The Washington School Post

All the news we find time to print.

December, 2022

Volume 6, Issue 1

Meet Mr. Mercurio, Leader of the Pack

By Aditi Magal and Aditi Hegde

Every time Washington Wolves enter the building, they are greeted with a smile and a friendly wave by their principal, Mr. Mercurio. He's the leader of the pack and without him, Washington School would not be the same or run as smoothly as it does today. "He is very nice. He took time out of his day during my skills period and allowed me to take pictures of the kitchen for my newspaper article, and gave us details about it," said Leela Kalyanpur in Ms. Irving's class.

"He is a good principal. He keeps everyone under control and excited at the den rallies. He is the best principal I've ever had," said Aniruddh Thupil in Mrs. Policarpio's class. "He is supportive and leads by example. He cares about the staff and students of Washington School." said Mrs. Policarpio.





Mercurio working at home, flanked by his children.

Mercurio strives hard to make the fifth grade experience as memorable as possible. Before becoming Washington School's principal in 2017, he was the principal at The Wyoming School, and before Wyoming School, he was the assistant principal at Millburn Middle School. He also taught at Harding School in Kenilworth, NJ.

Mercurio was selected to be the first-ever principal at Washington School. "I wanted Washington School to be a Leader In Me school because I felt fifth grade was the perfect time to allow students to make their own decisions and take leadership roles." He wants every student, shy or outgoing, to develop their leadership potential. "Everyone has leadership potential in some or many areas. Finding that special area and then developing it is what counts," Mercurio added.

Mercurio is active in his spare time: building things, hiking, spending time with his family, caring for his pet chickens, mountain biking, and enjoying sports. He roots for the Yankees and enjoys chicken parmesan. His favorite color is Caribbean blue.

Mercurio is excited for author visits from Supriya Kelkar, global read aloud author, and Anna Crowley Redding. He scheduled the visits and workshops to inspire students and to help students improve and refine their writing skills. "One of my favorite things about Washington School is all the different cultural events and clubs that students can participate in, and I highly recommend students to participate in them," Mercurio said. He wants Washington School to thrive, and he makes sure that every staff member is dedicated to bringing out the leader in all students.

Mercurio has made many innovative initiatives here at Washington School. He is the first elementary school principal to hire a full time Guidance Counselor for his students. Also, last year he initiated student led conferences for the spring parent/teacher conferences. He continues to innovate in an effort to make his school the best it can be.



Mercurio was determined to create a Leader in Me School as soon as he took the helm at the newly established Washington School.

Mercurio's message for his current fifth graders: "Take risks and become a leader. Participate and take advantage of all Washington School offers, from TREP$ to Broadcast Club. This is *your* school."

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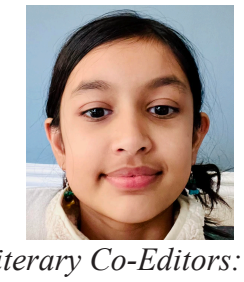


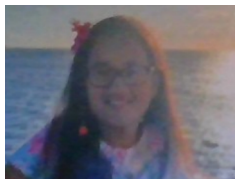


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Washington School Welcomes a Group of New, Talented Teachers



Ms. Segal Brings Out the Best in her Students

By Arya Samdani

Which current teacher was a former student at Hartshorn School? Give up? Well, it's Ms. Segal. “When I was a student, I had trouble with math,” said Segal, the new fifth grade teacher, explaining why she became an educator. Describing Washington School she said, “Washington is filled with school spirit, dedicated students and teachers, and just a fun place to work.” Segal's favorite subject is and has always been Social Studies. She said, “An example is the Revolutionary War. It is important to know how our country was formed.” Not only does Segal have a favorite subject, she also has a current goal: “I want to finish my masters degree.” She is working hard pursuing a Masters in Educational Leadership at William Patterson.

Born and raised in Short Hills, Segal currently lives in Hoboken. Her favorite pastimes when not busy preparing lessons are reading, enjoying long walks and exploring new restaurants.

Segal’s students are lucky to have such an energetic, enthusiastic teacher. “My teacher brings smiles to our faces. Even when days go wrong, she is always there for us,” said Sia Bagul. Jessica Shen said, “If we don’t know how to do something, she helps us. I like how she gives us positive energy.” Segal’s advice to current fifth graders: “Try your hardest because a little effort goes a long way!’ A glimpse into her inviting and creative classroom shows that Segal lives by her words of wisdom.



Button with her husband, Sean, and pet, Porter

Pack O Is Energized with New Addition

By Leila Mu, Norah Reich, and Gitanjali Kameswaran

New to Washington School and Pack O is Mrs. Button who teaches Social Studies and Builder. Recently moved from Washington D.C. Button lives in Jersey City with her husband and their dog, Porter, an Eskimo poodle mix. In her free time, Button enjoys walking Porter, practicing yoga, reading, and cooking. Interestingly, before she married her husband, Sean, her name was Ms. Learner. Button was born in Virginia, on March 2. Button later attended James Madison University in Virginia where she studied Psychology, Art, and Dance. Button taught eighth grade Math, and recalls the fact that students were all taller than she was. She then taught kindergarten, first and second grade. After she received her Bachelor's degree, she attended Johns Hopkins University, and received a masters in Education. She then returned to the University of Virginia and got a second masters degree there. As a new teacher, Button was excited when she heard how great the Millburn community was, and a bit nervous. She describes Washington School as a tightly-knit community with students and staff members who work hard to get better at what they do. Her classroom focuses on developing a growth mindset, and

Continued on Page 3.

New Teacher Shares Talent and Creativity with her Students

By Dalia Beckerman

Students might know Ms. Scharer as a new teacher at Washington School, but she has been teaching for seven years! “The purpose of being a teacher is for students to come back and say I inspired them,” Scharer shared. Are you a big fan of Zodiac signs? Scharer is a Leo. Generous, warm-hearted, cheerful, and creative; it is easy to see that Scharer is a Leo. Scharer loves the creative part of teaching because she feels she can express herself. Not only does Scharer teach students during the school year, but she is also a cooking instructor, ceramics educator, and counselor at a summer camp for the past 12 years. At summer camp she earned the nickname Ms. Centering because



she could center the clay on the pottery wheel the best. When Scharer is not with her students and campers, she is playing sports such as tennis and softball. She also enjoys watching football, and is a big fan of the New York teams, the Giants, Yankees, and Rangers. “My first Giants game was with my dad. We had season tickets for the Giants and I was finally old enough to go with him. We made breakfast

Continued on Page 3.

