

# Oakdale Times

May 2026

## Cultural Connections



Camela Mattel expresses her culture by wearing Marshallese dresses. Another thing that is important to her heritage is Christianity and attending church. She shared, "My people are really good at sailing and navigating." Camela is a great student here at Oakdale who loves showing and talking about her culture. She exemplifies great leadership in all of her classes. Camela's culture is very important to her since it is a unique culture and it is very important for others to know about different heritages. So I hope that you learned a little something about the Marshallese culture from Camela.

Estefani Montoya's favorite thing about El Salvador is the music and food. She says that the best type of music is Cumbia. El Salvador is the smallest, and most densely populated country in Central America, known as the Land of Volcanoes. Estefani shows her culture in a big way everyday here at Oakdale. She participated in the Spanish spelling bee and got 4th place. That is really something to be proud of! She says that "El Salvador was known as a dangerous place at first, but now it is a beautiful, safe place to visit." I hope you enjoyed Estefani sharing a small glimpse of her El Salvadoran culture.

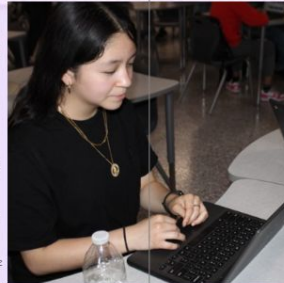
When Neymar Ortiz was asked about his culture, he started by saying, "There is one tradition that I love called Dia de Muertos (Day of the Dead). It is a day that you celebrate and send love to those who passed away." Neymar enjoys sharing his culture everywhere he goes. He is a great student at Oakdale with good grades too! He is also on the Oakdale soccer team with the Rogers Activity Center. Mexican culture is amazing and there are so many things to learn about it, so I hope you enjoyed hearing about Neymar's favorite holiday. It is great to gain understanding about different traditions that may not be the same as your own. What part of your culture would you like to share with others? -Monstra Gomez

## Favorite Class Experience

Many people around the world have a school subject. I asked Grecia Marroquin, "What will you remember most about this class years from now?" Her answer was, "I will remember the friends I made along the way during this class period and how generous this teacher always was. Mr. Ramirez was like a dad figure to me and he was a funny teacher everyday always. Doing fun Spanish activities will forever be in my heart."

I asked Wander Walker, "If you could design your own classroom based on your favorite subject, what would it look like?" His answer was, "It is my favorite class because it helps me stay fit. So it would look like an outdoor gym with purple walls and purple and white flooring with bikes and treadmills and stuff to do outside. It will also have a workout room attached with white walls and all the workout equipment."

I asked Alexandria Rivera, "What made the environment in your favorite class feel comfortable or productive for learning?" Her answer was, "The environment in Mrs. O'Connor's classroom feels beyond productive for learning. All the anchor charts really support your understanding in every unit. When you need to look back on a lesson, just by looking at the charts you immediately recall what was taught." What is your favorite class? -Wayden Slaughter



What Sunshine also shared by saying, "My family tradition is doing the Rosca de Reyes or known as "Three Kings Bread". It has been passed down because my grandma's family has done it for a long time." From generation to generation is my life, and this proves my point. What's family has been doing this since she was little. I asked, "How has your family tradition changed from the past to the present time?" She replied, "When I was younger, we used to make this with my grandmother. Now since times have changed, we do it with my dad's side of the family." From what What's said, it gives me a new insight: nothing can change something that built you. What has been built from decades of family laughter and love stands strong.

Seremy Torres explained one of his favorite family traditions, "Every Christmas, me and my family like to eat potato together. I also enjoy opening and giving presents to my family and friends." Potato is a traditional hearty Mexican soup or stew made from heirloom corn (hominy), meat (usually pork or chicken), and broth. Not everyone has certain things that their family does as traditions, but it does not mean it can stop you from having fun. Traditions do not have to be only through family, they can be celebrated with friends, neighbors, or even teachers. There are endless possibilities within this earth, and it can start with you stepping up to create a tradition for generations to come. -Sooelyn Springer

## Generation to Generation



Everyone knows that nothing stays the same, nothing lasts forever. We can only predict and estimate how long someone will last, but tradition is different. Tradition goes through generations that started from times of dirt and trails, to cities and roads now. When I interviewed Jackson Steward he said, "We like to throw huge fireworks shows and even win three time awards for the best show." Lots of people like to go out somewhere to see the shows, such as the lake, roads, or highways. Jackson said that his family does them for the Fourth of July too, so if you see fireworks double check, it may be his family trying to win the best fireworks show.

