

WISSAHICKON SILVER LININGS

WISS NATION'S WEEKLY ROUNDUP OF THE UPLIFTING & UPWORTHY



March 2022



Students in the WMS Drama Club spring musical delighted audiences in four in-person performances of Disney's "Moana JR" on February 24, 25 and 26th. Congratulations to the cast of 45+ talented students and our WMS musical director, Sue Brown.

We Belong!

WSD Survey to Support Equity Efforts

This February, the district administered its first Belonging Climate survey to all students and staff to support our equity efforts and goal of creating a culture of belonging. The District Equity Planning Committee, consisting of staff, students, and administrators, reviewed several climate surveys and selected the PSSM, The Psychological School Sense Membership Scale (Goodenow, 1993), to best meet our district's needs. The survey will help assess the degree to which staff and students perceive a sense of belonging in the school community.

The collected data will be used to inform next steps in professional learning, social emotional lessons, and our ongoing efforts in equity. Additionally, interested students and staff will have opportunities to take part in focus groups to assist in addressing the identified needs and in developing action plans.

Each year we will administer the Belonging Climate Tool to monitor our growth in creating a sense of belonging in our school community. [If you haven't watched it yet, please check out our Belonging video on our Belonging: Equity & Inclusion webpage.](#)

WSD is SELebrating #SELday Kick-Off!

At WSD, we know that Social Emotional Learning (SEL) leads to long-term improvements in students' skills, attitudes, prosocial behavior and academic performance! That's why SEL learning is incorporated into our professional development, teaching and learning and classroom/extra-curricular activities across the district.

From March 1st through #SELday on March 11th, we will be celebrating all of the great SEL skills that our students and staff use and how SEL benefits our school community.

WHAT IS SEL?

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions.

On page 2, we share a few examples of SEL in action and will include more highlights in future *Silver Linings*.

We also invite you to check out our social media (Facebook, Twitter & Instagram) and the [SEL page on our website.](#)



Social Emotional Learning (SEL) IN ACTION

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) includes community service projects, which help raise **social awareness** as students learn about those in need and the positive impact of giving back to help strengthen the community. Thanks to donations to the Giving Tree Foundation, made by a parent and the Lower Gwynedd Elementary HSA, the entire school community was able to assemble gift packages for those in need. Students in K-2 made a Morning Munchie Bag for Meals on Wheels and grades 3-5 made Kindness Cups for the homeless.

[CHECK OUT OUR SHORT VIDEO](#)



Lower Gwynedd Elementary knows how to spread the love! To celebrate Valentine's Day, students and staff purchased more than 1,000 carnations and wrote a handwritten note to let each other know how much they appreciate and care about each other. What a great way to build **relationship skills!**



Every two weeks, five **WMS students and five staff members** are celebrated for demonstrating qualities associated with the 3 Rs - **Respect, Responsibility and Relationships**. Students and staff nominate each other with a short write-up about their nominee. A drawing is held and the 5 students and 5 staff winners are recognized during the morning announcements. Students are also congratulated in person by Principal Bauer and all winners receive a 3Rs gift package.



In **Ms. Beck's 3rd Grade Class at LGE**, students learn about strategies to self-regulate emotions and share aloud the different ways they calm their bodies such as belly breaths, finger breaths, taking a walk, getting a drink of water, thinking of a happy memory, drawing, and talking to a friend. The students even assume the role of teacher, showing the class how to do it and practice the strategies on their own. What a great way to learn about **self-awareness and management!**

Mrs. Neft's second graders at BBE learned how to express themselves, especially through music. They analyzed the meaning of song lyrics for "What I Am," by will.i.am, then picked a phrase and described what it meant to him or her. This led to conversations about perseverance and hard work and developed their **self awareness skills!**

“ SEL skills promote the idea that we can control our own path, our own actions, our own outcomes by choosing to see the good, by choosing to see the opportunity to learn, by choosing to see the opportunity to help someone else.

Dr. Lynne Blair, WHS Principal

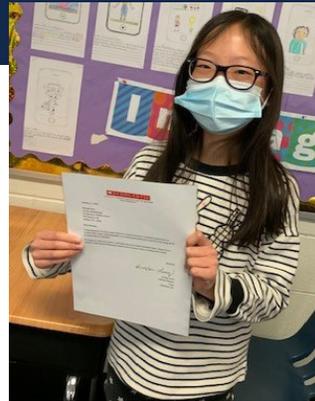
“ SEL techniques help me to be successful at everything - both simple and challenging tasks during all times of my day!