Students Weigh In On School Lunch

By Navya Panwar

Meals are an important part of the school day for every student. At Washington School, the active PTO organizes the special lunches, providing lunches from local restaurants. Students’ thoughts and opinions on the school lunches are as diverse as the food selections themselves.

When students think about lunch, they look forward to yummy tasting meals that feel good after a long period of learning. Some students bring food from home, and others get lunch from school. The school lunches vary from pizza to sushi, and parents can pick what their students enjoy each day. Based on the review given by seventeen students receiving

Continued on Page 3.



Ms. Scharer Shares Talent and Creativity

Continued from Page 2.

in the parking lot, threw the football, and even watched a DVD in the car because it was so cold. It was one of the first times that my dad and I got to spend time just the two of us watching the game we loved. One of the best parts though was that the Giants won that day!" Scharer said.

Scharer is fond of traveling. One of her favorite trips was to Italy when she went with her grandparents for her Bat Mitzvah. "The best memory I have in Italy is going with my grandparents to eat gelato every night. Being able to do something simple," Scharer said. Scharer loves gelato but her favorite meals are pizza and chicken parmigiana. Her favorite color is blue. At school, Scharer is known as a considerate and generous colleague. Scharer is also a great partner. "I learn from her every day," Mrs. Jones said. When Scharer was young she had two dreams, to become a teacher and a Nascar driver. Washington students are glad one of her dreams came true.



Washington Wolves Celebrate Diwali

By Sharanya Bhattacharya and Myra Wadhawan

The air was filled with joy and magic on Oct. 24, the special day of the year, Diwali. Vibrant fireworks dance around the sky, bright yellow diyas flood the houses in pretty rows, and beautiful powdery rangolis are all around the floors of the cheerful houses. People dance and sing, wearing colorful clothes on the day of the year which is flooded with magic and a mystical aura.

Diwali is celebrated mostly in Hinduism, the third largest religion in the world, but it can also be celebrated by people who follow Jainism, Sikhism, and Buddhism. In the Hindu calendar, Diwali is celebrated in the new moon of the last month of the year, and ends on the second day of the new year. In the western calendar, those dates fall somewhere around late October and early November. Diwali is mainly celebrated in India, the home of a rich cultural heritage. Diwali is the largest festival in Hinduism, and India. But where does this historical festival come from? The story of Diwali originated many years ago, when the mythological story of King Ram, the ruler of Ayodhya, came back to his city after 14 years of exile. He had defeated the demon, Ravana, and his return was celebrated by lighting Diyas, (small, colorful clay lamps) because he came at night, where there was no light to guide him. The legend of Diwali states that all people have an inner light, or soul. In fact, the entire symbolization of Diwali is the triumph of light over darkness. But Diwali can also mean the end of the harvesting season, and the beginning of the planting season, where farmers are grateful for the

Continued on Page 4.

School Lunch

Continued on Page 3.

school lunch, ten prefer home lunch over school lunch.

Out of the seventeen students who had school lunch, most preferred Thursday lunch because of the ice cream. Parents can order ice cream for their fifth graders. Students can choose between sherbet or ice cream, with lots of different flavors from classics like chocolate and vanilla, to unique flavors like apple pie and cookies and cream. Students receive a wristband and are called up during lunch to collect their ice cream.

Among all lunch items, sushi is the most preferred lunch from school because of the many options it offers. "I love sushi!" said student Summer Peterson. When asked which items students did not prefer, burgers were at the top of that list. "The burgers are soggy. They only put a patty without any sauce," said Kiara Pathak.

School lunch is a great option for most kids, as it offers a convenient option to parents. With amazing varieties, and special ice cream treats on Thursdays, students do look forward to lunch every day. Although school lunches are a convenient option, it appears most kids prefer home lunch. When it comes to lunch at Washington School, "there's no place like home."

Mrs. Button Energizes Pack O

Continued from Page 3.

and social and emotional learning. Her students strive to be leaders. Claire Yu, one of her rotation students said, "She's very passionate about teaching us and a lovely teacher. She's a fun, kind and pleasant person." Students should get to know new teachers like Mrs. Button. She's a welcome addition to Washington School.

Washington Wolves Celebrate Halloween Up Close and In Person



In costume and ready to celebrate: Summer Cole, Ani Haupert, Naomi Guinoo and Brooke Anatole.

By Harini Prakash and Kiara Pathak

Finally after two long pandemic years, Washington School was able to celebrate Halloween in person. On Monday, October 31st, after lunch and recess, all the packs celebrated Halloween in their own special ways. The warm sunny weather enabled some packs to celebrate outside. Every class had a class party. The teachers in each of the six packs and Mr. Mercurio and Mrs. Emmanouilidis all dressed up as the Seven Leadership Habits.

Both Pack W and Pack S decorated pumpkins prior to the holiday. On Halloween, students voted for the best pumpkin.

Continued on Page 4.

Washington Wolves Celebrate Halloween: Up Close and in their Classrooms

Continued from Page 3

Pack W voted for the scariest pumpkin, the cutest pumpkin, and the most creative pumpkin. Pack S voted for the most creative pumpkin from each of the three classes. Pack S also enjoyed a group STEM project, creating catapults to launch a small plastic pumpkin. They also worked on Halloween themed string art and played Halloween bingo, Halloween Kahoot, and a word study game. Pack O went to the back field and had a sack racing competition with monster patterns on the sacks. It was followed by an eyeball on spoon race. One of the highlights of the afternoon was mummy wrapping, where everyone had to find a partner to wrap with tissue paper. Pack O wrapped up the festivities by playing pass the pumpkin and making paper bags with candy for the nurses and the army.

