

The Eagle Flyer



Kennedy High School
422 Highland Avenue
Waterbury, Conn. 06708

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Students help build house in New Haven

By Bryan Cruz Santiago
Staff Writer

Ms. DeVeau and 12 of her Construction class students volunteered to help the Habitat for Humanity organization build a house, guided on continuing progress made by prior volunteers, which helps them and families on the construction site in New Haven, Conn. Tuesday, April 14, 2026.

“Habitat’s vision is of a world where everyone has a decent place to live,” according to www.habitat.org, the website of the nonprofit Habitat for Humanity organization that aims to help in all sorts of housing aspects: finance, construction and more.

“More than 65 million people in countries around the world are building their futures on their own terms thanks to access to decent housing,” according to www.habitat.org.

This is a huge problem within the United States alone, and it's widespread among various countries.

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VOLUNTEERING Junior Milagro Mendes helped Habitat for Humanity build in New Haven, Conn. April 14, 2026. All photos courtesy of Ms. DeVeau



ON SITE Sophomores (top photo) Christopher Martinez, Jose Ortiz and Levant Lovett build with Habitat for Humanity staff and other volunteers while senior Ashley Garcia (left, bottom photo) and fellow Construction class students (from back to front) juniors Jesse Henry, Aniyah Gascot, Isabella Martinez, Milagro Mendes, and Shayla Santos-Vasquez help out in New Haven Tuesday, April 14, 2026.

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“In 2019: 37.1 million households, including renters and owners, were cost burdened — of these, 17.6 million households were severely cost burdened...” according to odphp.health.gov, website for the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, a part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, “...83.5 percent of households earning less than \$15,000 a year were cost burdened.”

The organization has volunteers and staff who guide anyone and everyone of all skill levels.

“I’m newer to...construction...,” said DeVeau, who teaches Construction I, II and III in the Tech Ed Department, noting it was her “second year” participating in Habitat for Humanity.

For those unfamiliar with Habitat, they also ensure anonymity for the future families and occupants of the houses being built. They do provide vague information though, as DeVeau noted that the site in New Haven was meant for a family of a mother, father and three kids.

“They don’t tell you names,” said DeVeau, who’s been teaching Construction for four years, having spent many previous years as an English teacher (including teaching AP English Literature and Composition).

Thanks to the community-fueled progress, all volunteers build off of previous progress.

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Volunteers “get split up,” said DeVeau, who explained students perform “cleanup (and) nailing.”

Because of this, volunteers participate and learn how to do various tasks.

We “learned to use a drill (and) wall installation,” said student and volunteer Ashley Garcia, who joined her class in aiding Habitat for Humanity’s efforts both her junior and senior year, with duties like “nailing plywood.”

There’s something for everyone, facilitating personal growth.

“I’ve never been hands-on on a site like this,” said junior Jaelyne Vazquez-Robles, who volunteered at the Habitat for Humanity field trip.

There’s various types of guides on-site who help ensure safety and quality work, easing concerns all-around.

“There’s a Foreman and two staff. They’re also working,” said DeVeau.

Allowing such clear and constant communication only further enables student volunteers who might be on the fence about applying to follow through.

“They said a lot about construction,” said Vazquez-Robles.

There’s a time and place for everything, even conversations more personal than just ‘getting the job done.’

“(The Foreman) built his strength. It’s good to have your own business,” said Vazquez-Robles.

The organization gives many chances for individuals to grow in their own way, being a widely accepted form of getting community service hours and providing access to experience in the construction field. This is very important for those wanting to experiment or even gain further education in the field.

“I’m planning to go to college,” said Garcia, who is eager to “have new opportunities” such as this.

DeVeau mentioned that the opportunity provided many real-life experiences and skills for her Construction class.

“Seeing all the kids working together, willing to learn,” said DeVeau.

For those interested in learning more about the Construction class, see Ms. DeVeau in room 157. Visit the school counseling office on the first floor for more information on taking the class. For details on who Habitat for Humanity is, volunteer opportunities, and its application, visit www.habitat.org.

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RAINY DAYS DON'T STOP THEM In May 2025, facing inclement weather, according to Construction teacher Ms. DeVeau, her students worked indoors to help construct a home with the Habitat for Humanity organization in New Haven, Conn. Seen in top left photo are student volunteers Jirrylee Rivera-Franco and Ashley Garcia working in the basement. Garcia (bottom left photo) drills insulation into place as does Rivera-Franco (top right photo) while a Habitat staff member (bottom right photo) offers instruction to David Valdiviezo-Palacios, Class of 2025. All photos courtesy of Ms. DeVeau