Ms. Seidenberger, BBE 3rd Grade Teacher



Student **ACHIEVEMENTS**

Congrats to **WMS student Hannah Kim**, whose infographic was chosen as a winner of Scholastic's Scope Magazine Vacation Contest - October 2021 issue. Scholastic said: "Your infographic was stunning and informative, and we loved seeing all of the good eats you included." Hannah's prize was a \$20 gift card to the online Scholastic Store.



WMS Student Council Cake Wars Victors: Shout out to all the WMS students who participated in the Student Council sponsored Cake Wars! It was such a successful event; there were so many talented individuals. There were over 25 cakes that the Student Council judged. They each had their unique spin on the holiday festivities. The cakes were both judged on appearance and taste. Then, they were shared with our custodial staff to bring some holiday joy to the Middle School. The winners are as follows:

- 1st Place: Jill Olszewski, Sophia Stehlik, Sammi Acuna, and Jonah Grossberg
- 2nd Place: Alexa Bowers and Shelley-Anne Burke
- 3rd Place: Vivi Ronalter

Congratulations to our winners and all of our contestants!

1st Place



2nd Place



3rd Place



WMS Robotics Teams: Shout out to the robotics teams who competed in a virtual competition organized by La Salle College High School on January 8th and congratulations to the award winners:

- Team 7114 – Future Engineers for winning the Core Values Award. The award celebrates a team that displays extraordinary enthusiasm and spirit, knows they can accomplish more together than they can as individuals, and shows each other and other teams respect at all times. Team 7114 members are Josiah Chung, Caden English, Luke Lampron, Andrew Perry, Noah Shaffer, Drew Shakespeare, and Russell Ton.
- Team 7113 – The Seven Musketeers for winning the Rising All-Star Award. The award celebrates a team that the judges notice and expect great things from in the future. Team 7113 members are Jack Dukes, Kevin Liu, Delaney Marc, Patrick McNaughton, Read, McNeil, Alan Meng and Tim Thomas.
- Team 7114 who will move on to the FIRST Mid-Atlantic PA-East FLL Regional Championship on January 29th.



State Invention Convention Winners: Congrats to our WMS students who competed in the Pennsylvania State Invention Convention in Hershey, PA on February 8th. Of the 1,000 student competitors at the local level, WMS represented 6 of the 65 students that advanced to the state competition. Each student or group of students worked to create a prototype of their invention and an elevator pitch to try to sell their idea.

Andrew Li, Patrick McNaughton, Ray Pelletier and Eric Jiang created the Scan-A-Pass, a digital hall pass system. Alisa Puenpatom and Anna Ippolito created Corner Catcher, a device that catches bugs in tricky places. Petra Lee created Mega Otodus,

a robotic shark that cleans the ocean.

We are pleased to announce that Alisa Puenpatom and Anna Ippolito won third place in the competition, earning a trophy and \$100 gift card. Andrew Li, Patrick McNaughton, Ray Pelletier, and Eric Jiang won 1st place, earning a trophy, \$300 gift card, and a ticket to the National Championship in Dearborn, Michigan. Please join us in congratulating these students. They worked so hard, and we are proud of them!

Alumni Accomplishments

Congrats to Madison Elwell '17 who was drafted to play for the Washington Spirit in the National Women's Soccer League's draft. Elwell was among 50 drafted players and was the 15th overall pick. She played varsity soccer at WHS and college soccer at Vanderbilt University. While playing for the Commodores, she scored 12 goals and assisted on another 29 during her five seasons in Tennessee. Elwell also earned Second-Team All-SEC honors in each of her final three seasons at Vanderbilt.



Kudos to Jessica Edelson '17- one of three Duke University students who have been named Schwarzman Scholars, a program that funds one year of study in Beijing. Edelson will be among 151 scholars that will begin the program in August of 2022. Students study at Tsinghua University in Beijing and live in Schwarzman College, a specially built state-of-the-art facility designed to promote community. Over the course of their one year scholarship, students will engage in developing a better understanding of China and its place in international affairs by attending lectures, traveling, cultural immersion, and a "deep dive" into a topic of their choice. Edelson, a Robertson Scholar, will graduate in May of 2022 with degrees in political science and visual and media studies, and a certificate in information science.



College Signing Day

Big shoutout to our **WHS student athletes** who committed to play collegiate sports after graduation. [Watch the video announcement created by our WTV students.](#)

Learning is Fun!

Miss Beck's third grade class at LGE enjoyed a Glow Day, completing all their work with highlighters, painting with glow paint, and playing games centered around the history of all things that glow. This class is bright!