Pack L enjoyed healthy snacks and played Halloween Bingo. They also enjoyed a STEM challenge, building a tower out of foam balls and toothpicks. The students who built the tallest tower won. Pack V celebrated with a party rotating between classrooms. Mr. Dela Fuente's class played Halloween Bingo. Ms. Lepinsky's class enjoyed a Halloween Kahoot. Mrs. Van Dzura's class had a challenge to build towers out of candy corn. Pack E decorated trick-or-treat pillow cases, and wrapped classmates in tissue paper to make mummies. They also played Pin the Head on the Skeleton.



Ready to party: Owen Ladetsky, Eli deLaurier, Max Lacy Miles Macasieb, Cody Braverman, Ani Haupert.

The students at Washington School had a great Halloween.

All students, teachers and staff thank the PTO for all their help in making Halloween such a big success. Mr. Mercurio said, "All the effort and hard work our PTO put into making Halloween so special this year is just one example of how engaged and invested our PTO is in making this a special year for our fifth graders. We are all grateful to them for their generosity."



Chloe Zhang pictured with her award-winning pumpkin. Classmate Jeremy Wang looks on.

Washington Wolves Celebrate Diwali



Continued from Page 3.

year's crops. The actual name of Diwali in Sanskrit (ancient Indian language) is Deepawali, which means row of lights. Diwali is celebrated over the course of five days, which are celebrated with family. In those five days, people complete pujas, long hindu prayers. Lakshmi, the Hindu goddess of wealth, will be worshiped for good financial stability. According to the legend, she will come to your house and bless you and your family, only if your house is clean. So people have to sweep their homes from top to bottom on the days before Diwali. Saraswati, the goddess of knowledge, will also be worshiped to make sure that the family's studies and work are going well.

Lastly, Kali, also known as Durga or Gauri, is the goddess of protection. She is worshiped to ensure family and friends stay safe. People create Rangolis, which are made from brightly colored powder, and then shaped into flowers and mandalas. Fireworks flare up brightly in the sky, each one emitting hope and the beginning of a new year. People eat tasty foods like sweet ladoos, juicy gulab jamuns and rasgulla. Families and friends exchange gifts too. Some people get henna or mehendi on their hands, which is a paste made from a plant, and lasts up to a week. A few people play cards with their friends for laughter and to have a good time. Diwali means the beginning of a new year, and a clean slate, so people wear new clothes, eat new

Continued On Page 5.

Students Enjoy Active Lives Outside of Washington School

By Matthew Kurias

The students of Washington School have many important activities going on in school, but they also have a lot going on outside of school, extracurricular activities. Many students play sports as there are so many different resources for sports. For example, Millburn offers many town teams or clubs in and around the area. Of all the after school activities that students participate in, sports is the most popular. A lot of fifth graders also learn musical instruments outside of school. Students also participate in musical Theater or drama. The Paper Mill Playhouse is one of the places where students go and perform. Other popular activities for young residents to enjoy are after school classes; some with tutors or with study groups. Some students love challenging their minds so much that when they go home, they just give themselves more practice. Whether those students give themselves a few more math problems or read just a few minutes longer than assigned, the students of Washington School are always pushing themselves to the best of their ability. Students also have huge responsibilities inside of school too. Many of the fifth graders participate in many important clubs and programs like the environmental club: keeping our earth clean, the Odyssey of

Continued on Page 5.



Washington Wolf Angela Zou studies violin both in and outside of school. She also participates in the before school Poetry Workshop every Friday.

Celebrating Diwali



Continued from Page 4.

foods, and repay old debts to symbolize the removal of all jealousy and greed.

At Washington School, four students from Mrs. Del Vecchio's class made a presentation to share with their class information about Diwali. "It was very exciting, and I loved seeing people learn about our culture," Isabella Bhandari said.

This year, eleven teachers at Washington School donned saris at the second den rally. Mrs. Khalap, Washington school secretary provided the saris. When asked why she decided to share her saris, Khalap said "I brought in saris for two reasons. First reason is that many students in the school celebrate Diwali including staff and teachers, and the celebrations make it more fun. Second reason is that many people admire saris and do not have an opportunity to wear one. I was happy to make that opportunity available."

Students Enjoy Active Lives

Continued from Page 5.

the Mind program and so many other clubs and programs. A lot of students in Washington School also take musical instruments, they are already playing in bands and orchestras. With all of these examples of all the hard work the Washington Community puts in, it's easy to see that the students in Washington School are always working hard.



Odyseey of the Mind is just one of the many extra-curricular activities Washington School students enjoy to strengthen their minds and expand their social lives.

Ms. Koch Goes for the Gold

By Kristin Zhang and Cynthia Hu

Ms. Koch knew when she was in six grade that she wanted to be a music teacher. She says that her music teacher inspired her to become a music teacher herself and she has been living her dream for seven years ever since she started her job as a music teacher. Her hard work and dedication has paid off. Students love music class, a special so many students say they enjoy. "It's really good," said Emma Zhu, "I like how Mrs. Koch lets us make music by banging on drums."



"Music is a way to get exercise, and Ms. Koch is always very energetic, " said Dalia Beckerman. "It's good," said Sarah Nasri, "It expresses feelings and emotions."

When asked what she likes best about Washington School, she said that it was the fact that all the students are coming from different elementary schools and it's really great to see that they are coming together to learn. "I think my favorite part is to get to teach all of Millburn's kids at once, and the teachers are great too," she said.

Koch loves her job. "I would rate it 100 because I get to do what I love every single day." Koch loves watching what part of music students are into. "I think my favorite part is watching what area of music students are into. Like some students are really into singing, or composing, or instruments. I really like that my students can find a part of music they can connect to. There is something for everyone in music. It can be a great outlet when you're feeling sad, happy

Continued on Page 6.