New secretary joins: meet Ms. Williams

*For second week here,
she feels very welcomed by
students, staff members*

By Joslyn Tremblay
Managing Editor

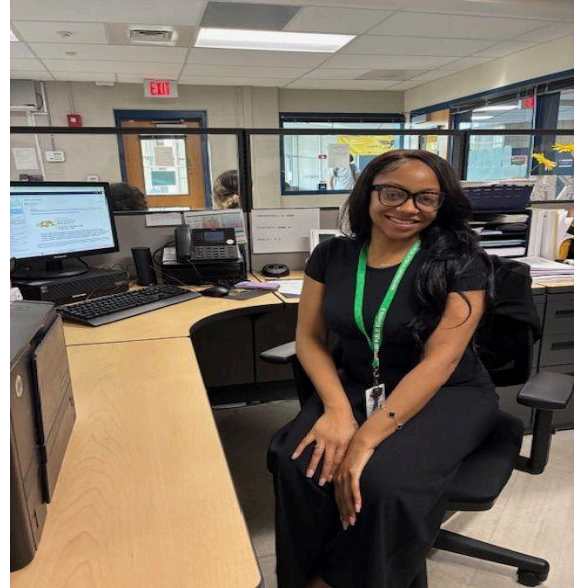
Ms. Williams, a new administrative associate who went to Newburgh Free Academy in New York for high school, is bringing more help to the main office at Kennedy; she wanted to try something different and new since she has had a similar job, and she got this job by taking a mandatory exam, then started Friday, April 10, 2026 during Spring Break.

“I had a similar experience, I just wanted something different. Just wanted to be around students,” said Williams, who had a job as a personal secretary for a small family business.

Her Kennedy experience has been great so far due to the teachers, staff and students being so welcoming.

“I like it so far. The teachers are nice and the students are cool. They make me feel welcomed,” said Williams.

In a previous job, Williams was like that office’s personal ‘Miss Denise’ (Cooke) who helps Kennedy run smoothly!



MEET MS. WILLIAMS IN THE MAIN OFFICE

She sits next to Parent Liaison Mrs. Brites, directly across from the main office door you must be buzzed into, to enter the school. Williams said she has been having a great experience being around the staff and students. Everyone has been doing a good job at making her feel welcomed since she started Friday, April 10, 2026. Photo by Dr. Cybart-Persenaire

“I worked for a transportation secretary for a small family corporation. I was like their Miss Denise,” said Williams.



MS. WILLIAMS WILL BE HERE TO HELP if you need anything. You will see her around since she works all year, even in the summer. Image from etsy.com

Attendance: show up daily

*Being present matters so much
in every aspect of your life*

By Joslyn Tremblay

Managing Editor

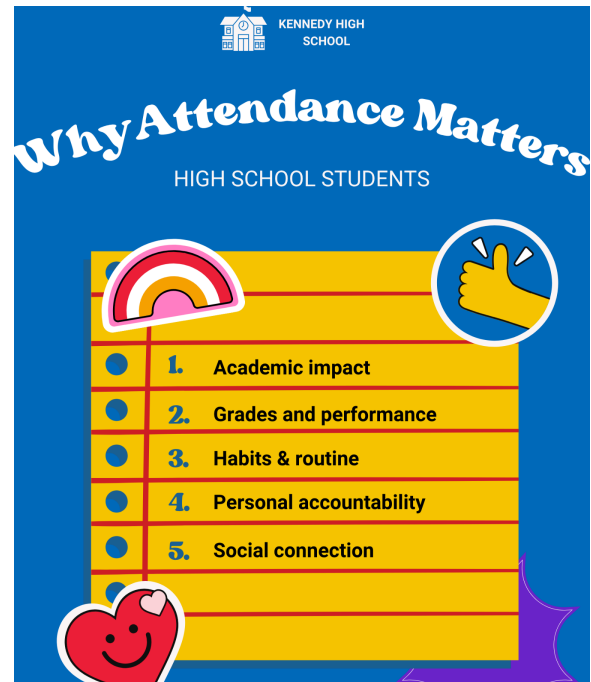
COMMENTARY

Don't be in the dark about your attendance.

Mr. Dallas Swain, Kennedy's new attendance counselor, resigned after starting Thursday, Dec. 4, 2025, no reason given; he took the place of Mrs. Mary Beth Sideravage, who retired the summer of 2025, so the school is looking for an attendance counselor. Speaking of attendance, here are some things to know about your absences with less than two months to go.

A reminder to all students but especially seniors if you want to graduate: you are only allowed 20 unexcused absences. When it comes to tardies, three tardies equals one absence. If you are always late or don't come to your first period on either A Day or B Day, you will lose credit for that class.

Also, if you are always leaving early even though you have a class, you will lose that credit. So make sure to come on time and don't leave early. Don't be the person to stay back or take a class all over again or go to summer school because of your absences or tardies! If there is a reason for this that you cannot control, talk to someone in school about it so you don't have to lose that credit.



WHY DOES ATTENDANCE MATTER?

Attendance is such an important thing for students in their life. Attendance in high school prepares you for having a job because you are allowed a certain amount of sick days. Graphic created by Joslyn Tremblay

Let's put aside talking about attendance for now and talk about what everyone is excited for. Don't worry, we don't have THAT many days left!

There are 42 more days left until the last day of school (as of April 26 when this issue was published) according to waterbury.k12.ct.us. Typically in past years, students don't come in on the last day (Thursday, June 25) unless they need to make up a final exam. I'm not sure if that is the same for this year but if it is, then technically there are only 41 days unless you miss an exam. Also, look forward to the last two days we will have off for the rest of the school year. We have Monday, May 25, 2026 off due to it being Memorial Day. We

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also have Friday, June 19, 2026 off due to it being Juneteenth. Don't forget almost every Wednesday is a half day. So if you want it to go by faster, think of every two Wednesdays as one full day.

