



EVENT NOTICE – Wednesday, November 19, 2025
Fargo Public School District #1

The following information is for media outlets for the purpose of assigning staff coverage to the event.

LOCAL MUSICIAN ELIAS YOUNGBLOM TO SPEAK TO MIDDLE SCHOOLERS ABOUT HIS JOURNEY TO ADAPT TO BLINDNESS

Ben Franklin Middle School students have gained insight into the lives of those with physical disabilities by reading the book “Freak the Mighty” by Rodman Philbrick. On Friday, they will hear a personal message from a local individual who has learned to live with their own physical disability.

- WHAT:** Guest Speaker
WHEN: **Friday, November 21** from 11:50 a.m. to 12:28 p.m.
WHERE: Auditorium, Ben Franklin Middle School, 1420 8th Street North, Fargo
CONTACT: **Kirstin Hanson**, Ben Franklin Principal, hansonk7@fargo.k12.nd.us or 701.446.3604 for more information.

Ben Franklin Middle School seventh graders in Maggie Farnen’s English class have been reading “Freak the Mighty” by Rodman Philbrick, which features a main character with physical disabilities. They will learn more about the experience of life with disabilities as they are visited by local musician Elias Youngblom, who has been blind since being involved in a car crash 10 years ago. Youngblom will speak to students about his journey to adapt to his new way of life in the school’s auditorium at 11:50 a.m.

In “Freak the Mighty,” the protagonist’s best friend has Morquio syndrome, which means that the outside of his body does not grow, but his internal organs do. He walks on crutches and wears a leg brace. Through the adventures of the two main characters, readers experience what life is like for a teenager with Morquio syndrome.

Youngblom lost his eyesight in 2015 after being hit head-on by a drunk driver going the wrong way on Interstate 94. Youngblom learned how to live with his disability and has not let it stop him from pursuing anything that interests him. He was a music student at North Dakota State University when he had his accident, and he is now a percussion instructor at NDSU. He also has a passion for woodworking and carpentry and has learned to use power tools to build furniture.

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