Sugar Bear Sweetens Downtown

By Aryan Singla

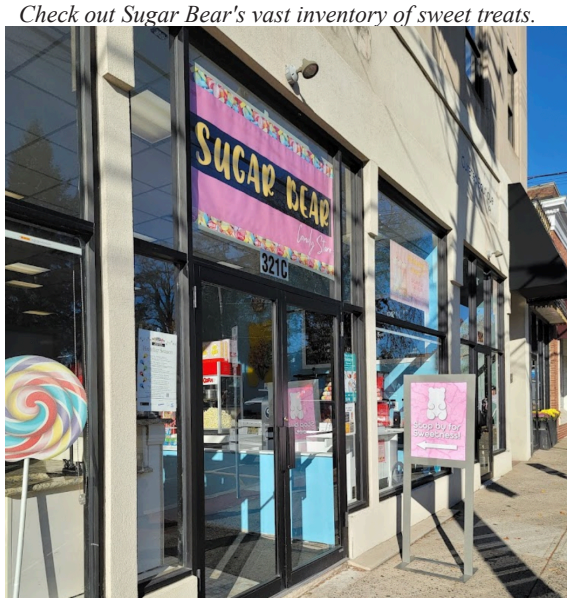
Going downtown can be a rite of passage for students in Grade Five and up. Some of the most popular places students like to frequent are Dunkin' Donuts, Häagen Dazs, Starbucks, and Kung Fu Tea. However, during the pandemic, a new contender arose: Sugar Bear.

Sugar Bear is a shop that boasts a variety of candy. It offers customers bags to stuff with candy like sour belts, Nerds, gummies, and so much more. The shop also has candy cigarettes that actually emit smoke, the biggest gummy bear possibly ever seen, fizzy soda candy, toxic waste, push pops, popcorn, macarons, Warheads, Warheads Sour Spray, chocolate-covered Oreos, chocolate-covered Oreos with M&Ms on top, chocolate-covered pretzels, Jolly Ranchers, Jolly Ranchers chews, Starburst, lollipops, a huge gummy pizza, gummy ramen noodles, and so much more. The items do cost a lot, but they are worth the expense.

Sugar Bear is a candy shop that truly has something for everyone and every taste: sweet, sour, salty, and crunchy. Better yet, the shop is right downtown giving easy access to all its fans.



Check out Sugar Bear's vast inventory of sweet treats.



Washington Wolves can find Sugar Bear at 321 Millburn Avenue, a short 15 minute walk from school.



Ms. Koch Goes for the Gold

Continued from Page 5.

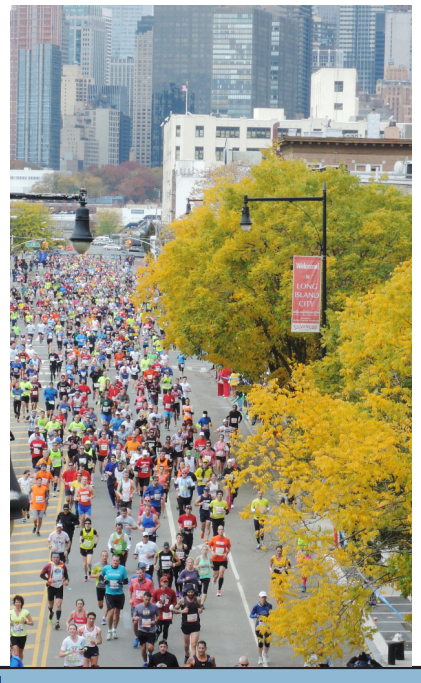
or even angry. There are times when music can speak to us."

Not only is Koch an expert in music, she is also a runner. The New York On November 6th, Koch ran in the New York Marathon for the very first time. She explained, "I wanted to push myself to do something I never thought I could do to see if it was possible. It was a goal I was looking forward to achieving." Before the marathon, she said that she was feeling nervous, excited, hot, and energized. However, after the marathon, she said, "I felt amazing, I felt accomplished but very tired. Still, I was very proud of what I'd done." A marathon is really long, but Koch wants to do it again. "I hope to do it again so I can experience the race, not in 75 degree weather, as well as hopefully run one year for a charity. A marathon is 26.2 miles! It took me five hours and ten minutes!"

When asked what her plans were in the future, Koch said, "I hope to continue to spend time teaching here in the future." Koch will continue to set goals, as well as to set a positive example for all her students.



Koch sets a positive example for all her students, and is always upbeat. Below, see shot of NYC Marathon, 2022.



Specials Add Extra Flavor to School Curriculum

By Chloe Zhang and Emma Zhu

Specials provide entertainment and education whether running laps or playing instruments, Washington School students bustle through the hallways getting from one special to another. Specials bring students together and enhance their skills.

P.E, or Gym, short for Physical Education, is a place to play sports and build sportsmanship. As the school enters the World Cup season and basketball comes to an end, Coach Hogan lets his students watch soccer live while learning different techniques and showing off their soccer skills. Every day of Gym is filled with fun and athletic and safe activities that strengthen skills and help inspire new hobbies. Rotating between indoor and outdoor sessions, Gym is not only fun and exciting, but even when the teachers merge two classes into one, it's much more fun competing against another class.

Music is full of sounds, songs, beats, and activities. Students bang on drums and clap together. Ms. Koch, Washington School's music teacher, prepares students for the upcoming music concert. Each pack will be singing two different songs. Koch also fills the fun with education. During diverse traditions and holidays, classes learn music coming from the culture such as Día de los Muertos originating in Mexico to honor the Day of the Dead and Dandiya and Dholida coming from India.

During Art class, students are busily working on mandalas that will soon be tiles imprinted into

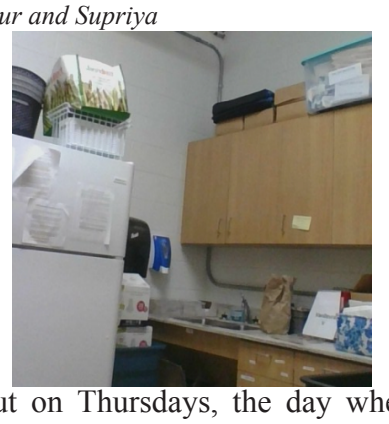
Continued on Page 7.

Secrets of the Secret Kitchen are Unveiled

By Leela Kalyanpur and Supriya

Although it has cabinets, a sink and a fridge, Washington School's kitchen is not used for cooking. The room is located in the stairwell of the auditorium. Most students have never set foot in the kitchen. Built in 1968, the place was not originally a kitchen, and its original use is unknown. But when the building became a school for fifth grade in 2017, the kitchen was refurbished. Since then it has served its purpose as a place to store and provide supplies for the school lunch.

The people who work in the school kitchen are not exactly Gordon Ramseys, but are instead parent volunteers. The number of volunteers varies based on the day,



but on Thursdays, the day when pizza and ice cream are served, most parents volunteer to help out during lunchtime.