Here is some encouragement and advice from students and staff about attendance.

"Come in every day because one day you'll want to take off and can't while all your friends are having fun," said Mrs. Denise Cooke, school secretary.

Hear from a teacher who is in the tardy center and sees how many students get a late pass every day.

"Regardless of what the weather is outside, make sure to come to school every day," said Ms. Salcito, social studies teacher.

Learning is a very important part of your life. People learn new things daily.

"Come to school because if you don't, it will really mess you up. And you have to learn," said senior Zahira Enwerem.

The more days you miss, the more you miss out on learning.

"It is so important for students to attend school. Teachers put a lot of thought and effort into their lessons that help students to learn the material. When students are absent, they miss out on those lessons and it can be challenging to try and catch up on your own. It is why we encourage students to attend

every day when they are feeling healthy," said Ms. Moutinho, school counselor.

Help and support is always around you.

"Some advice I would give to students regarding attendance is to show up. Even if your makeup and hair are not done or if you're feeling sad about something. I know that mental health sometimes gets the best of us but there are always some teachers that help put others in a better mood. I personally tell myself that hard work pays off in the end because even though everyone is encouraged to merely try their best, sometimes that's not enough. Life is hard and not everything or everyone is going to accept that; they're going to want more. So just show your face and work on ways to gradually improve," said Tefta Mino, senior.

Attendance is THAT serious.

"Definitely stay on it. And anyone that says attendance isn't that serious, it is THAT serious," said Laura Perez, senior.

High school isn't forever.

I know it sometimes stinks going to school, trust me. My attendance growing up was never good. There was one time near the end of the school year in middle school I got called every day during one of my periods to this classroom full of students who didn't have great attendance. We would go over why coming to school was important. I officially got out of the class since I stopped missing days. But, it goes to show schools do care and want better for their students.

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Even though you wake up and have to pull yourself out of bed, remember “everything is temporary,” said Miss Denise. And high school isn’t permanent; it’s just a chapter in your life you have to complete.

Here’s some advice from me.

Come to school and show up. I know how difficult it can be to force yourself out of bed. But, think how worth it, it is in the end. Think about how fast high school goes by. If you are a freshman, you might think it doesn’t. But it really does; you blink and it’s over already. You don’t want to have to be in high school longer than you already are because of faulty mistakes on missing too many days. Personally, I know how hard it is to even miss one class and have so much work to catch up on, especially in my Math classes.

Okay, last but certainly not least, I know a lot of you are excited about graduation!

In the beginning of May we are supposed to learn the date of graduation. I know students have been very patiently waiting along with their families. Dr. Schwartz, our superintendent, sent out an email via ParentSquare Wednesday, April 24, 2026 at 8:21 a.m. announcing they are working on finalizing the end-of-year plans. So, keep a close eye on your phone or computer for an email from him giving us graduation dates.



to the Class of...



35 Eagles enjoy trip to Hawaii

By Adrianna Perez
Staff Writer

35 members of the Kennedy band and chaperones went to Honolulu, Hawaii March 26-31 to be part of the parade for the 30th Annual Honolulu Festival, which they were invited to more than a year ago to celebrate Vietnam War Veterans as the only high school invited from Connecticut.

“Really special to be thought of in this way,” said Mr. Nick Drabik, band director, when he was asked “How does it feel to be the only Conn. high school invited to this?”

Even though they were invited, it was an expensive trip and not everyone had the ability to afford the costs.

The cost was “over 100 grand, around \$3,000 per person,” said Drabik and due to the cost, people who got to go were “whoever was able to afford it,” he said.

The band was dedicated to trying to raise as much money as possible through events and fundraisers.

“We had ‘buy a flag and shout out,’ coupon booklet, car washes, pasta fundraisers, (and) events sponsored by places from the city and state where we were given the proceeds,” said Drabik.



BEACH IN HAWAII A beach in Waikiki was one of the areas Band members enjoyed on their Hawaii trip, where they participated in the National Vietnam Veterans Day Parade Saturday, March 28, 2026. Photo courtesy of Mr. Drabik

Even though they did all these events and fundraisers, not everyone was able to go

A total of “35 people” ended up going, he said, which was Thursday to Tuesday.

Due to the airline’s restrictions they weren’t able to bring most of their instruments. So how did they get instruments?

“We rented instruments from the University of Hawaii,” said Drabik.

Some things they did during their trip were:

Toured “Pearl Harbor, the Polynesian Cultural Center, beaches of Waikiki,” Drabik said.

As band director, what was his most memorable part of the trip?

“The end of the parade when we were passing the beach during sunset; it was something out of a movie,” said Drabik.

