

Empowering Youth Through
Restorative JusticeSocial Circle hosts inaugural
Christmas ParadeEmpty Stocking Fund serving
Walton County for decades.Should 16-year-olds vote?
Opinion poll might surprise you.

Lip Sync Battle seeks to revive a 90's tradition

Monroe Area High School event promises to unite the community while benefitting local charities and organizations.
by Sarah Watts

Walton Youth Project eagerly announces the 2025 Lip Sync Battle! On April 19th, 2025, you could perform a song of your choosing on stage with your closest friends to raise money for either a local business or Walton Youth Project and other organizations in our community. Even if you have stage fright - like me! - there are still plenty of ways to participate in our talent-filled event! Please sign up at the link below if you would like a free table, to sponsor, or simply support local performers at the 2025 Lip Sync Battle by cheering them on from the crowd. I had the pleasure of helping at this event and watching the amazing performers last year, and one thing I know for sure, I would never miss this event. Our location will be at Monroe Area High School and in the meantime, visit the link below and prepare yourself for one of the best community events around! bit.ly/Lipsynclinks for more info!

A note from the Partnership for Families, Children, and Youth board member and Coach, Tim Kemp:

Putting on the Hits was a cherished tradition at Monroe Area High School. This annual event was well known in the 90's and showcased students, faculty, and community members lip-syncing to popular songs, complete with creative costumes and choreography. The event fostered school spirit and community engagement, providing a platform for participants to display their talents in a fun, supportive environment. We are excited that the Walton Youth Project is bringing it back.

A note from the organizing committee:

We would love to hear your stories from previous *Putting on the Hits*! Let us know what song you performed, what your favorite part was, or things our event organizers need to make sure and include for this year's event. We are proud that our host for year 2 will once again be former WYP Youth Advocacy Board member, previous *Putting on the Hits* performer and current WCSD Communications Director, Patrice Broughton!

Going forward, the Walton Youth Project would like to move the event yearly to other places in the county who would benefit from raising money. It could be schools, churches, community organizations, etc. All ticket sales go to the host, and we will help with all of the planning. Please let us know if you're interested in hosting next year!

waltonyab@gmail.com or 770-207-3174



We are also looking for live acts like Futon, who played last year at intermission.



Aunt Debb (left) and Patrice Broughton are returning this year as hosts.



above: Crossfit Compound Strength performs "Hangin' Tough"
below: Banner from 2024 at Carver Middle School.



If you contribute a story or photos from a previous event, (going all the way back to the 90's *Putting on the Hits*) we will give you a set of 2 tickets, and a chance to participate in the pre-show Red Carpet with the Aunt Debb Show!

Social Wellness Spotlight: Restorative Justice

By Tishia McRae

In Walton County, a quiet momentum is growing. It's one that could reshape how our community approaches youth development, leadership, and accountability. The Walton Youth Project has been working with stakeholders to gather information regarding the establishment of a Student Judiciary. It is a progressive plan for the disciplinary systems of our schools and juvenile justice framework. By promoting restorative justice and empowering students to take active roles in their communities, this initiative seeks to nurture a generation of leaders ready to tackle tomorrow's challenges.

At its core, the Student Judiciary will provide young people with a platform to mediate minor infractions and disputes among their peers. This youth-led approach not only fosters accountability but also builds a culture of fairness and understanding. A system where students are not subjected to disciplinary measures that are punitive, neglectful, and bury a child in a hole instead of giving them a hand up. Instead, they could be active participants in the resolution process. By engaging in this way, students gain critical life skills such as public speaking, conflict resolution, and decision-making skills that will serve them well beyond the classroom.



COBB COUNTY
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Two currently operating teen courts in Georgia

This initiative was initially a response to concerns over punitive disciplinary measures that ended up a burden on parents, not kids, probation officer shortages, one-strike policies and mandatory sentencing. It is being refined as a way to invest in our youth. Research from restorative justice frameworks consistently highlight the benefits of moving away from shame-focused systems toward practices that emphasize rehabilitation and community building. Similar programs in other parts of Georgia, such as Dublin and Athens, have demonstrated measurable success, with up to a 30% reduction in disciplinary referrals in their first year alone.

A good foundation has been laid by Mayor John Howard's specially appointed youth development committee. Visits to established student judiciaries, surveys with local stakeholders, and partnerships with organizations such as the Dublin Juvenile Court and the University of Georgia's Fanning Institute have laid the groundwork for success.

The benefits of the Student Judiciary extend far beyond the students it directly serves. Families, educators, and the community as a whole will experience the positive effects of a system rooted in restorative practices. By addressing infractions in a constructive manner, we're not only reducing recidivism but also fostering stronger community relationships built on trust and mutual respect.

The Walton Youth Project believes in the power of young people to lead. This initiative embodies our slogan, "Our Future, Our Responsibility," by equipping students with the tools to succeed while challenging them to take ownership of their actions and their community. It's a model of empowerment that we hope to replicate in neighboring communities, creating a network of youth-led restorative justice initiatives across the region.