The kitchen does not have a stove so it cannot be used as a proper one. However, there is a fridge inside for storing condiments and ice cream. On the counter there are multiple boxes

Continued on Page 7.

HOUR OF CODE

coming in our next issue:

A Report on Code Day!

HOUR OF CODE

Secrets of the Secret Kitchen Are Unveiled

Continued from Page 6.

containing fortune cookies, fried rice, pasta and more which are included in the childrens' meals. The sink is not used for cooking or washing dishes (since there are none to wash), but instead to wash hands.

As Principal Mercurio said when he was asked if the kitchen will ever be replaced, "The kitchen is very important. We need the space for the school lunches." The school will probably never replace such a helpful and useful room.

Unseen by most students' eyes, Washington School's "secret" kitchen is a secret no more.



Behind the Scenes with Actor Cody Braverman



Braverman pictured above, front row center with the cast of "A Walk on the Moon" George Street Playhouse.

By Sydney Gitten and Supriya Gururaj

The resident actor in Washington School, Cody Braverman, is playing Kurt von Trapp in the "Sound of Music" at the Paper Mill Playhouse. Braverman who is in Mrs. Jones's class, has been acting for four years and started singing "Tomorrow" from "Annie" when he was two years old. "I want to be on Broadway; and I will," said Braverman. He has performed with Jonah Platt, Jackie Burns, and John Arthur Greene in "A Walk on the Moon" which happens to be Braverman's favorite musical that he has performed in. Braverman has also performed with siblings of famous actors and actresses. Braverman's first act was "The Harbinger." Many actors get stage-fright -- not Braverman, though he does become excited before each show. Sometimes performing for different size crowds makes Braverman slightly nervous.

Braverman's advice to aspiring actors is to never give up and to follow your dreams. Whenever he gets a part, he has no problem expressing his excitement. "The first thing I do is scream really high pitched when I find out that I got the part," said Braverman. He has many friends at the studio. They are like family to Braverman. Even though being a child actor seems cool, there is always the difficulty of balancing both school and career. "No matter how much you try and fail, keep going," said Braverman, an important life lesson that students, staff, and parents should remember.

The Cricket World Cup Gains US Fans

By Karman Gadh and Aniruddh Thupil

Although the current global read-aloud, *Strong as Fire, Fierce as Flame*, gives readers glimpses into the many atrocities and indignities suffered by the people of India at the hands of the British, there is one positive legacy left by the British - a love of cricket. Originated in Great Britain, cricket is now played and enjoyed around the world, especially in India. Currently, cricket is finding its way across the Atlantic to the United States. This year the annual men's cricket World Cup was held in Australia. The teams that qualified for the super 12 were Afghanistan, Australia, England, New Zealand, Sri Lanka, Ireland, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, South Africa, Netherlands, and Zimbabwe. There were some nerve-wracking matches, and as always India vs Pakistan was an exciting match with Virat Kohli who scored a wonderful 82 runs from 53 balls. With the match coming down to one ball, Ashwin hit it over midwicket for the one run required to win.

In the semis, Pakistan beat New Zealand in a low-scoring match when Babar Azam, captain of Pakistan, and Mohammad Rizwan redeemed themselves after a poor season with fifties. For the second time in a row, Sri Lanka's Wanindu Hasaranga topped the wickets chart at the ICC Men's T20 World Cup. Hasaranga finished with one wicket fewer than in 2021, but once again led the chart for bowlers with 15 wickets in the tournament, including a best of 3/8. In India vs England, India put up an average total of 168 with a loss of 6 wickets. Hardik Pandya, India's star all-rounder as well as Virat Kholi India's former captain did well to get to their half-centuries. But it was Hardik Pandya who finished the innings for India. England, however, smashed the Indian bowlers who all finished with economies over 7.00 with Alex Hales being the player of the match by scoring 86 off just 47 deliveries. His opening partner Jos Butler, who is the captain and wicket-keeper scored 80 in 49 balls. As a result, the match went in England's favor.

Continued of Page 9.

Specials Add Extra Flavor to School

Continued from Page 6.

Washington School's walls. After making their beautiful mandalas, students will be designing wolves to hang on the walls near the Art classroom. From unique patterns and designs to different interests, each wolf holds Washington's school spirit. After making creative wolves, students start their next unit in Art: painting sci-fi-like drawings of planets and moons, spaceships and sci-fi. Art teacher, Mrs. Percarpio, also lets students complete fun projects like Shrinky Dinks and Day of The Dead skeletons.

Washington Wolves enjoy learning Spanish with Maestra Deraville who shares stories while students are hard at work. Learning Spanish greetings, family vocabulary, Spanish numbers and more are all to come. Deraville also collaborates with Percarpio for Spanish-related projects, like the Day of the Dead Skeletons. "I prepare students for sixth grade by showing students that using what we have, like paper to make your own homework, gives more points as it shows that you're working harder," Deraville said.



Mr. Hogan, pictured above, keeps Gym classes exciting with lots of fun games and exercises.



Mrs. Percarpio always has creative, engaging projects for students in Art.

Specials are a great way to explore different subjects. Specials are fun, safe, and teachers always look out for their students.



Anna Crowley Redding Visits Washington School

By Armaan Saraf and Vir Doshi



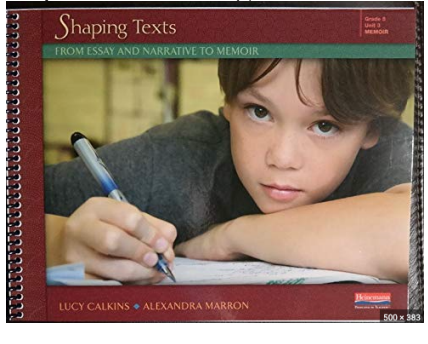
Mr. Mercurio with student Zoey Wachtel reading at virtual assembly.

Washington School was fortunate to have a whole school virtual assembly with author-in-residence, Anna Crowley Redding in November. An accomplished author, her books include *Google It*, *Courage Like Kate*, and a biography about Elon Musk.