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SATURDAY, MARCH 28, 2026 PARADE Starting from the tree line on the left, students who marched in the National Vietnam Veterans Day Parade along Kalākaua Avenue in Waikiki, Honolulu are: junior Jayden McCallister; junior Dionna Person; freshman Milaysia Gonzalez; sophomore Adrianna Cappabianca-Ferron. Second line: Senior drum major Devon Colon; junior Gavriel Martinez; senior Kyleigh Gorman. Closest line: sophomore Nikolai Volkov; freshman Kevin Pani Palacios; junior Asher Sims; freshman Jenniah Paneto; sophomore Shaila Huerta; senior Gabriella Pavon; and sophomore Julian Gilford. Photo courtesy of Mr. Drabik

Celebrate student voices April 30 @ 4pm

Creative arts showcase to be held for second year

By Tefta Mino
Sports Editor

English and Creative Writing teacher Mrs. Cusack is hosting the second-annual poetry reading, the *Diamond Poetry & Creative Arts Showcase* in Kennedy's auditorium to allow students' voices and talents to be shown by allowing them to choose a topic or a few to write about and share to the public Thursday, April 30, 2026 from 4-7 p.m.

"My inspiration for wanting to do the poetry reading was that I wanted to showcase my students' work. I wanted to give them a safe place to share what they were writing about," she said.

While this is a nice event, it is a lot of work.

"I have to stay extremely organized. I delegate tasks for helpers. I do a lot of lists. Listing and reminders are what makes it possible to do that (be organized)," she said.

The feeling is exhilarating, for staff and students.

"I feel proud... I feel proud of my students," she said.

While this is an annual event, this year's has been a big upgrade compared to 2025, which was the first time the event was held.

"I'd like to do this every year as long as I have enough support and funding," she said

Cusack has a lot of support this year and while everything is free, there are a few additional things that have a cost.

Presented in the lobby from 4-5 p.m. will be:

1. The Silas Bronson Library
2. Henna by Haseeba, cash/permission slip required
3. Italian Club selling cookies, cash preferred over card
4. Student selling pins, cash preferred over card
5. Free book giveaway
6. Catering by D'Amelios
7. CT NAACP
8. No Place for Hate
9. Girls' soccer
10. Shakesperience
11. Artwork by Jade Camacho (a former student), payment required
12. The Band performing
13. *The Eagle Flyer* displaying recent past issues

Readings in the auditorium go until 7 p.m.

"We are having a wide variety of foods," she said... and the food will be free!

There are not a lot of opportunities to show off talent from students and staff.

"I wish we could do more things like this. I wish we could do more shows," she said.

Is there something she would like to change for next year? "I mean I really don't know yet. Every year I learn something new," Cusack said.

Italian show Pinocchio Pop features talent

By *Evan Delfino*
Staff Writer

COMMENTARY

Pinocchio Pop is an educational bilingual Italian show that helps teach language learners in the United States using song and dance, and Kennedy's World Language students saw the show at Central Connecticut State University in New Britain, Conn. Wednesday March 25, 2026.

"Pinocchio Pop is an Italian theater group from Italy led by Simona Rodano. They perform educational performances to teach language learners in the U.S.," said Dr. Mary-Ann Sagnella, Italian teacher.

Now that we have a better idea of what the show is about, how about a little feedback from someone who was there.

It was "a very colorful show with a very talented performance by some very talented people," said freshman Michael McCallister, a member of the Italian Club.

Watching the show wasn't the only thing we did while at Central State University.

"Not only did we see a show but we also got to visit and have lunch in the dining hall of Central, paid for by the Italian Club," said freshman Alex Mino, an Italian Club member.



THE ITALIAN FAIRY ON STAGE Simona Rodano (seen here) is the director of the Pinocchio Pop Show students enjoyed March 25, 2026 in New Britain. Rodano is also a script writer and played the fairy in Pinocchio as well. Image from nytimes.com

We were not alone: we had four helpful chaperones. We were joined by Dr. Sagnella, her husband Francesco Palmieri, Italian teacher Mr. Robert Likaroma, and his daughter Anna Likaroma.



EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE This photo was taken at the beginning of the Pinocchio Pop show at Central Connecticut State University March 25, 2026, and if you look closely you can see the Italian flags given out to be waved during the show. Photo courtesy of Dr. Sagnella

16 compete in 2026 COLT Poetry Contest

*Students earn nine medals
in four languages*

By Mr. Likorama
Italian teacher

COMMENTARY

Kennedy World Language students participated in the COLT (Connecticut Council of Language Teachers) this year with 16 students who recited five different languages: Italian, Spanish, Albanian, Portuguese, and French. Our students successfully competed with hundreds of other students around the state and won nine medals: two gold, three bronze and four silver. Overall, Kennedy received five medals in Italian, two in Spanish, one in Albanian, and one in French.

Artana Bablusha, Albanian Heritage 1st Place

Mia Rivera, Italian HS5-6 1st Place

Kerly Pila, Italian Heritage HS 2nd Place

Akira Lewis, Spanish HS4 2nd Place

Bidalys Taveras-Tiburcio, Spanish HS Heritage 2nd Place

Miguel Parrales-Ramon, Italian HS Heritage 3rd Place



POETRY CONTEST Congratulations to all the World Language students participating and winning medals in the 2026 COLT (Connecticut Council of Language Teachers) annual poetry contest. Image from animalia-life.club

Keyci Rapalo-Orellana, Italian HS1 3rd Place

Edithmar Castillo-Garcia, Italian HS3 3rd Place

Yuri Thomas, French Heritage 3rd Place

Congratulations to the winners and also to our students who once again proudly represented Kennedy High School in this state competition.

