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# AOC Times

## Athletes Serve Up Inaugural Volleyball Season

by: Isaac Dowaw, Will Kotsatfis & Frency Villalona

In the 2018 - 2019 school year, it was confirmed that the AoC Middle School was going to have sports teams. In September, the AoC community found out that the first installment was going to be volleyball.

The boys volleyball team was coached by 6th grade math and science teacher, Mr. Enderes and the girls was lead by Learning Specialist Ms. Bond. Practices were held twice a week for 2 hours. During practices, both male and female athletes warmed up, then did drills and finally played a friendly game against each other.

The girls team played about 10 games and ended the season with a record of 0-10. However, according to Ms. Bond, the league the girls played in included much older 7th and 8th graders. Bond would like "a longer volleyball season so the girls can practice more and get better." She also added that the girls exceeded her expectations.

Although the boys team only had two games, which included a few female athletes, they said it was fun and worth it. Many of the boys are looking forward to the next season. They hope it will be...

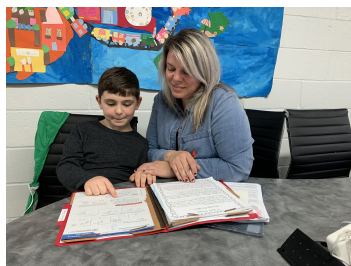
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## This Cycle's News

### AoC Debuts Student-led Conferences

by: Zafir Alam & Chelsea Dunne



On October 17-18, 5th and 6th-grade students held AOC's first-ever student-led conferences where students had to share their grades with their parents and their advisors, not teachers, using a portfolio. Inside of the portfolios were grades for ELA, Math, Social Studies, and other classes as well as two examples of work per class.

Student-led conferences were Mr. Adriaan's idea, "since kids are leaving elementary school." Mr. Adriaan stated, "it's

important they take responsibility for their grades." While one of the goals of the conference was to talk about grades with the parents, there was supposed to be a bigger meaning behind the talk. According to Mr. Adriaan, his main goal for these conferences was to teach students how to talk to their parents when talking about shaky topics such as grades. Now that students have experience talking about grades, students feel it'll be much easier to talk about shaky topics going forward.

Ms. Lisa Beaubian, a 5th-grade advisor, described the process of preparing the students for these student-led conferences. "I showed them [sample] videos and it gave them confidence." She also had "run-throughs" of how the conferences would be like. Ms. Beaubian stated, "It felt good and I was proud of how

confident they were at the time. [It was] Nice to see the parents proud. And some parents were emotional." Mr. Faulkner, a 6th-grade advisor stated, "the conferences went well and I was very confident for the students."

45 middle school students were asked if they thought their conferences went well. 34 students said yes and 11 said no. Two middle schoolers felt similar emotions about their student-led conference. Sixth grader Zara Prasain said, "It went amazing; I was nervous, even though there was nothing to be worried about. My parents were proud because I had good grades." ELA, but I also had good scores too."

In the spring students will have another student-led conference and people expect the second one to be better than the first.

### Middle School Goes Camping Overnight for First Time

by: Sean Hill & Ronald Pachecho

For the first time, on September 18th -20th, middle school students went on a 3-day 2-night trip to Camp Jewell in Connecticut and participated in group bonding camp activities after Mr. Lee decided to take the students out of the city and into nature.

Students participated in activities such as rock climbing, hiking, canoeing, team building and many more. Students also enjoyed a campfire on the last night where they made and enjoyed s'mores and watched a play held by the administrators. Breakfast, lunch and dinner menu items were a variety of different



foods including meatloaf, tacos, egg sandwiches, and salads. Students slept in cabins and shared bathrooms.

Mr. Adriaan was one of the main Camp Jewell trip planners when it came to what the students would do and keeping them safe. However, "Mr. Edwin Gayle was the main brain in the negotiations." It was revealed that the entire trip cost \$320 dollars per student, but

for the students, they only had to pay \$150. The school board supplied the rest of the money. Mr. Adriaan was hoping almost everyone would go, but only an estimated 140 went camping.

When asked if was safe, Adriaan said it was very safe because it was in nature and it was beautiful." Adriaan saw camp as a way to give kids an opportunity to be away from their parents.

Some parents hesitated to send their children to camp. Robert Castillo said his mother was overwhelmed about the trip and worried about how he ...

