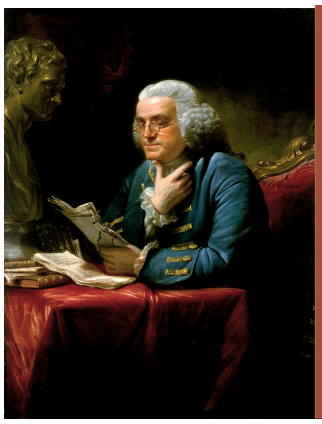


Ben's Pen

Spring Edition, Volume 7, Issue 2 A Publication by Benjamin Franklin Middle School Students

The 2025 Wizard of Oz Musical

by Leanne Alazawi

The Wizard of Oz was played for our middle school on January 31, 2025. It was a fun experience for me to be part of the cast as a doorman. The cast and stage crew, including the directors and helpers, did a fantastic job. Miss Hill, Miss Regan, Mr. Krueger, Ms. Smith, and Mrs. Yorio-Sager were helpers and directors in the show, they did such an amazing job. In the musical, we played fun theater games, we practiced our lines and acted our roles. It was hard work and took a long time, but in the end, we did our best! The lead role, Dorothy, was Avery Clark. The Tin Man was played by Sydney Torchia. Scarecrow was played by Braelynn Miller. The lion was played by Mackenzie Kinda. The ensemble also did a terrific job. There was a large number of fifth graders who were new to this musical this year, and hopefully, they will participate again next year. Even though this will be the last year for the seventh graders to be in a middle school musical, they will have fun memories of this experience. This experience for me was amazing and I am glad I joined. I can not wait to join next year's musical in high school.















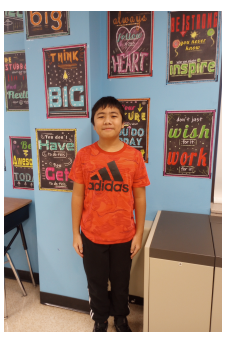
Acts of Kindness Week - February 10 to 14

Orange/Super Hero Day by Catherine Mayr

On Monday, February 10, students could wear the color orange for helpfulness, or they could wear super hero clothing. The concept of wearing super hero clothes was to focus on helping people and to represent kindness. Some students wore capes that are from different super heros. When we watched the Franklin morning announcements the week before, they mentioned thinking about helping other classmates on this special day. The announcements also suggested you can assist people in a kind way and reach out to others.






Yellow/Western Wear Day by Sarah Izard

On Tuesday, February 11, students could choose to wear yellow or western clothes. Wearing yellow was for positivity. For western wear, some students wore cowboy and cowgirl hats. Many people wore flannel shirts. Some people tied flannel around their waist. Some people wore flannel shirts and hats. I saw some people even wore western boots! On this day, many students showed a positive attitude, by saying "I can" or "I will" and by giving their best effort.

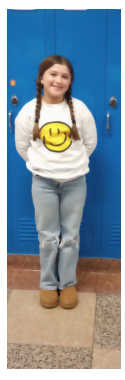
There are so many fun things you can do while wearing western clothes. This day reminded me of when I went to the Taste of Country Event in Buffalo last summer. It was a great experience. There were a lot of good singers and performers. Another fun thing people can do when wearing Western wear is to do line dancing.

I hope you had fun on Yellow and Western Wear Day.















Blue/Tie Dye Day by Katie Zhang

On Wednesday, February 12, students could wear either tie-dye representing peace, love, and kindness or blue for encouragement. Examples for the idea of this special day include complimenting someone for their effort, being supportive, and inspiring others with kind words and actions; this purpose for blue and tie-dye day was shared on our school announcements. I hope you enjoyed seeing your friends wearing blue or tie-dye.










Green/Twin Day by Pearl Karki

On Thursday, February 13, students could wear either green for appreciation or they could "twin" with a friend and maybe make some new friends! This day gave people a chance to show how thankful we are for our friends, and how much we appreciate them. One example of something kind you can do, on any twin day, is that you can ask someone to twin with you for this day. You could also ask to twin with your friends too! Then you can have group of triplets or qudruplets, etc. This day is was made for showing how much you get inspired by people.









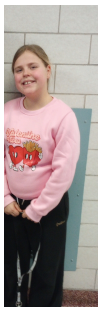


Red/Valentine's Day by Erica Khanal

Friday February 14 was Valentine's Day. Most people wore red or pink or bright colors. On this day many people give chocolates or flowers as a way of recognizing the people that are special to them. In our school, we wore red to promote self-care. There were some suggestions from our school announcements for Valentine's Day. They were to get some extra rest, enjoy some mindful minutes, do some physical activity, or exercise your brain by reading a book or doing a puzzle.