Page layout and design by Joslyn Tremblay

Spring Break?

Florida leads list of most visited

By De 'Jaunae Thompson
Staff Writer

Kids, teens and college students in the United States go on spring breaks every year and while their school decides when they take that break (Waterbury held its Monday, April 6 - Friday, April 10) it's never too late to plan for next year, with Florida being a popular place, according to internet sites.

Orlando, Florida is one of the most visited places during Spring Break

“Orlando, a city in central Florida, is home to more than a dozen theme parks. Chief among its claims to fame is Walt Disney World, comprised of parks like the Magic Kingdom and Epcot, as well as water parks. Another major destination, Universal Orlando, offers Universal Studios and Islands of Adventure, with the Wizarding World of Harry Potter straddling both,” according to www.simulationinformation.com/members/city-of-orlando/, a website from the National Center for Simulation, non-profit national group with information about the city of Orlando.

Miami, Florida is said to be the second most visited place during spring break.

“When it comes to spring break fun for families in Miami, there's so much to see



POPULAR DURING SPRING BREAK Orlando, Fort Lauderdale and Miami (seen above) are listed as the top three most visited places for Spring Break, according to internet sites. Did you travel this break, or are you planning now for Spring Break 2027? FYI, it's Monday, April 12 - Friday, April 16, 2027, according to the school calendar at www.waterbury.k12.ct.us. Image from internet

and do throughout March and April,” according to miamiandbeaches.com, the Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau website, which describes beaches, festivals, museums, and attractions.

Some people travel for arts and to learn about other cultures, which could be why Fort Lauderdale is the third most visited.

“Fort Lauderdale is famous for its beaches, arts, culture, and events. From shopping on Las Olas Boulevard to gondola rides on the canals, to a historic riverfront, this is the ‘Venice of America.’ Just two miles north of Port Everglades, you can experience Fort Lauderdale's landscaped beachfront promenade, with its signature white wave wall and paved brick path, and, across the street, luxury hotels,” according to visitflorida.com, the state's official destination marketing organization for tourism website.

Month of May named after... hint: think ‘growth’

By Camila Gonzalez
Staff Writer

May is named after Maia, a Roman goddess of growth and spring. In Ancient Rome, around 700 BCE, people created the calendar and chose her name because May represents plants, new life and warmer weather. The name reflects how nature grows and changes during this time of year.

“May isn’t just about blooming flowers and warming weather—it’s a month steeped in traditions like offerings to a Roman goddess, Maypole dances and celestial wonders,” according to history.com/, a website that shares stories, videos, and articles about important events and people from the past to help people learn more about history.

May’s name comes from its Latin roots and the goddess Maia.

“May comes from the Latin Maius, probably referring to the goddess Maia. She embodied the concept of growth, both in nature and in business,” according to timeanddate.com, a website that gives information and tools about clocks, calendars, time zones, holidays, and things like sunrise, moon phases, and dates to help people plan and learn about time.



MAIA: GODDESS OF GROWTH

Maia is a Roman goddess associated with spring, fertility and growth. Her story symbolizes renewal and the life-giving power of nature, inspiring ancient celebrations and the naming of the month of May. Image from facebook.com 2021

Did you know Maia’s story shows her role in mythology?

“Maia and Zeus are the parents of Hermes, the messenger of the gods, and she also became the adoptive mother of Arcas after his mother was turned into a bear,” according to grunge.com, a website with articles about music, pop culture and history.



FAMILY PHOTO This image supposedly shows Maia, Zeus and their children together.

May recognizes importance of mental health awareness

By Matthew Twasam
Staff Writer

Established in 1949, Mental Health Awareness Month has led to a lot of positive impact, and it is recognized by spreading awareness, educating society and focusing on community unity. Day in day out, there are individuals battling mental health and the help one gives or treatment one receives can go a long way and cause a positive impact on a person.

“May is Mental Health Awareness Month. While it was first recognized in 1949, it has never been more important than now to recognize the role mental health plays in our overall well-being and the value in raising awareness and helping those in need receive treatment,” according to brownhealth.org, a website for Brown University Health teaching hospitals, the country’s top recipients of research funding from the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH).

In times like this, help is crucial and important for people of all ages, and one group focuses on youth: children and adolescents.



FIRST RECOGNIZED IN 1949

During May, it’s important to note a “well balanced diet, a healthy sleep schedule, exercise, gut health and hydration all affect our mental health and our physical health equally,” according to discoverymood.com, the website for the Discovery Mood & Anxiety Program. Image from gosnold.org

“Child and adolescent psychiatrists play a crucial role in society, tending to the mental health of youth, supporting communities in times of disaster, responding to traumatic events, and so much more,” according to aacap.org; the mission of AACAP is to promote the healthy development of children, adolescents, and families and research, and to meet the professional needs of child and adolescent psychiatrists throughout their careers.

What can you do to have a positive impact on both your emotional and physical health? Here are some tips.

“ ‘A well balanced diet, a healthy sleep schedule, exercise, gut health and hydration all affect our mental health and our physical health equally,’ ” according to discoverymood.com, the website for the Discovery Mood & Anxiety Program, which has been helping patients and their families build the confidence and skills they need to better navigate life’s challenges.

