics team and vice-president of the chemistry club, as well as connecting with peers to learn and share opportunities for programs and resources useful for college admission."



Two West High Graduates Became Delegates At The DNC

Preston and Cole Peirce, Hazelwood West High School graduates (Class of 2021), proudly attended the recent Democratic National Convention (DNC) as

delegates. They confidently represented Missouri as two of the seven delegates chosen from North St. Louis. Their appearance resulted from a successful selection campaign at the Missouri State Democratic Convention in Columbia in June.

Their first-time experience at the DNC in Chicago was driven by a heartfelt mission to raise awareness for autism.

"People with invisible disabilities like autism are often misunderstood and mistreated, sometimes even as if they're insane," Cole Peirce emphasized, "That's why it's so important

for me to attend the DNC and represent people with autism."

Since first grade, the twins have demonstrated an interest in politics that has continued throughout their journeys, leading to this moment. Through much adversity, their resilience has kept them on track to inspire others, proving that autism coupled with an auto-immune disease would not deter them from pursuing their political advocacy goals.

"Being able to represent the great state of Missouri at the DNC is a huge honor," Preston Peirce said. "The most significant thing about youth getting into politics is that it allows young people to advocate for themselves and grow as individuals."

HSD is proud of Preston and Cole Peirce's resilience in raising their voices to bring awareness to autism while pursuing their political goals.

North Middle Student Entrepreneurs Pop Out to Showcase Their Pop-Up Shop

Young entrepreneurs at Hazelwood North Middle School recently had the chance to showcase their business acumen at a school-sponsored pop-up shop — they responded with creativity and savvy.

“The pop-up shop aimed to showcase the remarkable skills, talents, and creativity of North Middle students,” the Dean of Students, Dr. Kenya Cody, explained. “In planning the event, I focused on creating an ambiance that instilled confidence in students regarding the products they were selling to the community. Ultimately, our mission was accomplished.”

For some students, the overall experience was exciting, mixed with a tad of anxiety. “I felt good, but also nervous,” Jocelyn Miller, a North Middle sixth-grader, explained. “I did not know if people would like my soaps and scrubs, but they did.”

“I was afraid because my mom kept telling me to raise the prices,” Queen Esther Miller, a North Middle eighth-grader, emphasized. “My custom-made cups went from \$7 to \$20, and I did not think anyone would buy them because of the expense. I was wrong — my mom was right, people bought them!”

In addition to soaps, scrubs, and cups, students offered clothing, lemonade, fruit, and snacks. The assortment presented enough variety to keep the community interested.

“I knew people were going to become hungry,” Ryan Harper, a North Middle sixth-grader, explained. “I made a few snacks for them to eat while they were looking around.”

North Middle students’ parents played a major role in motivating and assisting the students’ success with their products.

Seventh-grade student, Elijah Davis, explained, “My clothing line, King’s Row, was a surprise from my mom for my birthday in 2022. My mom talked to me about having generational wealth so I could earn money while I was young. It will go on for generations.”

“I got into the business because of seeing my mom as a businesswoman,” Jayde Hayes, a North Middle

eighth-grader explained. “My mother influenced me by always being there, no matter good or bad. She contributed to the pop-up shop by purchasing what I needed to make my candy grapes.”

The North Middle entrepreneurs encouraged their peers interested in starting a business to persevere, believe in themselves, and not give up despite challenges.

HSD applauds the North Middle students’ creativity and entrepreneurial spirit and anxiously anticipate their future business successes.



Literacy Remains a High Priority in HSD

Hazelwood School District emphasizes literacy and reading throughout the year, and summer is no exception. In fact, summer is an opportunity for students to read even more, and the district's #HSDReads is one such activity to promote reading and have fun.

Over the summer, the district held the #HSDReads Summer 2024 Reading Challenge, a district-wide initiative to keep students engaged with reading while school was out. The program was held between June 3rd and August 18th. Students recorded the minutes that they read and earned badges for reaching certain levels. Each badge unlocked a prize that they could claim during the 2024-2025 school year.