Links for Love Fundraiser by Mrs. Zummo

Students from the National Junior Honor Society coordinated a fundraiser for the SPCA. Students across all three grade levels were able to purchase paper chain links for only twenty-five cents! The seventh grade had pink paper chain links, the sixth grade had blue paper chain links, and the fifth grade had green paper chain links. There was a competition to see which grade level would buy the most paper chain links. The fifth grade students purchased over 1,500 chain links! That is a lot of quarters! The fifth grade was in the lead for this competition. As a result, their class won the opportunity to see a movie in the auditorium. The date of the movie, and exactly which movie the fifth grade students will watch, will be announced later on. Schoolwide, a total of $970 was raised, indicating that every grade level was very supportive of the fundraiser.

I was excited about this fundraiser, since my cat was adopted from the SPCA about 13 years ago. There are so many amazing animals up for adoption at the SPCA. Also, the SPCA has a foster care program; if your family would like to take care of a cat, dog, or other animal on a temporary basis, foster care is another option. For more information, check out the following website: https://yourspca.org/.

It was impressive to see such strong support for this fundraiser from our Franklin community.



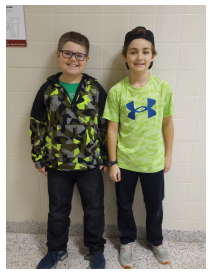


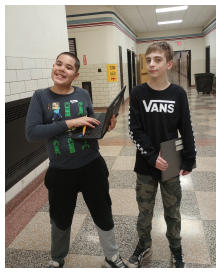
The custodial staff attached the chain links to the ceiling in the first floor hallway near the auditorium.

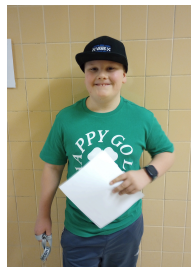
St. Patrick's Day - Many students and staff wore green on Monday, March 17.











Wellness Week by Sonya Das

Wellness Week was from March 31 to April 4. Wellness Week allowed people to dress up, laugh, and have fun. It was about being positive and kind to others. Keep reading to find out what people dressed up as. Monday was "Color Me Monday," a day to dress up as an emotion. Being mindful/your emotional health was the theme. People dressed up in a variety of colors, like yellow for joy! Tuesday was "April Fool's Tuesday," a day where people have laughs! On April Fool's Day, people can make you laugh, which can make you joyful and content. People dressed up in silly and goofy clothes, some wearing clown outfits, others wearing mismatched socks. Wednesday was "Weather Wednesday," a day to dress up as your favorite season. This day was also about helping the earth by picking up garbage or simply throwing a plastic bottle in the recycling bin. People dressed up wearing shorts, sweaters, boots, and more. Thursday was "a time to shine," a day to dress up as a career you want to be when you grow up. This was a time to get creative and explore your future. Make sure to thank everyone who helped you, like doctors or firefighters! People

(continued on the next page)

(Wellness Week continued)

dressed up as scientists, engineers, tae-kwon-do instructors, and even Walmart employees! Last but not least, Friday was "Floral Friday," a day to be kind and cheerful. Spread happiness with seeds of kindness and positivity! People dressed up with flowers on their clothes, or wore cheerful sayings. Students earned tickets for a chance to be in a raffle drawing to win a bike or another prize. The Town of Tonawanda Police Department donated 15 bikes for the bike drawing that took place during wellness week! The names of the bike winners were shown on the big screens in our classrooms as we watched the school video announcements. That was Wellness Week, and make sure to be positive. Put a smile on your face and have a great day!












Franklin Freezes

February Franklin Freeze

by Lillian Cardus

There was a Franklin Freeze on February 27, 2025. Every grade did a drawing activity where you had a partner, and one partner saw an object or word and then you had to describe the object or word without using its exact name. Your partner could not see your object or word. For example, if you had a square shape, you would say something like "Draw a shape with four equal sizes." All grade levels had a chance to practice using their best communication strategies.

This Franklin Freeze was based on the concept of REACH. We had a chance to talk about what communication and students interactions should look like based on REACH. Each letter in the word REACH stands for something, as shown below:

Responsible
Excel in academics.
Act kindly.
Create a safe environment.
Have respect.

Every grade level did a different activity after we did the drawings.

The Franklin freeze shortens the periods of a normal school day. We also did it on a half day so the day went very fast.