As we embark on this journey, we invite the community to join us in supporting this transformative effort. Together, we can ensure that Walton County's youth not only understand the justice system but also actively contribute to making it better. It's time to put the future in the hands of those who will inherit it—and there's no better way to start than by giving them the responsibility, tools, and opportunities they need to thrive. Starting a program like this is a great step toward a stronger Walton County.

JOIN UNION CITY'S

TEEN COURT PROGRAM

This immersive and interactive program allows participants the opportunity to learn about Court Services from the role of a Judge, Solicitor, Jury Member, Bailiff, and Clerk.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- Must be a high school student enrolled in grades 10-12 in South Fulton County, or as a college freshman enrolled in the Metro Atlanta area
- Minimum of a 3.0 GPA or higher, with strong communication skills, teamwork ability, and a high level of professionalism

VISIT UNIONCITYGA.ORG TO VIEW PROGRAM INFORMATION AND APPLICATIONS. THE DEADLINE TO APPLY IS SEPTEMBER 29.



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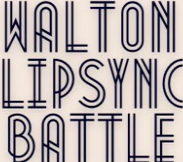
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APRIL 18, 2025 | 06:00 PM



More Lipsync
links below
including
videos from
last year,
sponsorship
and vendor
opportunities,
and more!



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More information walton.k12.ga.us/21stCentury.aspx Register bit.ly/LEAP_RISE_registration



**WANT YOUR
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Should 16 year-olds be allowed to vote?

by Ella Masterson

The argument of whether teenagers should have the right to vote is much older than the current high school students. As a matter of fact, as the perpetual wave of students coming in and eventually graduating continues, this debate often stays cemented within the walls of high schools. As a 16-year-old myself, I've heard the point made multiple times: "We'll be adults well before the next election, and the decisions the president makes will actually affect us." So, while no one can stop teenagers from having an opinion in general, one has to wonder how many of them wish they could actually put it forward. So, after asking 40 sixteen-year-olds and 40 adults the same question, "Do you think sixteen-year-olds should be allowed to vote?" I came back with some surprising statistics. First of all, out of the 40 students surveyed, 32 surprisingly said no, they should not be allowed to vote.

Out of the adults, 39 said no, and one said yes, which has led me to the conclusion that a lot of the opinions adults have against children voting, the teenagers themselves actually share. One 16-year-old, Catherine Langley, expressed, "They are very impressionable and have not had the adult experience yet, but also, it's kind of biased because parents could be like, Oh, you should vote for who I did." This is an excellent point considering the incredible impact parents have on their kids. Other points made by teenagers, for example, Kate Hollandsworth and Andrew Bridges, said teenagers shouldn't vote because they haven't "developed enough maturity" or "don't understand the world's problems yet." This is another opinion that should be considered, especially when the fact that some 16-year-olds haven't even taken a government class yet or simply don't have time to learn a lot about politics. Other teenagers even approached the policy with the opposite solution. Lukas Porter expressed that the voting age should be heightened to the drinking age of 21, and Caleb Garret said you should not be able to vote before you are able to be drafted.

- Continued on Page 6



Can you crack the code to unlock the door?

→	↓	→	↑	←	↓	←	↑	→	↓	←	↓	→
2	4	2	7	1	2	2	3	6	8	1	1	2

MAZE Choose the path that reaches the exit by using All The Steps shown in the guide above. The correct pathway Does Not overlap itself, cross letters and pass Outside the maze. **MAZE**

A		4		0		6			1
				3				5	
	3		C			1			
6		9					9		2
	B			1					
			7			10		8	
3		5			4				
			0				2		5
	8			3					
		2			1		7		EXIT

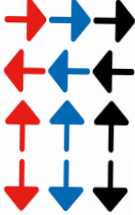
NOTES

CODE Use the numbers the correct path crosses to reveal the code that unlocks the exit door. **CODE**

CODE LETTER: CODE NUMBER:

**MAZE
RUN
ESCAPE
ROOM**

Can you follow the key to get through the maze?



Solution on back page

Social Circle's First-Annual Christmas Parade: a festive success!

by Sarah Watts

Nothing says Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays more than a charming small town Christmas Parade like Social Circle's inaugural Christmas Parade on December 6! Spirited participants from all over Walton County entered festive floats in the parade and made the first annual Social Circle Christmas Parade a wonderful success!

Anticipation grew as Holiday-themed decorated floats lined up on Memorial Street in preparation. Along the parade route, South Cherokee to West Hightower, eager citizens awaited the spectacular procession, and they were not disappointed. The crowd enjoyed seeing the Polar Express, a Griswold Christmas, Charlie Brown Christmas, the Minions, and of course, Santa and Mrs. Clause. Social Circle high school marching band added to the ambiance with their lively renditions of crowd-pleasing Christmas favorites. Our very own, Walton Youth Project, enjoyed participating in the parade dressed as characters from the Peanuts cartoon. Snoopy even made an appearance!

Evident throughout this event was the loving sense of community treasured by everyone.