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## First Athlete vs. Staff Volleyball Game a Success

by Andrew Jarrin

AoC hosted the first ever athlete vs. staff volleyball game in order to make something fun for the students before Thanksgiving vacation and to celebrate the end of volleyball season.

The gym was packed with screaming 4th, 5th and 6th graders as well as lots of teachers. The students showed their enthusiasm in rooting for their classmates. However, some fourth graders were cheering for their teachers.

For the first set, the girls team played against the teachers and lost. However, in the second set, the boys team beat the staff in a close game. Finally, a team of mixed boys and girls were again defeated by the staff.

Madison Gousse, a 6th grade member of the girls volleyball team thought "the games were fairly played, but in the end it was a friendly match and it was all good."

"It was fun. I am very competitive and I liked when I played against my co-workers. Coaching is very satisfying because you get to see the



students improve from the beginning to the end." said Ms. Bond. "I had told Mr. Faulkner when I was younger, I used to play against the teachers when the season was over." Faulkner organized this event by asking Mr. Lee and Mr. Adriaan if the school could get together for a fun game of volleyball. Faulkner sent out an email to teachers asking if they'd be interested and most were.

"I was excited for the first ever volleyball game we had - I was really proud I think the students played very well," said Ms. Whalen, SETSS teacher. "Ms. Bond and Mr. Enderes did a great job coaching the volleyball teams."

## Fall Festival Raises over \$3,400

by Charlie Lau & Oliver Ramos



On Saturday, October 26, AoC hosted its 9th annual Fall Festival. It was a fundraiser for the PCO. The Fall Festival took place in the gym of AoC and it was organized to help raise funds for the PCO. They raised about \$3,400. The money will go towards a variety of things such as snacks and school supplies.

The festival, which took place outside this year due to nice weather, had bouncy castles, carnival games, students wearing costumes and food and even a DJ. It took Mr. Peguero and a

## Camp (continued)

...would act. Other parents were worried about safety. However, most of the students had a great time. "I had a really good time and the cabins were really clean," said Santiago Jimenez, one of the students to attend Camp Jewell. "The food," Aaliyah Hayes said, "was delicious. It was made fresh and it tasted really good." Melina Simeonides, a 6th grader said "The activities were really fun and creative and you had to work together to accomplish a goal."

bunch of other people about two weeks to organize the festival. "It's a great opportunity to get together to celebrate for the people that don't celebrate Halloween," said Mr. Peguero.

First grader, Hudson Stewart-Berkowitz's mom played scary music as the DJ. The event lasted from 1:30-5pm, however it took the custodians 2 hours to clean up. According to Youssef Lamameri, a new fourth grader, "It was fun," but he was a little disappointed because he "couldn't go in one of the bouncy houses."

## Volleyball (continued)

...a longer season with more games. The boys did not belong to a league and therefore the games were only scrimmages.

The AoC Wolves had one co-ed game in which they lost against the Bank Street School. Coach Enderes has volleyball experience being that he played in high school, however he has never coached professionally. He was sad because the boys team didn't have many chances to play against other schools. "I was expecting more games."

Isla Kitses, 5th grader joined the volleyball team because she wanted to try out something new. "It was a very fun and relaxing experience."

Volleyball will continue to be a sport in the new middle school.

## Jazz at Lincoln Center Visits AoC

by JonMarcus Diaz  
Contributing Reporter



Instead of taking a trip to Lincoln Center, 6th graders got a chance to listen to a Jazz performance at AoC this past October. Musicians played mostly instrumental music using drums, saxophones, pianos and cello.

In music class, Mr. Nunez guided 6th grade students in writing the lyrics to a blues song. Students first listened to samples of blues music and learned that the first two lines were the same and the third line was different. Each student then wrote their own blues song and 2 were selected by Mr. Nunez to be performed by the artists. Julianna Alvarez and Isabelle Campos' songs were selected and played by the artists. Campos felt "proud of myself because out of 100 students my song was the one that was selected/."

During the performance some students were even invited to dance along with the music.

Mr. Nunez "wanted to have live music from professionals in our school and playing for our students. Jazz at Lincoln Center always provides high quality music education and I wanted AoC to be a part of it."