March Franklin Freeze

by George Kingston

On March 27th, the Franklin Freeze focused on kindness and we watched the kindness boomerang video. The kindness boomerang video showed how kindness from one person affects another person, and another person, and another person, and their kindness comes back to help them. The name of this video was *Kindness Boomerang - One Day* by Life Vest Inside, a non-profit organization that encourages people to be kind. Before the video, we also answered some questions from the website First Five (https://www.edtomorrow.com/first-5). One of the questions was, "If you could choose one job without worrying about the paycheck, what would it be?"

Next, we played a game. The game for this Franklin Freeze required you to say something kind you could do for someone else. After this game, we had to write a kind act that someone did for you and write on a post-it and they got placed in the hallway. I wonder what the next Franklin Freeze will be like.

Sixth Grade Theater of Youth Field Trip: The Hobbit

by Fox Honan

On March 12, the 6th graders went on a long-awaited adventure to the world of The Hobbit. This production is based on the best-selling book series of *The Great John Ronald Reuel Tolkien*. Also, it is from an award-winning movie named "The Lord Of The Rings" with 44 different awards, including the 2004 Academy Award for Best Directing, the 2004 NME Award for Best Film, and the Critics' Choice Award for Best Score. Although the production we saw on our field trip has not won any awards yet, it was still a dramatic and exhilarating play. Emotional background music was used to intrigue and excite the audience. The production of the play was short on actors and extras. They managed to do a great job with only five cast members, including, Lily Jones, as the Balin/Troll 3/Elf 3/Goblin 3/Wolf 3/Eagle 3; Glen Chitty, as Bilbo the Hobbit; Anna Krempholtz, as Gandalf/Bombur/Troll4/Gollum/Eagle 4/Elven Queen; Tom Evans, as Dwalin/Thorin/Goblin 1/Wolf 1/Eagle; and Preston Williams as Kili/ Troll 2/ Goblin 2/ Wolf 2/ Eagle 2/ Smaug. Going on this field trip was a fun experience, seeing the cast members displaying their talents was very inspiring.

The 5th grade Tifft Nature Experience

by Catherine Mayr and Lillian Cardus

In March, the fifth grade classes went on a field trip to the highly recommended and excellent Tifft Nature Preserve. This field trip included nature walks with birds and deer. We got to see a beaver dam in person! There are also coyotes.

Just by holding hands, we made a human circuit! It was powered by human energy. The connection is pretty awesome. We also get to see the population of animals in Tifft going down over the years and up! We used a chart and some measurements to talk about the population changes. We also got to play a game called Predator and Prey. In this game, we learned how the animals all need different resources to survive, but we also needed to be aware of how they can lose some resources. We talked about what was the most important in a food chain based on a chart. We learned that top consumers have no predators, and that is why they are on the top of the food chain. We also got to go on a walk and we saw deer. They got pretty close. If you reached your hand out far enough you could probably touch the deer! We also got to do a food web activity, and that showed how everything gets energy from the sun; by pulling on a string, you could see a demonstration of how one thing affects another. It was a very interesting field trip.

6th grader Kayla Boland wrote a short story, entitled "Dreamer." Kayla's friend, Lilyana Santerre, helped Kayla to write the beginning part of the story, which is shown below. To continue reading the rest of the story, please find it in the library next to the printed copies of the school newspaper.

Dreamer by Kayla Boland and Lilyana Santerre

Chapter 1: First day

Hi, my name is Hunter Walker, and I am 18, and this is my story about starting in college.

It's 8 AM and I have school, I usually get woken up by my sister or an alarm, but today I'm not. "Hey, wake up," a voice said. It sounded like it was in my head, but it was just my roommate. I might have forgotten to mention, but I just moved into my new apartment for college. My best friend moved in with me to help out with bills and get me up at 5 AM because I usually I don't wake up on time but little did I know, he slept in too, at least I thought. "What is it?" I asked. Then he said, "You missed your first class, the 6 o'clock one." Then I shot out of bed and got ready the quickest I have ever gotten ready before, except the one time I almost missed my class trip. "Why didn't you wake me up sooner?!" I yelled at my roommate. "Well, I woke up at 1 AM and sat on my phone and before I knew it it was 6:59!" my roommate answered. "Well, pay more attention, or I'll make you pay more bills than you already do," I said with anger in my voice. Then I rushed to my next class and got there only thirty minutes late.