Redding believes people can turn flaws into superpowers. She converted her nosiness into curiosity. Redding informed students that turning weaknesses into strengths can transform personalities. Redding talked about this transformation and invited teachers to come up to share their flaws and superpowers.

A few days later, each class got to visit Redding virtually. Redding taught students about memoirs, a timely lesson enhancing students' Memoir Unit. "She taught me how to come up with exciting ideas," said Aditya Singla in Ms. Segel's class. Redding explained to students how to use daily events in their storytelling. She asked students to write about their journey to school, changing a dull narrative into an engaging piece filled with details. "She inspired me to change boring events into a story with rich description," said Aryan Singla in Mrs. Schaefer's class.

Washington School students were grateful to Redding for taking her time to visit and share writing tips. "We did an activity in the Media Den with her and it really helped me get my ideas down," said Matthew. Kurias in Mrs. Monaco's class. Hopefully, Washington Wolves will profit from her writing expertise with daily improvement in their own personal writing.

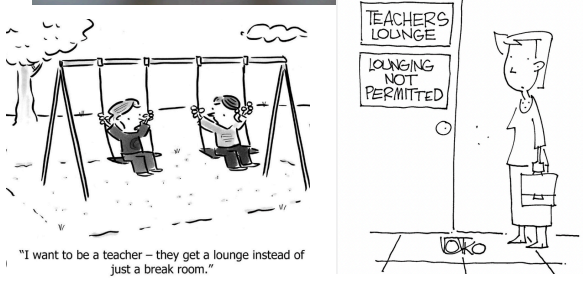


An Inside Peek Into Washington School's Teachers' Lounge

By Sarah Nasri

Have you ever thought about what teachers do in the teachers lounge? Well, you might think they party and have fun, but that's not quite correct. Some days, they need a quiet place for preparing their lessons. Teachers might find it a little loud in their classrooms, so they head downstairs, down the hall, or in the elevator to use the copier or get a water bottle before their next lesson. There are two kitchens. One for the PTO and another for the teachers and staff members. Sometimes on the loudspeaker, they announce breakfast for the employees. Employees get food and drinks like soda, coffee, water, and snacks. The big table is for eating lunch. The teachers sit down and discuss teaching and what they did until the bell rings. The room can also be used for many different things, like having private discussions, celebrating, and much more. The staffroom kitchen is helpful to many teachers and helpers, because it has a microwave to heat up their lunch. It also has a sink for washing hands, or dishes. One of the office members, Mrs. Todd, had said "Our faculty lounge provides a location for our staff to gather for lunch, find a quiet place to prepare lessons, and make copies for their students. The lounge also houses the staff mailboxes. We are grateful to have this space for these purposes." Washington School is very lucky to have this room for all of the hard working teachers here.





Eating Lunch Inside Versus Outdoors

By Sydney Gitten

"Lunch brings our students together because they are socializing," said Washington's principal, Mr. Mercurio. Many wonder if students prefer inside or outside lunch. Mercurio said, "It's really about preference." During both inside and outside lunch, students are socializing with other students. The only difference is during outside lunch, students are socializing with their packmates and during inside lunch students are socializing with two other packs. "… rotation of packs together is a nice addition," said Pack S teacher, Mrs. Monaco.

The outside lunch area is made up of picnic tables on the black top. "We wanted to create a space where students could enjoy the outdoors," said Mercurio. There are times when Washington School has taken a break from eating outside due to the weather. The cafeteria is made up of ten lunch tables in two rows. In both areas, students are connecting with each other.

"I prefer inside lunch because it is warm and you get to sit with more people," said Anya Lisasky, a student in Mrs. Murphy's class. Eva Johnson in Ms. Segel's class also prefers inside lunch. On the other hand, Cooper Balan in Ms. Livingstone's class said, "I like outside lunch because it gives you an opportunity to sit outside with your friends, and it is not too loud and you also get fresh air."

There are many benefits of inside and outside lunch. When students eat inside, the heat is on. Students have the privilege to eat with more friends because of the longer tables. When students eat outside, they can still eat with their friends and get fresh air at the same time. Eating outside is not as loud as inside lunch. There are also some disadvantages of outdoor and indoor lunch. Because so many students are talking at once, inside lunch can get loud. During outside lunch, only two people can sit on one bench because the picnic tables are so small, so some friends may be left out. When the weather is colder, some students are cold. In the warmer weather, there are bees and lanternflies.

No matter where students are eating lunch, they are socializing with their friends and taking a break before returning to their classrooms for the rest of the school day.



Pack S students from Mrs. Monaco's class pose with the holiday tote donation bags.

Pack S Joins Washington School PTO to Make Holiday Tote Drive a Success

By Matthew Kurias

With the coming of the holiday season, Pack S decided to set a goal of donating six tote bags of food and supplies for those who are less fortunate. Students brought in treats like popcorn, hot chocolate, and coffee. Their kind generosity fueled by their parents allowed the pack to exceed their goal. They were able to donate nine holiday tote bags full of holiday cheer for those less fortunate.

Pack S asked its students to begin donating the goodies back in early December. Ms. Scharer and Mrs. Monaco, along with the help of Mr. Kramer and Pack S student volunteers organized the food and supplies by categories. Then, they put a little bit of everything into each tote bag. Even after they finished organizing and stuffing the tote bags, donations continued pouring in. Finally, on Wednesday, December 7, the totes were sent out to local charities. Inspired by the Washington School PTO's holiday tote drive, Pack S was able to participate in this kind, compassionate and caring initiative which was a great way to kick off the holidays. Principal Mercurio is especially thankful to the Washington School PTO for giving students a vehicle to flex their leadership muscles by participating in this important charity event. "Giving students an opportunity to give back is as instructive to our students as it is generous to those in need this holiday season," said Mercurio. "I am also grateful to the teachers of Pack S for taking the charity ball and running with it. Kindness always pays big dividends for the both giver and the receiver."

A big thank you to the PTO, Pack S teachers, student, parents, and everyone else who contributed.



Pack S students proudly point to all the holiday totes they organized and stuffed to donate to local charities during the holiday season. The holiday tote initiative was organized by the Washington School PTO. Pack S teachers were proud of their students' participation.

Percy Jackson Series Inspires Students

By Vikash Pamnani

Percy Jackson and the Olympians by Rick Riordan delivers themes on the importance of never giving up, as well as the importance of teamwork. There are also lessons on determination mixed with Greek mythology. Many student readers love fantasy which makes this book really popular today. Zain Henning, a student in Mrs. Schafer's class said, "It's very adventurous, and you never know what is going to happen next." Henning read the entire book series, which includes five books. He enjoys the storylines, and the writing style as well. Book Four is also popular with students. In *The Battle of the Labyrinth* Percy and his friends Annabeth and Grover go into the Labyrinth to prevent a Titan invasion. Book Five is popular as well. Sanaya Pamnani, from Mrs. Button's class said that she likes this book because it's the most interesting book in the series, and the ending is really good. In this book. *The Last Olympian* readers are treated to the final showdown between the Titans and the Gods. Because the dangerous monster Typhon has arisen, and the gods are fighting him, Percy Jackson and his friends must save Olympus from being destroyed.

In this thriller series, readers can learn about Greek mythology, with facts about the Greek gods and Greek stories. For some students, this book has changed their reading lives.

The series inspires determination, hard work, and teamwork, important leadership ingredients. This series is wildly popular at Washington School, so if anyone hasn't picked up a copy yet, join the many Washington School readers who vouch for this engaging, inspiring series.

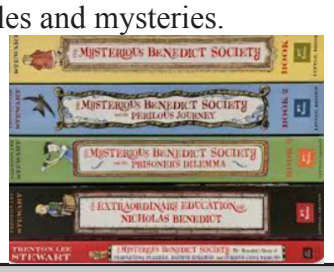
Book Review: The Mysterious Benedict Society Book Review

By Tina Pratap

The Mysterious Benedict Society by Trenton Lee Stewart is an adventure series which tells the story of four gifted 12 year old orphans. Meet Sticky, Constance, Reynie, and Kate.

When a mysterious ad in the newspaper appears saying "Are you a talented child? If so, come to the Monk building for some tests to get into the best school in the city," George Washington (or Sticky as he likes to be called), Constance Contriare, Reynie Muldoon, and Kate Whetheall are up for the challenge. They have to go through a series of tests. The person behind the test is Nicolos Benedict. As with most thrillers, there is a villain whom the heroes must prevent from controlling people's brains. Trained by Mr. Benedict, the protagonists are sent to a remote boarding school to learn about the evil mastermind. The school is run by Dr. Ledroptha Curtain.

The four book series follows the adventures of the four heroes as they use teamwork, courage and creative problem solving skills to solve the mystery. The series is funny, action packed with riddles, puzzles and mysteries.





Coming in our next issue:
A review of "The Sound of Music"
starring
Cody Braverman
at The Paper Mill Playhouse



The Write Stuff: A Collection of Creative Writing from Washington Wolves

A Christmas I'll Never Forget

By Abigail Litus

One Christmas morning I woke up to a cold house. I looked outside my window and saw that it had snowed. Happy mom put more wood in the fireplace, I could feel the cold on the tip of my nose. With goosebumps on my arms, I crept downstairs to the fireplace to warm up my hands.

"Yay, the house is warm right now!" I said. After I warmed up in front of the fireplace, I put on my coat, earmuffs, and gloves and went outside.

I didn't expect it to be this cold outside. "Oh no, my foot is stuck in the snow. I can't get it out. I feel like my foot is in a freezer at 1 degrees," I said to myself. I hate the cold. I saw that my brothers went outside and we saw a hill of snow blocking the garage door. Grabbing the sled, we climbed up the hill. We piled on the sled and slid down the hill, whole body shivering as we slid down the hill.

BRR BRR… the snowball froze in my hand as I was about to throw it at my brother, but I missed him when he tried to throw a snowball at me. He also missed. After that, I made snow angels. It became even colder, so I decided to go back inside. Settling in by the fireplace to warm up, I waited for my mom's hot chocolate. I added marshmallows, caramel and peppermint.

As I placed the tray of cookies and hot cocoa near the fireplace, a hot steam was coming from the mug. The fireplace was making crackling sounds. A nice warm blanket was wrapped all around me. The Christmas tree with the brightly shining ornaments lit up in the room. What a splendid Christmas. I hope to make many more Christmas memories in the years to come.





Girl in the Woods

By Sophia Kim



She's right there
In the dark
Staring at me
As if her life depends on it
She's right there
Still as a oaktree
As if waiting for someone to come
She's right there almost unnoticed
In the woods
She's right there
Like a trapped soul
She never leaves
If you just pay the slightest attention
She's right there in the woods

Haiku

By Dhruvarsh Talluri

The first snow of winter
A white blanket
Covering the ground
The cold sends everyone back to their homes



Stars

By Shreyan Mittal

Stars-
Sparkle in the moonlight
Trillions to count



Stand Strong

By Sydney Gitten

On a steep hillside
Evergreens powdered with snow
Stand strong in the wind
Down under your fabulous feet
Hope should be in all of us
That one day
We will produce a perfect planet

Producing a Perfect Planet

By Dhruvarsh Talluri

We will lift the land with love
We will make the world bright and bold
We will make a new knowing nation
The future will feel fair
With different individuals
Valuing each other
Regardless of skin, intellect or years
Our forefathers created this nation
Where people together make creations
In which our differences don't matter
But our character creates our judgment
Hope high in the sky

Periwinkle

By Chloe Zhang

A sea of periwinkle flowers brush through the lush fields
The fragrance of candles twirls through the air
Periwinkle clouds disperse through the vast sky
Bees hum around as they circle the periwinkles
Birds chirp as they land on the prickly stems
The sound of the summer breeze, swaying the flowers gently
The luscious macaroons crumble in my mouth
A dainty lavender flower on the tip of my tongue
Like ripe blueberries smearing against my taste buds
Periwinkle feels like smooth petals placed upon my fingers
Delicate butterfly wings fluttering upon my nose
As sharp as an edged crystal
Periwinkle is like loyalty, standing strong and calm
Periwinkles that graze your arms as you walk pass
Periwinkle feels as soft as a breeze
Periwinkle could be as sharp as crystal, or as soft as a petal.





Red

By Jeremy Wang

A ruby sparkling and gleaming like the sun
The red, dusty surface of Mars
A blood moon, looming over the sky

The deafening sound of a gunshot
Piercing sirens screaming and whirring
A lone wolf's howls haunting the night

The burning spiciness of peppers
Plump cherries, bursting with sweet juice
Fresh, cold watermelons, delicious and refreshing

Raging anger, bared teeth and a hostile glare
Contented joy, true happiness and delight
Restless energy, jumping and bounding

Red is energetic and seeking adventure,
Always ready for a challenge



Washington Wolves,

Please submit your creative pieces, poems, stories, memoirs, to our literary editors,
Kiara Pathak
30pathakk@millburn.org
or Annika Vadhavkar
30vadhavkara@millburn.org

Cricket World Cup

Continued from Page 7.



T20 World Cup 2022 top wicket takers, Sam Curran, finishes second and named Player of the Tournament.

In the final, Pakistan batted first and made 137 with the loss of 8 wickets which was a poor score with their highest scorer, Shan Massod scoring only 38. England, on the other hand, scored 138 in 19 overs with the loss of five wickets Ben stokes redeemed himself from the 2018 world cup final when he got hit for three sixes and lost the match for his team. But this time he won the match with a brilliant fifty. So England won the match. They were the first team to win an ODI world cup and a T20 world cup at the same time.

The Write Stuff

Continued from Page 10.

Where I'm From

By Eli deLaurier

I'm from all sports.
Playing, chanting, having fun.
I'm from the tall green grass
Tickling my legs as I run through it.

I'm from Bess and Craig
Always caring, and my two brothers
Being there for me when I need them.
I'm from Hanukkah with my family.
The blazing North Carolina sun on my back.

I'm from shredding on water skis and having fun sailing.
I'm from the water, the pool, the ocean,
And getting tan in North Carolina.
I'm from traveling
To San Diego to see my grandparents
To a seven-hour drive to North Carolina
To Maryland for a wedding.

I'm from the batting cage practicing my swing
And hitting baseballs with my Dad.
I'm from New York and the busy streets.
I'm from New Jersey and its peaceful nature.

From the Principal's Desk



Dear students,

As I walk the hallways of Washington School, I am gratified to see and hear the many levels of student participation in our school, from the music emanating from our band and orchestra to all the student work displayed on bulletin boards. I urge you all to continue to participate. As a Leader in Me school, every teacher and staff member here is dedicated to bringing out the leader in each and every student. It is my hope that you take advantage of all the many leadership opportunities and and activities offered here just for you. Keep looking at the Job Board posted right outside our Guidance Counselor's office, remember to log every book you finish reading into our school wide reading log...in short, participate!

This is your school. As the first trimester comes to a close, I hope you are all thinking of ways you can work a little harder, participate a little more, and make your time here as meaningful as possible. Make a new friend, join a new activity, just try something new and different.

My best wishes for you and your families for a blessed holiday season. I hope everyone has a relaxing and safe December break. Come back renewed, refreshed, and ready for 2023.

All the best,

Peter Mercurio
Principal, The Washington School
Publisher, *The Washington School Post*

Memoir: *Abuela's House* *by Naomi Guinoo*

I remember the past summers that I would run by the old dusty fountain in their backyard, run up the short staircase and ring the vintage doorbell. I can remember the echo I would hear as the footsteps followed. I always had a tradition that I would jump and hug the person who opened the door. It always was Abuela. She has short light brown hair, black glasses with wrinkles that look like you could stretch them and they would go far. Inside her house was like going back in time. To the left as we walked in, the entire wall was filled with speakers all the way up to the ceiling. A massive tower of speakers as if they were still all the rage today. And I remember when Abeulo would turn up all the speakers to the max especially at birthdays. If you think you know what loud is, think again.
He was a navy captain. He would tell stories of his maritime glories. I'm telling you he could go on for hours. He's what I want to be when I grow up. Brave, courageous, and absolutely funny. He gave the biggest hugs and had a smile as bright as the sun. Not to mention always telling us to finish our food (my cousin, Arielle, had a different response.) He and Abuela shared the house, but now it is just Abuela… but that's another story for another time.

The house was filled with so many rooms. On the outside it looked tiny like a two or three room house, but inside it's like a mansion. Eight, nine rooms – big enough to fit the entire family. Speaking of family, my uncles, aunts, and cousins are always nearby. My Uncle Henry, Auntie Jade, and my cousin Arielle live a few blocks away from the house so anytime we visit, they're the first car to pull up in front of Abuela's house. The second car to pull up is my Uncle Richard, Auntie Sherika, my cousins Saniya, Trinite, Naima, and Legacy. All together we're the happiest family ever. And anytime we had to leave, we always took a family picture. Kids in the front, adults behind, and our beloved house in back.

I never wanted to leave. I never wanted to say goodbye. But most of all, I never wanted anything to change.

Coming in our Next Issue:

*More teacher features including a piece on new teacher, Ms. Livingstone.

*A review of *The Sound of Music* starring Washington Wolf, Cody Braverman.

*Code Day reconstructed.

*Author Visits Revisited.

And more!

The staff, editors and reporters and faculty advisors would like to wish all the Washington School family the happiest of holidays, and a safe and relaxing December break.

We would also like to apologize in advance for any omissions or errors. In a project of this scope, mistakes will be made. We have tried our best....



From the Editor's Desk...

December, 2022



Dear readers,

Welcome to the first issue of T*he Washington School Post* for the 2022-2023 school year. I came across a quote by Jon Kabat-Zinn: "You can't stop the waves, but you can learn to surf." To me, he means that you can't control what happens in life, but you can control how you react to what is thrown your way. The quote by Jon Kabat-Zinn reminds me of Habit One, be proactive. To be proactive means that we are in charge of our decisions and reactions. This quote also reminds me of the beginning of the pandemic; how we could not control everything that happened to us, but how we chose to respond to all of the difficulties that were in store for us. As people start making their New Year's resolutions, keep in mind that you can control how you react to life, and not just what happens in it.

Have a great December break,

Sydney Gitten

Sydney Gitten
Editor-in-chief
The Washington School Post

The Last Laugh

Submit your comic strip to our editor-in-chief, Sydney Gitten at 30gittens@millburn.org if you'd like to see your comic strip published in our next issue.