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Designed by Miah Barragan

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## Behind the Scenes

What is the purpose for the Veterans Day assembly? Less than 27% of students know the real reasoning behind Veterans Day. I think it is safe to say that is not enough. This assembly gives students the opportunity to learn more about Veterans Day and gives them the chance to see things up close. Mr. Mendez states, "The Veteran's Day assembly provides us with the opportunity to thank our veterans for their service. As for our school community, we are able to reflect and show appreciation during this time." The Veterans Day assembly has been around at Oakdale for 30 years now and will continue to be a celebration for years to come.

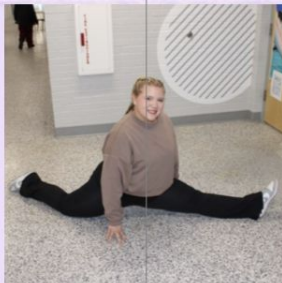
Whether you love or hate field day, it is still an important activity at the end of the school year. It gives students a fun day to look forward to and strengthens teamwork and creativity. Coach Lee thinks, "The benefits of having field day are allowing all students to choose activities that they would like to do, to have a fun activity day with their friends and to socialize with everyone. They get to choose what fun activities they would like to do and they get to spend that time with their friends." Field days have been around in middle schools for over a century. They will continue to be a fun pastime for students to look back on after they leave Oakdale to move onto high school.

School dances are a great way to socialize with your classmates in a way other than just in class. Students have an amazing time at school dances and they love socializing with their friends. Mrs. Meredith says that, "I chose to help with dance decorations to get students involved and interested in current events around school. My leadership students worked hard to create paper chains, triangle hunting, and a balloon arch to transform the cafeteria into an exciting environment." Dances are a great reward for students and an amazing way to socialize with their community. -Hannah Lawson

## Balancing Act

Brooklyn Harp is a serious student and cheerleader. She is captain of the Oakdale cheer team, a member of the freshmen cheer team at Heritage, takes tumbling classes at once every Tuesday, and takes high school level science to get ahead. She is a planner and is able to balance all these activities while still making good grades. She says, "Though it's challenging sometimes and can be a blow to my confidence, I know I can always count on my friends and teammates. We don't only strive for our own success, but each other's success as well."

Gamari Warren is an Oakdale football player with all B's and D's. During football season, practices are long and frequent, having practice 4 days a week. Even with this busy schedule, Gamari is still able to benefit from taking accelerated science. Most of his friends play football and it really lifts his spirits when he is struggling. He states that, "I manage my time really well and I am able to get everything done. I am really independent and that is how I balance my life."



Madley Smith is a straight A student and she participates in four extracurricular activities. She is on the Oakdale dance team, a dancer at High Pointe Performing Arts, and a member of 2 softball teams. She has a 4.0 GPA and is able to handle everything. She says, "I balance my school work with my sports by prioritizing my school work first, then my activities. I do my homework during my breaks at dance and hardly ever get on my phone because I'm juggling everything else." -Aspen Pullen

## Oakdale History

Have you ever wanted to know how a school was made? Oakdale was created in 1974 and the founder of the school was the Rogers Public School district. It was a junior high before it became a middle school in 2008. There is much more information about Oakdale that people do not know, but teachers that have been there the longest have more information to share with us.

Many people do not understand all the things that happened over the years to make Oakdale what it is today. When I asked one of our 7th grade teachers and track coach, Coach Sandlin, if the school has changed from when he first came here, he said, "Yes, some changes that have been different the way classes are set up. They also did the teams

differently, and we used to have a department for each subject and not have a different hall for each grade. Students also had more options for classes like acting and theater that I used to teach."

Numerous people are unaware of all the changes that have been made to Oakdale, good and bad, but the teachers and students still continue to have a good attitude about teaching and being here. I asked one of our 8th grade teachers a question about a misunderstanding about Oakdale that is not true and makes the school look bad.

He said, "The biggest misunderstanding about Oakdale is if you don't put in good work, then you can just go into 9th grade and act the same, but in reality you may pay the price when you become an adult." This means that people think of Oakdale as less important than high school, but you should actually treat Oakdale like you are in high school so when you get into high school you are better prepared. -Mace Frakes