Disney on Ice 2025 by Andrew Caputa

Last January, I saw Disney on Ice - Into the Magic at Key Bank Center. I have been to a few Disney on Ice performances before. This year, they had a lot of characters from different movies, including Rapunzel, Coco, Moana, Frozen, and Beauty and the Beast. The audience was clapping a lot after each song. To me, this year's show seemed shorter in time than last year's show. When you go to these kinds of shows, it is very expensive, but it is worth it. You can buy items when you are there. They had jewelry for people of all ages, and toys for children. At the end of the show, all of the characters came out and took a bow. If you are looking for something to do next year, I highly recommend this family fun adventure.



Chess Club by Sanya Das

If you like chess and competition, you should definitely think about joining the Chess Club next year. Mr. LaMendola is in charge of the Chess Club. For each meeting, we get to play chess and compete against other people. Get your friends to join so you can brag on them if you win. If you do not know how to play chess, but you would like to learn, that is fine too. You will learn quickly in the club. Before we play chess, we learn tips and tricks to get better. On April 10, there was a chess tournament between Hoover Middle and Franklin Middle. Hoover won, with three students earning trophies. It was a fun event for all who attended.



5th grader Catherine Mayr wrote a short story, entitled "The Gardening Club." The beginning of the story is shown below. Catherine had some input from other members of the newspaper club while writing her story. To continue reading the rest of the story, please find it in the library next to the printed copies of the school newspaper.

The Gardening Club by Catherine Mayr

(Chapter One, Tulips)

It was a sunny day and Lilly was in her school when they were working on an art project. "Psst," said Lilly. "What?" exclaimed Maddie.

"What flowers are you painting?" Maddie asked as she gazed at the ceiling. "Roses! They're pretty. What about you?" "Hmm," murmured Lilly. "I think tulips. I love tulips," she exclaimed. "I love tulips," she repeated. Mrs. Lauren interrupted,"Okay class! Hold on, I have permission slips for The Gardening Club!" "You should join," said Maddie. "I don't know," said Lilly. The bell Rang. "See you tomorrow," said Maddie. Maddie picked up her stuff, and then stopped for a moment, "Consider joining, please!" Maddie handed Lilly a permission slip for the club. "I still don't know, sorry," said Lilly. Maddie sighed, but smiled, "I'm sure you're gonna join it soon, plus you have all A's, and you always draw flowers. You'll be perfect." "Hmm, maybe I will join," said Lilly, "thank you, you're the best!"

Dear Falcon Friend,

I will graduate high school in the year 2030. I have no idea what I want to do for a career when I grow up. I know I still have a lot of time, but many of my friends already have some ideas of what they might want to do in the future. How can I find out about different kinds of careers?

Your truly,

Wondering What to Do

Dear Wondering What to Do,

It is alright not to know what career you would like to pursue right now. But if you are really stuck, list out your interests. When finding your dream career, you want to be interested and happy with it. Knowing your interests can narrow down what career suits those interests. You can do the same thing with your strengths and values. Do you prefer to work in a team or independently? Would you like to be the leader or just follow directions? The answers to these questions will help you find careers that match your personality. Nobody wants to work in a setting that they find to be boring or upsetting. Finding your strengths, interests and values in a career will help you get ideas of what you want to do in the future. If you do not know what these are, you can take a few quizzes to help determine those strengths, interests, and values. Here are some websites I recommend: https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/career-search/career-quiz, https://www.princetonreview.com/quiz/career-quiz, and https://www.careerexplorer.com/. If you are still stuck, you can do more research. Knowing what a job requires and knowing if you match those requirements will help you know if you would like that career or not. For example, in my research, I found that pediatricians are doctors that care for children and teens. I like that job because I enjoy helping young people. It is okay if you have not found a solid choice yet. In 7th grade, you'll be able to do more research in 21st Century Skills on what job you would like to do. You can always ask your friends that have similar interests to you and find if you want to do what they plan to do or something similar to that. You might even be able to ask an adult who is currently active in their career about what their job is like.

Sincerely,

Falcon Friend

Poetry

Tacos
by Mrs. Zummo

Tortilla
Appetizing
Cheese is one kind of topping
Originally from Mexico
Sauce can be mild, medium, hot



Flowers for Spring
by Sonya Das



Fern, green as a leaf
Lily, sweet and lean
Orchids, small but tall
Wallflowers, orange but don't punch!
Echeveria, gorgeous but not famous
Roses, red and head over heels!
Spring is the season of the flowers!

Types of Cookies by Lillian Cardus

Chocolate chip
Oreo
Oatmeal
Krumbcake
Icing
Easter
Sugar