Community Helps our Rising Stars

Thank you to two local authors and Ambler residents who recently visited the Rising Stars Homework Club to read their books to our students.

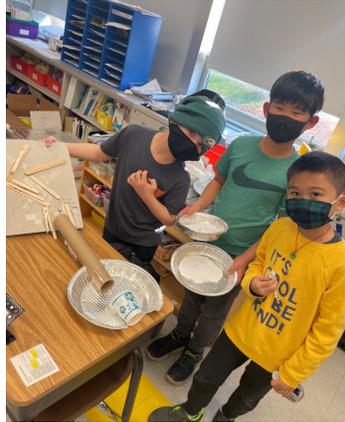
Physical therapist and author, Hillary Sussman, read "Roxy and Maliboo: It's Ok to be Different". The story about her real dog and book character, Roxy, and other lovable book characters with unique features, were created to help young children overcome their fears and insecurities surrounding differences and gain more confidence.

Hazel McGriff, a staff member at Upper Dublin School District, read her book "Young Buddy Arms," a story about how school children and staff remain close friends while safely social distancing in order to prevent the spread of dangerous germs.

Rising Stars is also thrilled to have students from LaSalle High School as regular volunteers every Tuesday. What great mentors!



Learning SPOTLIGHTS



Second graders at BBE participated in a Force and Motion Carnival to culminate their science unit. They designed carnival games and had to describe what forces they used to create their games.

After completing a social studies unit about our country's symbols, **Miss Stern's 3rd graders at Stony Creek** wrote this great song, US Symbols, to demonstrate knowledge of their learning.

[LISTEN TO THEIR SONG](#)



Congratulations to our students who participated in the **WMS 21st Annual Spelling Bee** on January 28th, organized by Social Studies teacher Cheryl Neild. Special thanks to our judge, Mrs. Janice Belcher, and our "word pronouncer", Mr. Steve Ebert.

This year's grade level winners and runner-ups were...

6th grade Winner - Weston Ma
Runner up – Grayson Maggi

7th grade Winner – Luca Almeida
Runner up – Vera Geshev

8th grade Winner – Amy Fackler
Runner up – Shieun Koo

On February 2nd, the winners advanced to the Championship Spelling Bee and competed in 10 rounds. Congrats to the runner-ups:



Second runner up - 6th grader,
Weston Ma
Runner up - 7th grader, Luca
Almeida
And a big shout out to the
WMS SPELLING BEE
CHAMPION...
8th grader, Amy Fackler,
whose winning word was
"accomplishment." How fitting!

Congratulations to the **162 WHS students inducted into the Wissahickon Chapter of the National Honor Society!** To be inducted, students must meet the qualifications of Scholarship, Service, Leadership, and Character defined as follows:

- Scholarship: Students having an unweighted GPA of 3.5 or higher at the end of the Sophomore or Junior year;
- Leadership: Students who have demonstrated leadership in the school community—both in the classroom and in extra-curricular activities;
- Character: Students who have demonstrated good character (honesty, integrity, morality, reliability, fairness and tolerance) in the classroom and in school activities and programs.
- Service: Student participation in three (3) school activities per year throughout high school including a service activity, interest activity and team activity. During the induction ceremony on January 27th, students selected a quote reflecting the High School's theme "Choose Happiness". NHS officers also recognized four faculty members who embody the four pillars of NHS:
 - Mr. Heppe-Service Award
 - Mr. McCabe - Scholarship Award
 - Mrs. Castor – Character Award
 - Ms. Estock – Leadership Award

Congratulations to all!

100 Days of School Completed

Students and staff celebrated the 100th day of school on February 7th with costumes that displayed 100 or dressing up as a 100-year old. They also did math activities and fun assignments incorporating the number 100. It was so great to be 100 days smarter!



Congratulations to our District Artists of the Month

Congrats to our January District Artist of the Month, 8th grader Viivi Ronalter, selected for her beautiful acrylic painting on canvas. In this assignment students focus on the element of value and the principle of emphasis. Students work from a photograph and just like Bob Ross, students are encouraged to explore "happy accidents" and "move mountains, rivers and trees!" Viivi said she likes to sketch, especially eyes and faces, and carries a sketchbook with throughout during the school day. Her painting was also selected for the cover of a thank you card given to the School Board for School Board Recognition Month.



Art Teachers Emily Shaffer and Rob Illuminati and Principal Bauer congratulated Viivi on her artwork.