### Musician Spotlight:

The band met 3 years ago in 2016. In total, they have performed at 4 schools and 7 new ones this year. The goal of the band is to perform at 200 schools this year.

The original dream job of Justin, the saxophonist was to be an NBA player, but he changed his mind and became a musician. When he first wanted to learn how to play, his band teacher taught him how to play at the age of 10 and he still continues to learn.

## TEACHER SPOTLIGHT



### MR. FAULKNER WRITES A BOOK!



by Marshall Dorfman & Isaac Peguero

Mr. Faulkner, AoC's physical education teacher wrote a fiction book that he started it in 8th grade for his last creative writing assignment back in 1997. He then finished it in college.

The book is titled *Blue Line to Blue Line* and it written for high school age students. It currently has 23 chapters and 266 pages. According to Mr. Faulkner, it's about a boy who wants to play hockey, but people expect him to play basketball because he is African American. He was inspired to write this book because he grew up in a community where a lot of people didn't look like him. He wanted to write a story and he thought he "could tell the story best by creating a character who plays a sport where most people don't look like the main character."

Writing this book means a lot because Faulkner never thought he had the ability to write a complete novel. "This book proves that you can do anything that you put to your mind," said Faulkner.

After going through many stages of editing and revisions, Mr. Faulkner plans on publishing his book in the near future, however in order to get his book published, he needs an agent, which he is in the process of searching for.

## 5th Graders Visit Museum of Natural History

by Ryan Khokon  
Contributing Reporter

Fifth grade students visited the American Museum of Natural History in November in order to make a connection with a Journeys text about how humanity is destroying natural habitats by causing pollution.

During the trip, 5th graders experienced a few exhibits about marine life, a 3D movie and a butterfly conservatory. The students learned about our ecosystem and wildlife and looked at exhibits that show what is currently happening to endangered species and

what to do to help them.

The butterfly conservatory had many species of butterflies flying around, a display with cocoons as well as information about them. Butterflies even landed on some students. Tenzin Zigsang had 6 butterflies land on him. "It felt like a new, awesome experience! Because they were so light, it was like 6 leaves landing on me!" said Zigsang.

It was also very hot and humid in the conservatory in order to keep a suitable temperature for the butterflies. "It was a very



good experience being able to explore exhibits and the 3D movie," said Zafir Alam.

The 3D movie showed marine life in the shallow tropics and rarely known deep ocean floors, containing many unknown species.

Students returned to AoC on the subway because teachers wanted to give students more time and a better experience, since the buses have to be back at school by 1:00 pm.

According to a museum staff, "it would take 1 whole week to be able to explore everything at the museum!"

## 4th Grade Visits Queens County Farm by Tiana Harrison & Sonam Lhaki



Fourth graders visited the Queens County Farm in November to experience 18th century cooking styles and see different types of animals.

Students were taught

how to make soup and such as cows, chickens and cornbread and also got to llamas.

cut up vegetables and churn butter. Churning is what people in the old days did to mix to make butter. After all the cooking was done, students enjoyed the meals they helped to cook.

Students also went on a nature walk with a guide and visited with animals

Ms. Nikolopoulos, the organizer of the trip said she took the students there because their PBL project was all about great leaders and she "wanted the students to know how these leaders lived."

One student, Julietta Munoz, really enjoyed the light meal because "I was hungry!"

## Hunter College Music Show Delights

by Jose Pablo Ponce & Aiden Rodriguez

Fourth graders took a trip to Hunter College to see a concert with a variety of different types of music and dance in November put on by the Little Orchestra Society.

AoC students watched as break dancers, ballet dancers and flamenco dancers danced along with different types of music, composed by

Igor Stravinsky. There was also a MC, which stands for Master or Ceremonies, who explained the pieces that Stravinsky wrote. Music included string instruments such as violins, guitars and even drums.

Mr. Nuñez, music teacher planned this trip because "I love this trip because it highlights the music of Stravinsky, one of the greatest composers that ever lived."



Nunez added. They do a lot of programs for schools."

Student, Sebastian Ivaldi, enjoyed the show because he "liked the break dancers because he likes hip hop music."