The results have been tabulated, and we are happy to congratulate the winners:

Top Student Participation

1. Walker Elementary, 120 students
2. Brown Elementary, 88 students
3. (tie) Lawson Elementary & Lusher Elementary, 78 students

Greatest Number of Student Minutes Read

1. Walker Elementary, 35,938 minutes
2. Lusher Elementary, 31,084 minutes
3. Lawson Elementary, 23,089 minutes

Greatest Number of Minutes Read*

1. Lawson Elementary, 69,992 minutes
2. Walker Elementary, 51,085 minutes
3. Lusher Elementary, 49,540 minutes

The contest netted over 295,000 minutes read collectively. Individual winners were excited to receive recognition and were awarded prizes, including certificates, gift cards, and books, during presentations that were held once the school year resumed.

Julie Szczuka, HSD lead reading teacher, added, "We're looking forward to our next challenge during winter break to keep the love of reading and literacy going strong!"

A huge congratulations to the winners and to all who participated. And happy reading!

**Includes students and staff*



East High's Soccer Goalie Elijah Quinn Soars to Third in the Region



Elijah Quinn, a senior at Hazelwood East High who plays goalkeeper and forward, is having an amazing final year. He is ranked third in the region for his goalkeeping skills in soccer, averaging over 20 saves per game.

"I am kind of athletic," Quinn explained. "I have played soccer for four years, baseball for ten years, and wrestled in my sophomore year. I have been putting up over 20 saves a game, helping my teammates out. Being a part of this team feels good. We are a family and get along well. It is the vibes — it is all good. I love it here!"

Elijah praises East High's newest head soccer coach, Brendan Watts, for giving opportunities to new players and being relatable. Coach Watts is switching up new tactics, and the team is going through a transformation process, adjusting to what they have already built, on top of what they are being taught.

"I think we brought the pride back," Coach Watts explained. "With six games left in the season, we already have five more games than last year, so we are definitely on the right track. Elijah is incredible. He is six feet and a 'thousand', so it helps that he can reach across the net, but he is great and a good captain. I can't complain."

The soccer season runs from fall to winter with around 16 games against local schools. Elijah encourages others to try soccer for its physical and mental benefits and the chance to build a team family.

With Elijah in the net and Coach Quinn's guidance from the sidelines, the future looks bright for the East High soccer team.

HSD Celebrates Hispanic Heritage Continued from Page 3

of the celebration. "This gathering gives us a prime opportunity to celebrate the vibrant tapestry of Hispanic culture and embrace music, art, food, and language." He continued, "When we have a better understanding of each other, we bridge our worlds and get to honor the customs and traditions that unite us all."

"The event was not only a celebration of culture, but it also showcased our Spanish language exposure program," added Dr. Juan Cordova, HSD assistant superintendent. "It's so important to promote inclusivity and host events like these which embrace the culture's history, customs, and achievements."

Jamestown Elementary School is the only school in HSD that has a thematic school where students begin learning the Spanish language and culture in elementary school, with a goal of earning the Seal of Biliteracy by the time they graduate.



The No Guns in School campaign specifically targets guns and mobilizes students, parents, and the community to partner with the district to achieve one goal: No Guns in School. **Did you know that a student who brings a gun to school will be suspended for up to 180 days? Additionally, barring extenuating circumstances, the student will be expelled, which means they will not be able to attend any public school in the state of Missouri.**

The key to achieving the campaign goal is participation from all stakeholders.

West High Cheerleaders Prepare For National Competitions

West High cheerleaders participated in the National Cheer Association (NCA) Lindenwood Speed Camp over the summer to enhance cheer techniques with an emphasis on stunting. In addition to developing their skill set, athletes Kaylynn Ellis, Bethany Thompson, Hope Green, Saige Johnson, Aiyana Smith, Nevaeh Bennett, Trinittee Griffin, and Samari Weaver received All-American nominations.

For the fourth consecutive year, West High senior, Bethany Thompson, earned the title of All-American cheerleader, demonstrating new tumbling skills to improve her eligibility. Achieving this type of success took a lot of work for Bethany.