Appreciate your teachers May 5

Eleanor Roosevelt first urged Congress to honor educators

By Farha Ahmad
Staff Writer

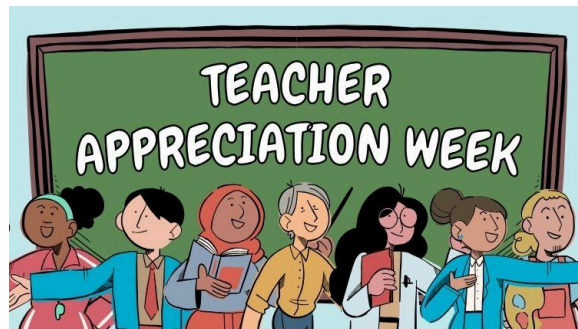
People nationwide celebrate Teacher Appreciation Week Monday, May 4 - Friday, May 8, 2026 to acknowledge educators' importance by showing appreciation towards them, with National Teacher Appreciation Day still being held Tuesday, May 5.

Teachers can be so important; this is why.

“Teachers are arguably the most important members of our society. They give children purpose, set them up for success as citizens of our world, and inspire in them a drive to do well and succeed in life. The children of today are the leaders of tomorrow,” according to uopeople.edu, a website from University of the People, which is an accredited, American, tuition-free, non-profit, online university.

This U.S. holiday dates back to 1953.

“Teacher Appreciation Week is celebrated annually throughout the USA during the first week of May. The history of this national holiday dates back to 1953 when First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt urged Congress to set an official holiday to celebrate the important work of educators across the country,”



DID YOU KNOW? Teacher Appreciation used to be a singular day; it became a full week in 1984.
Image from rainbowdreamsacademy.org

according to alicedealmiddleschool.org, an award-winning public school with 1,500 students across 6th, 7th and 8th grades.

How can you show appreciation to teachers?

“Before you venture out to buy something for the educator in your life, consider giving a more personalized gift. Some of the most cherished gifts educators receive are notes, pictures, crafts and illustrated stories from the students they teach and their families,” according to ace.edu, the website for the American College of Education, whose mission is to deliver high-quality, affordable and accessible online programs.

Educators can celebrate themselves, too!

“If you are an educator looking for ways to pamper yourself on a budget, Teacher Appreciation Week is the right time to look for deals and discounts at businesses near you. Staples, Costco, Adidas and Lenovo offer discounts to educators during Teacher Appreciation Week. Restaurants and cafes like McDonald's, Outback Steakhouse and Starbucks also provide discounts and giveaways,” according to ace.edu.

Origins of Mother's Day

By Favour Agboola
Staff Writer

American activist Anna Jarvis created Mother's Day May 10, 1908 at Grafton's Andrews Methodist Episcopal Church to honor her mother, Ann Reeves Jarvis, by focusing on celebrating the sacrifices mothers make for their children; the day is now marked Sunday, May 10, 2026 by flowers, cards and special gifts but has ancient roots, too.

"Celebrations of mothers and motherhood can be traced back to the ancient Greeks and Romans, who held festivals in honor of the mother goddesses, but the clearest modern precedent for Mother's Day is the early Christian festival known as 'Mothering Sunday,' " according to history.com, a website for A&E Television Networks.

Did you know Jarvis was inspired by friendship groups and promoting health?

"Jarvis was inspired to create the holiday by her mother, Ann Jarvis, who organized women's groups to promote friendship and health," according to britannica.com, a website that hopes to kindle the spark of curiosity with stories of discoveries.

Mother's Day is also said to be a time for heartfelt, handwritten letters honoring mothers, not necessarily gifts, candy, flowers, or store-bought cards.



SUNDAY, MAY 10, 2026 is Mother's Day, founded by Anna Jarvis to celebrate her mother Ann and said to be a day for wearing a white carnation and writing heartfelt letters. Photo from Google Image

"The official Mother's Day, as we know it today, was established after Ann Reeves Jarvis's death in 1905; it was then that her daughter, Ann Jarvis conceived Mother's Day as a day in which we honour mothers for the sacrifices they've made for their children," according to capetowndiamondmuseum.org, a museum located at the V&A Waterfront in Cape Town, South Africa.

In 1868, Ann Jarvis brought mothers together along with former Union and Confederate soldiers to promote reconciliation during "Mothers' Friendship Day" – a day she helped create.

"Her efforts came to the attention of the mayor of Philadelphia, who proclaimed a local Mother's Day. From the local level, she went on to Washington; 'The politicians saw it and were quick to lend verbal support,' " according to almanac.com, the Farmer's Almanac website that creates and provides users with updates on news and trending stories.

Boys' volleyball: seniors share growth, inspiration

By Adairis Genao
Staff Writer

The boys' volleyball team members and coaches were interviewed prior to their Spring season starting, and they revealed their focus on building the program through team effort development, and overall growth as a team. They defeated Waterbury Career Academy Thursday, April 23, 2026 as this issue went to press.

One captain shared his shifting viewpoint.

"My perspective on volleyball has evolved significantly from my freshman year to now," said senior Jayson Guaman.

As the boys' volleyball season began, players and coaches were focused on growth and making the most of the season. Guaman reflected on how his mindset has changed over time, especially with commitment.