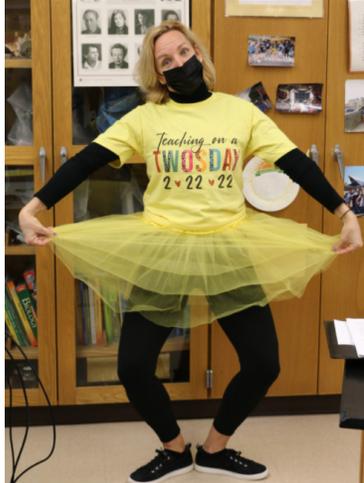
Assistant Superintendent Dr. Dawan, Principal Venezia and Art Teacher, Mrs. Coyle, congratulated Sarah on her artwork.

Our February District Artist of the Month is Stony Creek First Grader Sarah Chen with her featured "Cave Art" drawing of a bison and prehistoric symbols. Sarah and her classmates experimented with drawing onto a rough surface with materials - charcoal, chalk and colored conte crayons - that mimicked those that may have been used in prehistoric art.



TwosDay Celebration

Staff & students celebrated Palindrome Day, 2-22-2022, by twinning with someone, wearing twos, tutus & tiaras. Shady Grove used the celebration as an opportunity to do a good deed, collecting pairs of socks to donate to Mattie Dixon Community Cupboard.



Bravo to the WMS Mathcounts Team



Congratulations to this year's WMS Mathcounts Team! Led by the 1-2 punch of 8th graders Ray Pelletier (1st place overall) and Andrew Li (2nd place overall), all 8 WMS team members finished in the top half of nearly 150 competitors at the Valley Forge Chapter Competition. Team members logged dozens of hours of preparation and solved hundreds of problems to ready

themselves for the February 17th competition. Both Ray and Andrew, along with Eric Jiang (5th place), are now on their way to the State Finals the weekend of March 18th. In addition, the team, made up of Ray, Andrew, Eric, and Joseph Chang (10th place), scored a rare perfect Team Round score. Alas, only individuals are being advanced to States this year due to safety protocols.

7th grader Gabe Gold and 8th grader Kevin Li also deserve special recognition for top 25 finishes, as do Albert He (6th grade) and Mihir Khanna (7th grade) for their strong showings. All team members have been invited to continue to practice with our state representatives to ensure the WMS program shines later this month.

In other MathCounts news, a group of nine (made up of current, past, and new club members) has begun in earnest on our project to be submitted for Gold Level consideration at the national level. The group has opted to create a video presentation on one of the problems from this year's handbook and aim to keep the club's unparalleled 14 year gold streak alive.

Tick-Tock: New Clock Brings Joy to WMS



WMS was overjoyed by a new addition to the Makerspace - a grandfather clock entirely made out of K'Nex. Students use K'Nex in the Makerspace but this addition was donated by the parent of a 6th grade student. Abigail Ferraro's mom,

Kerry Ferraro, created the clock which keeps accurate time and has a working pendulum. Abigail says the clock lived in their sunroom for many years, but now it serves as an inspiration to students who entered a contest through the Montgomery County Intermediate Unit. Their challenge is to build something useful from K'Nex. Thank you Mrs. Ferraro for the painstaking work it took to build the clock, and all the amazement and enjoyment it brings to our students.

Please Join Us! Mental Health Parent Workshops

WSD is excited to announce that we have partnered with two local mental health agencies to offer parent workshops about student mental health throughout the month of March. Aldersgate Youth Service Bureau (AYSB) and Regna Services will be facilitating a 90-minute parent workshop every Wednesday night from 6:30-8:00 PM via Zoom.

[View Details](#)

[All workshops will be recorded and listed under the Family Resources page on our website.](#)

Cultural Recognition and Celebrations

In recognition of MLK Day, **Mr. Smyth's 11th grade US History students** read and discussed the comic, *Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story*, published in 1957 by the Fellowship of Reconciliation. This comic was edited by Martin Luther King, Jr. and tells about the methods of nonviolent resistance and the success of the bus boycotts. **4th Graders in Mrs. Coleman's class at BBE** learned about Martin Luther King's message by watching videos of his famous "I Have A Dream" speech, then had great discussions about what can be done to combat racism. They did a collaborative art project to show that when everyone works together, beautiful things can be accomplished!



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Shoutout to the members of **WMS Asian Student Association** who decorated the WMS atrium to celebrate the Lunar New Year. Almost eight million people throughout the United States, whose origins come from China, Vietnam, Tibet, and Korea, celebrate the Lunar New Year. Did you know 2022 is the year of the TIGER? Based on the Chinese zodiac, Tigers are vigorous and ambitious, daring and courageous, enthusiastic and generous, self-confident with a sense of justice and a commitment to help others for the greater good - just like our students!