"I was not the best cheerleader in middle school," explained Thompson. "NCA is one of the most prestigious cheerleading associations, and for them to say I am All-American is huge. This means I worked hard. I put all four years of dedication into this to be on top."

West High senior, Hope Green, was recognized with the Pin-It-Forward honor, catapulting her as the standout individual at the NCA camp.

"The Pin-It-Forward award shows leadership, spirit, communication, and kindness," Green explained. "These traits are what a cheerleader should show – the face of what a cheerleader should be. After the NCA staff picked a person from each school

who represented those characteristics, I received two pins. I had to look for someone else from a different team to Pin-It-Forward to. Seeing that my hard work and dedication to cheer paid off was great!"

Due to these achievements, the West High cheerleaders have been given the chance to travel to different cities and perform with the varsity team. They are preparing to compete at the NCA Regionals in St. Charles and the Nationals in Dallas, Texas.

The Hazelwood School District is proud of the West High cheerleaders, and we are looking forward to their continued success!





Grannemann Students Hone Teamwork and Communication Skills at the Character Olympics

Seeking a unique way to engage students

and encourage positive communication — packaged with a generous dose of fun — Grannemann Elementary School recently held the Character Olympics for its students. The Character Olympics are a collection of competitions with the goal of emphasizing character traits that are expected of staff and students, inspiring teamwork, and practicing expectations.

Students at all grade levels enthusiastically participated in the competitions and gained a better understanding of competition, while also enhancing their team-building skills and enjoying learning together. The consensus from the students was a big thumbs-up. Comments ranged from, “I want us to do that again one day,” to “Other schools around the world should do it,” to “Please keep this event.”

Math interventionist, Jessica Strong, was instrumental in initiating and organizing the efforts for the Character Olympics at Grannemann. The concept came from Strong’s prior experience while serving as a teacher. She was impressed with how it influenced her classroom community. Strong brought the project to Grannemann to have students engage in activities that focus on teamwork, perseverance, encouragement, critical thinking, and communication.

The competitions for the Character Olympics took place throughout the school day. Several stations were set up around the building, including the gym, the cafeteria, and the library.

Among the events were:

- **Collaborative Cup Stacking:** Helped coordination skills.
- **Scouts STEM Van:** Volunteers from the Boy Scouts donated their time and brought their STEM van to the school. They helped students engage with puzzles, robotics, 3-D printing, and drawing.
- **Zip Pow Boing:** Students passed around imaginary energy using three specific movements — “ZIP”, “POW”, and “BOING.”
- **What Would You Do:** Students practiced having productive conversations, made connections with peers, and practiced the Kagan strategy Mix Pair Share.
- **Relay Races and Recess Games** Taught the value of teamwork and healthy competition.



Grannemann hasn’t seen the last of the Character Olympics — upcoming sessions are scheduled for the day after winter break and the day after spring break. Grannemann staff say they are pleased with the success of the games and excited to see how future sessions will help to shape the culture of the school.



**HAZELWOOD CONNECT VIRTUAL ACADEMY
REGISTRATION IS OPEN
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OPEN TO GRADES 1-5**

**FULL-DAY VIRTUAL INSTRUCTION TAUGHT BY HSD TEACHERS USING
HSD CURRICULUM LOCAL ALTERNATIVE TO MOCAP OR HOMESCHOOL
DISTRICT PROVIDES CHROMEBOOK AND HOTSPOT
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FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT MRS KEONNA REYNOLDS AT 314-953-5204 OR VISIT HAZELWOODSCHOOLS.ORG

Hazelwood Central Middle School Hosts Visit from UniverSoul Circus



The Hazelwood Central Middle School gymnasium typically hosts PE classes, running, and basketball. But for a brief stretch, it was the home of the world-renowned UniverSoul Circus. The famed troupe was in town for performances in downtown St. Louis but took time to give an abbreviated version of their show for the enthusiastic students at the school.

The well-received half-hour performance included juggling, dancing, acrobatics, and a trio of clowns. Students had an up-close view to witness the value of teamwork, as the performers worked cohesively and relied on each other to perform challenging routines. The show provided a valuable opportunity for students to observe people from diverse

backgrounds and cultures.

The circus boasts entertainers from as far away as Ethiopia and the Dominican Republic, but as near as Detroit and Atlanta.

The appreciative crowd roared their approval throughout the exhibition. After the show, performers took time to shake hands, chat, pose for photos, and offer words of encouragement to the captivated students. "It's all about giving back to the community," noted Bella the

Ringmaster, who hosted the festivities.

A huge thank you to the UniverSoul Circus and the performers for an unforgettable experience.



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**BE THE
BEST
ON THE
TEST**

Hazelwood
School
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AVOID
BREAKING
CHROMEBOOKS

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"A Culture of High Expectations and Excellence"

**Time
Out**

**TO TALK TUESDAYS
RAISE YOUR VOICE FOR HSD!**



Central Middle Assistant Principal and Secretary Embrace Heart-Warming Full-Circle Moment

It's not unusual for an assistant principal to eventually form a strong bond as a co-worker with the secretary. But in the case of Central Middle School assistant

principal, Twyla Lee, and secretary, Natavia Raymond, they had a huge head start — Raymond was Lee's former seventh-grade student!

Lee reflected on her heartwarming journey with the school's new secretary. "During my tenure as Natavia's seventh-grade American History teacher, she was quiet, but always a good student," Lee remembered. "Finding out Natavia was my secretary, I instantly became overjoyed. Since being in this role, Natavia's email correspondence, word choices, and dependability have impressed me. To feel I had some influence in that melts my heart."

Distance and life transitions were not a roadblock for Lee to continue championing Raymond through consistent positive encouragement while on her pathway to beginning a career.

"I have always respected Ms. Lee," explained Raymond, who

started her position with Central Middle School this school year. "We had a student-teacher bond, but now she is my colleague. To be in the office with Ms. Lee daily feels amazing. At times, I have been speechless because she was my seventh-grade teacher. Ms. Lee has instilled in me the importance of always being willing to help others. Through encouragement, people need to see their best sides. Not only is Ms. Lee a mentor to me, but she inspires me."

Lee shared that working in education for the past 23 years is a testament to service and dedication. The commitment to lifelong learning is the driving force of the journey. The student/teacher learning dynamic goes both ways.

"In working with the era of students now, we have to be culturally relevant. Natavia is closer to them and keeps me culturally relevant. Because of this, I use real-world connectors when talking to the students to help them see what is going on. Our working relationship is an equal mentoring opportunity, and I look forward to its growth."

Lee and Raymond are the perfect examples of the teamwork and communication toward which the Hazelwood School District strives. We look forward to their working relationship positively impacting staff and students.

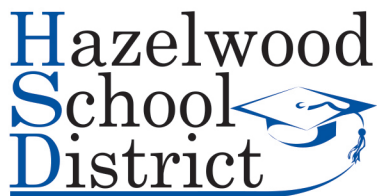
Fall Family Festival Continued from Page 3

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) director of programs, Andrew Loiterstein, was excited to represent his organization for the first time at the Fall Family Festival and shared vital information about supporting mental health for youth.

"Sometimes our mental health is really good, sometimes it is not so good; sometimes it is not good for an extended time," said Loiterstein. "NAMI focuses on destigmatizing mental health by giving presentations in schools from 5th to 12th grade, teaching students about mental wellness, self-care, and where to seek help."

The St. Louis Internship Program under the Boys and Girls Club of Greater St. Louis' career workforce readiness developer, Christopher Lagrone, was a returning visitor to the Fall Family Festival. He explained how his organization benefits the youth. "Our primary focus is working with sophomores and juniors to help them figure out their careers when they graduate high school. We provide students with professional paid internships through a 10-week training and development component. Getting the opportunity to meet everyone at the Fall Family Festival has a great impact and we appreciate it."

The Hazelwood School District appreciates the support from the community members who attended the Fall Family Festival and congratulates the Family and Community Challenge winners. We look forward to next year's festivities!



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