"I never expected to be as committed to the sport as I am now," he said. "During my freshman year, I lacked the motivation and dedication that I currently have."

Now in his final season of his high school career, Guaman's focus is on leadership and teamwork.

"This is my final season, and I'm determined to give my best effort on the

court," Guaman said. "My goal is to help lead the team to as many victories as possible while appreciating the time I have left with my teammates."

Fellow captain Jose Lopez shared a similar journey, shaped by both inspiration and personal growth.

"I was inspired by my sister who played for Kennedy, and it really started my love for sports," Lopez said.

Through his experience, Lopez learned the importance of communication and confidence.

"In order for me to really unlock (it), I learned I had to use my voice," he said. "I want to leave my mark on this school."

The coaching staff also plays a key role in the team's development. Varsity coach and physical education teacher Ms. Alethia Hibbert brings years of experience and passion to the program.

"I have been coaching for 15 years overall, and this is my third year coaching boys' volleyball at this school," Hibbert said. "Coaching allows me to mentor, build discipline, and help students develop confidence and teamwork skills."

The team currently has 18 players and practices daily in the main gym as they were preparing for their first game April 14, 2026.

"Our goal is to win games, continue building the program, and most importantly, have fun while growing as a team," Hibbert said.

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JV coach Ms. Toni Lopez, a Kennedy graduate as well as a Post University graduate, also emphasized her passion for helping students and athletes grow.

“I wanted to give back to my community, and I love being able to teach aspiring young students and athletes,” said Toni Lopez.

With years of playing experience herself, she understands the benefits of the sport beyond competition.

“Some benefits of playing volleyball include staying healthy and helping with your mental health,” Toni Lopez added.

With strong leadership from captains and support from dedicated coaches, the boys’ volleyball team is focused on building a successful season while continuing to grow as a program.

Note to our readers:

Stay tuned for more Sports news on the 2026 Football Banquet and award winners.

Also, this issue originally went to press Thursday, April 2 with a few updates.

Our goal is to publish the month’s issue in the preceding month (thus, our May issue is being published April 26).

We welcome all students, staff and faculty to submit items for submission. A photo or image should be sent as a jpeg or a png, not PDFs.

Our deadline for the last issue of the school year is Thursday, April 30. Please see any staff member for more information, or stop by room 105. We look forward to you joining us!



Softball coaches aim for supportive, fun environment

By Tefta Mino
Sports Editor

Ms. Hartsoe has given the details of softball here at Kennedy to explain the way she manages the team by keeping a positive attitude prior to the season starting March 30, 2026, noting student leadership.

“A good group of leaders,” said Hartsoe, English teacher and softball coach. “We have a full varsity and JV team.”

The team practices in the back of school Monday to Friday until 4:30 p.m. on the softball field near the football field.

There were not any games yet at the time of this interview, but the schedule can be found on the CIAC website.

Team captains are seniors Olany Roche and Alyssa Bracken. Bracken goes to WAMS, but since she is in the Kennedy district, she could play softball as WAMS does not have sports teams.

With softball’s four distinct areas: pitching, hitting, fielding, running, Hartsoe is focused on covering all aspects.

“Early on I try to practice all four of those and try to see where the team’s at,” she said.

Hartsoe has a very positive attitude and tries to demonstrate a cooperative mentality.

“We’re all in this together,” Hartsoe said.

Math teacher, Ms. Romaniello, is the assistant coach.

“I coach JV, so I’m basically the JV coach and I also attend all varsity games,” she said, mentioning that she helps out, stays on bases, etc. “(I) help keep things moving.”

This is her first year assisting but has played the sport before.

“I played for nine years before I stopped in high school,” she said.

One of Romaniello’s hopes for the team is...

“That they have fun, and hope to win a few games,” she said.

One thing she noticed from the JV team is a supportive environment.

“The JV team is very supportive of each other. They cheer a lot for each other. They seemed to have clicked already,” she said.

With the many days off due to the water main break and snow days, she hopes for things to go well this year.

“I just hope we have a good season,” Romaniello said.

Division champ baseball team seeks to keep legacy going

*Coach urges all to stay active,
participate in sports, honor
your support systems*

By Tefta Mino
Sports Editor

History teacher Mr. Sarlo not only shared the status of the baseball team early in the season, but expressed the importance of staying active and having support systems, during an interview in his classroom March 31, 2026, to encourage students and athletes while bringing awareness of health benefits.

“This (isn’t) easy to do. It’s one of the hardest sports to play. You can’t just pick up a bat and do home runs,” he said of baseball.

Baseball tryouts had a strong turnout.

“We had tryouts for the entire program starting on Saturday the 21st,” he said. “I don’t have final numbers for our program but we had 30 kids come out and that’s the most I’ve seen as head coach,” Sarlo said.

While Sarlo is proud and understanding, he feels as though some things aren’t the same.

“Kids don’t play like they used to,” he said.

And with the clock ticking, there are only so many days left in the Spring season.

“We don’t necessarily have much time to elaborate how this year will work out,” he said.

The team had a lasting impact from 2024.

“It’s hard to gauge when the last two years we won the division. It’s gonna be a challenge to repeat as division champions. We don’t have the same players as last year,” he said.