WYP's Charlie Brown Christmas

Behind the scenes, representatives from the City of Social Circle evaluated each float and awarded fun superlatives to three of the entries. Even though winners were announced, the joy of being together and celebrating was never compromised. Congratulations to the Deep South Swarm Softball Team for winning "The Griswold" award, Social Circle Theatre for winning "The Holly Jolly" award, and Social Circle Christian School for winning "The Spirit of Christmas" award.

The success of this event is sure to prompt even more participation in the years to come, so if you missed Social Circle's Christmas Parade this year, be sure to stop by next year to enjoy this exciting evening with the warm residents of this community!

The Walton County Empty Stocking Fund

by Addison Gurcules

The Walton County Empty Stocking Fund is a non-profit organization impacting members of the community who need help with holiday meal boxes during the Christmas season. Dena Huff has been serving on the committee for 20 plus years and has made a great impact in the community. She became interested in joining this special organization because of their mission to help those in need. Dena says, "I am always interested in helping those who are less fortunate." The Empty Stocking fund receives donations from both United Way and private donations which Dena says are different every year. The normal budget they have is \$15,000- \$20,000 a year which they use to buy supplies. The organization also gets schools involved- they receive canned goods for families from schools. The Empty Stocking Fund helps out elderly people, low income families, and single parent families, and other people who may just need some extra help during this time. Every year the Stocking Fund helps 300-500 families, depending on the amount of applications they receive every year.

The ultimate goal of this organization is to assist families who are experiencing stress during the holiday season. The United Way and private donations help to fund the boxes that house canned goods collected by local schools during November. Volunteers help to load boxes and deliver them to those in need. Journey Church hosts this event and Pilot Club, along with many different kinds of people come to help out. Synovus Bank is a critical sponsor who leads this organization to success. If you want to get involved in this wonderful organization, you can volunteer to sort canned goods a week prior to delivery. Volunteers can also help deliver boxes on the day of distribution. This organization has impacted so many people's lives during the holiday season. Because of people like Dena Huff, families are able to enjoy each other's company with a little less stress!



Giftwrap, Tissues, and Bows, OH MY!

Reusable Fire Starters with The Eco Corner

Amberly-Aiana Ventura,
Environmental Correspondent

Holidays and special occasions hold significant importance for people, children and adults alike, creating cherished moments that last a lifetime. It is a time characterized by joyful gatherings with loved ones, stuffing your face with an array of delicious meals, and the pure joy of witnessing the happiness that thoughtfully chosen gifts bring to those we care about deeply. Although the holidays are designed for human enjoyment and connection, we are not the only ones affected by them.

Celebrations take a considerable toll on the environment, which is often overlooked in the midst of all the joy and festive activities. The holiday season tends to be quite wasteful when it comes to resources. Brightly.eco reports that Americans typically each generate around 5 pounds of waste each day, but this number alarmingly increases to 6.5 pounds, per person, daily during the holidays. One of the biggest contributors to this waste is paper products, particularly tissue and wrapping paper, which often ends up in landfills.

ARE YOU CURIOUS?

about how to tackle all that paper waste in a creative way? Well, look no further because I have a fun and simple craft idea just for you! It's a quick three-step project that anyone can easily do, regardless of crafting experience. What's this fantastic craft, you ask? It's a firestarter! It's perfect for the cold seasons, and they also make adorable stocking stuffers that are both practical and charming.

TO GET STARTED:

collect some toilet paper and paper towel roll tubes (another paper product that wastefully ends up in our landfills) and any flammable materials you have on hand. These can be lint from your dryer, used dryer sheets, wrapping paper, tissue, used paper towels (from drying your hands in the kitchen), magazines, newspapers, sales papers (that end up in the garbage anyway), straw from gift bags and boxes, etc. Next, once you have saved up all of your supplies, fold one end of the tube to close one end and use the flammable materials to fill the tube from the other end. Next, you simply fold the end of the tube over, and voila!

A DIY FIRESTARTER

If you want to give these as gifts, or just make your own stash more cute, you can make them look extra special by wrapping the tubes with your leftover wrapping or tissue paper with a few inches extra on the sides, twist and tie them off close to the tube with a bow made from twine, used curling ribbons and/or regular ribbons at both ends. Or just to keep things simple you can tie a bow around it. They will look like chic little gifts.



youtube.com/brightly2783



Then and Now: The Holidays, with LCA Head of School, Rachel Ernst

by Helena Meier

Taking a look 30 years ago, the world has changed drastically. Instead of having conversations at lunch tables, people's heads are stuck in their phones. Instead of going out to buy groceries, in one click of a button they are delivered to our house. While our world may be evolving and becoming more focused on technology, the one thing that brings us together again is the holidays, memories made every single year, and the memories cherished from years past.



1990's Thanksgiving Table

I recently had the privilege to talk to Head of School at Loganville Christian Academy, Rachel Ernst, and I asked her about her past Thanksgivings, what has changed, and what has stayed the same during the holidays. Mrs. