



EVENT NOTICE – Monday, March 30, 2026
Fargo Public School District #1

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

SEVENTH GRADERS TO BUILD UNDERSTANDING OF THE NOVEL ‘LIFE AS WE KNEW IT’ BY PARTICIPATING IN SURVIVAL GAMES

Surviving in an eternal winter requires collaboration and communication. Seventh graders at Carl Ben Eielson Middle School are putting these and other essential survival skills to the test.

- WHAT:** ‘Life as We Knew It’ Survival Games
WHEN: **Tuesday, March 31** from 12:22 p.m. to 1:06 p.m.
WHERE: Carl Ben Eielson Middle School,
CONTACT: **Kris Gillett**, CBE English teacher, gilletk@fargo.k12.nd.us or 701.446.1835 for more information.

The students in Mr. Gillett’s seventh grade enriched English class will participate in groups in four survival games meant to simulate life on a post-apocalyptic Earth.

The class is studying the novel “Life as We Knew It” by Susan Beth Pfeffer set in a world where the Earth has been sent into an early winter after the Moon is struck by an asteroid and pushed closer to Earth. Tidal forces are intensified, causing tsunamis, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions. As the sky fills with ash and temperatures drop, the Earth is sent into an early winter and the main character, 16-year-old Miranda, and her family try to survive.

On Tuesday, the students will be participating in groups in four survival games meant to test their teamwork, cooperation, communication, and writing skills. The middle schoolers will be led by volunteer seniors from South High School, who are former students in the enriched English class, as they participate in games called Tied Up, Blind Draw, Helium Stick, and Blind Maze.

Prior to participating in the survival games, students have grouped together to create simulated survival communities. They have shared their feelings through a journal activity, written character analysis of a chosen character from the story, and built tri-fold pamphlets to encourage other survivors to join their communities. Now they will attempt these four tasks to increase the odds of their personal survival and their community’s survival. The winners will receive food for all members of their team to share on a future date.

In Tied Up, students in the group are tied together with ropes and must separate themselves from the big knot that is holding them all together. It can only be accomplished with good communication.

Blind Draw is another communication game. One partner gives instructions to a second, blind partner who must draw a picture based on the instructions given. Their team will then try to decipher the picture.

Helium Stick is a cooperative activity in which students must maintain contact with a tent pole resting on their forefingers. As a team, they must lower the pole from shoulder height to the ground. The difficulty is that while maintaining contact, pressure is constantly applied to the pole pushing it higher.

The students will finish with Blind Maze, perhaps the trickiest of the activities. One team member has a map and a walkie-talkie and are tasked with guiding a blindfolded partner through a maze. The teams have as many chances to make it through the maze as they have team members.

These activities promote collaboration in order to understand what the characters are feeling as they try to survive with their family and help the students get a deeper understanding of the novel and its theme.

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