While it is difficult to keep up with the program as seniors graduate every year, Sarlo and the team push through.

“We have a legacy to continue,” he said.

The schedule can be found on the CIAC website, and listen to announcements, too.

As mentioned earlier, sports are not easy.

They are “a big responsibility. It’s hard to do,” he said. However, “given our history, we have reason to be optimistic.”

Sarlo said that anyone can struggle; Michael Jordan was great but still had some troubles.

Sarlo commented that with seniors graduating every year, “It’s gonna be hard to replace those guys, but that happens everywhere.”

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It is now...

“Time to find our next year's players,” he said.

Sarlo did share a story of him speaking to a student, seeing if he was interested in playing, but the student was busy with other things, and Sarlo completely gets it.

“I respect the kid. He’s going to do other things,” he said. “I’m not trying to shame anyone.”

While Sarlo did stress the fact that being active is good for mental and physical health, students have to make the decision to join a team.

“I don't walk around and beg kids to play,” he said.

Sarlo does invite, if not all, then most boys from the school to his Google Classrooms for football and baseball to simply share the different afterschool activities Kennedy offers, while also seeking new players.

“(It) doesn’t do any harm to leave them on the list,” he said, as he mentioned that he writes down everyone’s name on a piece of paper and whether they choose to play.

The baseball team has one team leader, senior Jaydon Lopez.

“Any guy at any level can lead,” Sarlo said.

As far as practices go, they try to go to Waterville Park, where there is a high school

field and happen to play their home games there.

If there is no bus for them, or the weather is not the best, then they play in the turf at the back of the school.

Even if the turf is not available, they will practice in the main or auxiliary gym to do other drills.

Sarlo tries to make the most out of what is available for them at the moment.

“Familiar to use the space and resources we have,” he said.

After all, there are so many other sports and teams that need a place to practice, too.

“We have multiple practice facilities,” he said.

Fun fact: Sarlo’s younger son assists him in coaching along with another person.

“They help me execute the plan,” he said.

One thing that he likes about coaching is...

“Seeing the kids I’ve coached come back. Seeing where they are in life,” he said.

As this story went to press, Sarlo was hosting a fundraiser.

“(I) hope to have a positive impact on that,” he said.

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Sarlo strongly believes that getting involved in an activity early on is positive.

“We learn from a very early age. Play is essential,” he said.

However, due to the pandemic, people’s activity levels changed.

“We stopped being as active as we used to,” he said. “That’s kind of sad. It’s a game, it’s supposed to be fun. I don’t see enough kids participate in sports,” he said, expressing how sports are not an American thing, but a “human race thing.”

Sarlo has hope; the more people see others being active, it will hopefully encourage them to try.

“I hope that that inspires more young people to participate. It’s important for them to see,” he said.

Sarlo not only comes from a family that loves sports, but his children also showed a passion for them, too.

“I’ve been around sports my entire life,” he said. “My sons were always around sports but I took the same approach,” meaning he never forced them, despite his personal belief of sports being a significant part of life.

Sarlo has coached all levels: beginner, novice, advanced, etc.; right now, he said that the team is being taught “Baseball 101.”

Sarlo officially has two assistant coaches, one of them being his younger son, Dante.

“He’s been more than an administrative assistant. I don’t think I’d be able to coach without him,” he said. “My dad did a million things, my mom did a million things; (they were) always active and involved, they taught us that. You need support like that.”

No matter the emotions Sarlo goes through, Dante is there for him.

“He keeps me going,” which helps him not turn into a “grumpy old man,” as Sarlo claimed.

Sarlo has hope for many things.

“I hope that we get the proper coverage,” he said.

He also applauds all of the advisors of clubs from the school.

“The amount of time people put in, I think they should be recognized,” he said.

MAY SCRAMBLED! *By Autumn Bohlman*

Unscramble these five words/phrases related to articles in this issue, and tell us on which page it appears.

ONCOIHPHC
REHTOMS YDA
AOPNEPRTIICA
WOTRGH
IAHAWI

Email answers to acybart-persenaire@waterbury.k12.ct.us

First to email receives a \$5 Dunkin Donuts gift card. Separate prizes given for students and staff.



Jean-Honoré Fragonard, 'The Swing,' 1767-1768, The Wallace Collection, London, United Kingdom

THIS THURSDAY

BE THERE OR BE SQUARE

Kennedy's Annual

POETRY & ART SHOWCASE

THE DIAMOND EDITION

APPETIZER HOUR

4-5 PM

IN THE LOBBY

WITH COMMUNITY
BOOTHs FEATURING

Henna by Haseeba



THIS EVENT IS
COMPLETELY FREE,

BUT YOU MIGHT WANT TO BRING
SOME CASH IF YOU PLAN ON GETTING
HENNA OR BUYING MERCHANDISE
AT ONE OF THE MARKETPLACE VENDORS.

Join us FOR AN INCREDIBLE
NIGHT OF STUDENT VOICE!



THE READING STARTS
PROMPTLY AT

5 PM



PLEASE BE IN YOUR SEATS
AND QUIET IN THE
AUDITORIUM BY 5 O'CLOCK.



NO FOOD OR DRINK
IN THE AUDITORIUM.