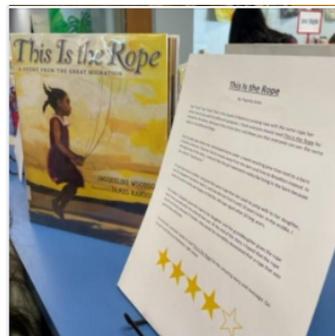


Top Row: Chloe Jang, Sophia Kim, Petra Lee, Sylvie Sanders, Brandon Furman, Eric Jiang, Mrs. Lee; Bottom Row: Jayden Aniceto, Riya Koshy Cherian, Hannah Kim, Shieun Koo

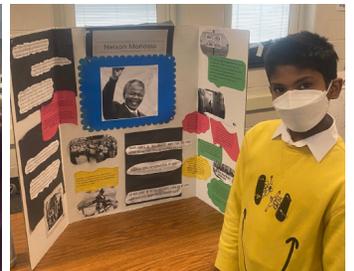
Special acknowledgement to the members of **Celebrating All Students Achievements Club at WHS** for their great work to recognize Black History Month. CASA students hosted a school-wide IE and collaborated with the TV Lab students to create short segments for the WHS daily morning show. The segments highlight and honor impactful moments and outstanding Black people who helped change the course of history. CASA also had a general club meeting open to all students to discuss global and local current events. Thanks to our CASA students and advisors, Dr. Brasch and Mrs. Schuman, for their leadership and hard work!



3rd graders from Miss Savalia's class at BBE did book reviews on picture books related to Black History Month. They are now displayed in the library for other students to read!



Ms. Williams 4th grade students at LGE researched notable African Americans for Black History Month, then created educational story boards and set them up as a museum for other fourth grade friends to view. They learned so much, had a lot of fun and did a great job!



In celebration of Lunar New Year on February 1st, **Ms. Klein's class at BBE** learned about the meaning and traditions of the holiday from WSD parent, Chen Xu. Via Teams, she shared a video and Power Point presentation, then taught the class how to make a paper lantern and write the word "tiger" in Chinese since this is the Year of the Tiger. As a follow up to the presentation, the class practiced how to write the word tiger in Chinese and learned the different animals on the Lunar Calendar. Thank you to Mr. and Mrs. Xu for their wonderful presentation and origami folded tigers!



Singing and listening to songs from diverse cultures helps us learn about the cultures of others and gain a better understanding of our own. In **Mrs. Guillama's music classes at LGE**, students learned about the Lunar New Year by participating in some great activities. K-2 kids made paper fans and learned a Jasmine Flower Dance. Third graders used their knowledge of the treble clef lines and spaces to complete coloring glyphs of Chinese dragon masks. Fourth and fifth graders were challenged with rhythm/body percussion activities to accompany traditional songs used for Lunar New Year: "Gong Xi, Gong Xi" (Best Wishes) and "Jin She Kuang Wu" (Dance of the Golden Snakes). In recognition of Black History Month, classes studied Motown and Soul. They learned a rhythm stick dance to "Ain't No Mountain High Enough" and a bucket drumming routine to "Respect" by Aretha Franklin. This song was an unofficial anthem for the Civil Rights Movement and women's rights - a great segue from Black History Month to Women's History Month this March.



Fourth graders in music class at SGE learned about the music of Colombia. They listened to music from the new Disney movie, Encanto, learned about some traditional Colombian instruments, and played Cumbia rhythms along with "We Don't Talk About Bruno" from the movie. Check out **Mrs. Sibley's and Mrs. Abbonizio's classes below** with their maracas!



During art, **Ms. Weise's kindergarten students at SCE (above)** created textured dragons in honor of the Lunar New Year



WSD Professional Development Update

Administrators and faculty have participated in professional learning throughout this year. Each professional development session offers layered activities to support and foster equity and inclusion among staff, students, and families. The districtwide learning opportunities, along with the administrative team's "train-the-trainer" sessions and faculty learning sessions, work in alignment to promote equitable environments and outcomes that support all students' social, emotional, mental, behavioral, and academic wellness and success. Some of these professional learning session topics have included Cultural Responsiveness, Trauma Informed Care, Social Emotional Learning, and Restorative Practices. Wissahickon School District remains committed to professional learning to ensure we are meeting the needs of each and every student.