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**SPELLING BEE WINNERS**



**4th Grade**  
Sebastian Moore  
**5th Grade**  
Justin Nguyen  
**6th Grade**  
Diego Hernandez

**Student Council Formed to Prepare for Next Year**

by Kayla Rojas & Norzeen Tsering

The AoC Middle School now has two representatives per class to share ideas and speak up as Student Council members. Students will be able to improve AoC with their own ideas.

Fifth and sixth grade teachers used a variety of ways to choose one male and one female representative to have a voice and be confident to help improve AoC. Mr. Adriaan explained that he's forming the council now so "in the fall of 2020, when AoC has their own middle school building, teachers and students will come together and discuss problems and changes that they want to see at AoC. Once the students have a topic or issue, they will argue between the choices to see if they agree with the change."

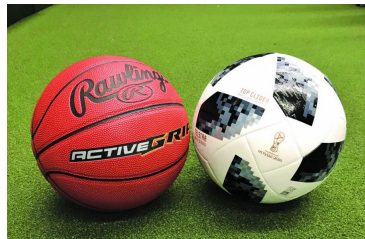


Even though some details are unclear, 6th grader Juliana Alvarez thinks that "the student representatives could help create fundraisers for our school and would help make trips and things like that." Newly elected 6th grade representative, Zara Prasain feels "I feel like I have a big responsibility and what I do depends on my classmates choices."

5th grade teachers Mr. Jessimy and Ms. Nathan will be advisors of the Student Council.

**New Sports are Coming in the Spring**

by Manu Betances & Ariana Giraldo



New sports such as basketball and soccer are coming to AoC this coming spring. While basketball will have separate boys and girls teams, soccer will be co-ed, which means both boys and girls will be on the same team.

Sign-ups will begin in February and the practices will be held two times a week for each team in

March. In April, when the games start, teams will likely have one practice and one game per week. Soccer and basketball teams will practice in the gym.

Mr. Faulkner, Physical Education teacher and Mr. Adriaan, Middle School Principal are still deciding on the most fair way to make up the teams. Next year, flag football & cheerleading will most likely also be coming to AoC, according to Faulkner.

"It's a lot to keep in mind, like the interest of the kids. We need to keep in mind the kids interest, or what is the point of having a new sport that they don't like?" said Middle School Principal, Mr. Adriaan. There's a lot that goes into a new team, he explained "We need money, a coach, kids, and a facility to play in."

**Ms. Megias Transforms Deck Into Student Lounge**

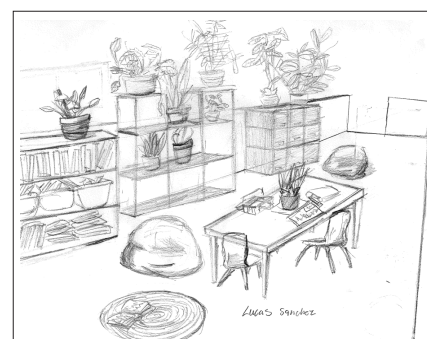
by Mayra Navarrete

The deck of the portables have [and will be again] been transformed into a place for middle school students to relax and breathe. However, there have been some bumps in the road for Ms. Megias, who spearheaded the project, but she has been working very hard to make this possible for the 6th graders.

Currently there are tables and chairs on the deck. Ms. Megias has bought plants, bean bag chairs, and storage for the items students are going to use. Due to the rain and snow during the winter months, Ms. Megias and other teachers such as Mr. Enderes have had to foster the plants in order to keep them healthy and alive. There are other things stored in different teachers rooms as well.

The money for these items (~\$900-\$1,000) was donated by anonymous people though a website called Donors Choose. Students will write letters to thank the donors for their generosity.

Student Kylie Betancourt feels like it's going to make kids feel more at home. Ms. Megias took on this



Rendering of what the lounge will look like in the spring.

Artwork by Lucas Sanchez

task so the 6th graders will feel more like sixth graders and not 5th graders as well as to also give sixth graders a place to themselves.

Since the bumps in the road changed some things. What we have been told these things may change later on in the year. It may not be what Ms. Meigas envisioned, but there are some things that can improve the student lounge, such as an outdoor rug or to close the area off so no rain or snow affects the items Ms. Megias bought.

Ms. Megias had doubt that she wouldn't be able to make the student lounge that she thought of. She decided that it was something she was doing for the students of 6th grade. Even though it's not complete, she thinks by spring it'll be something very nice for the students to enjoy.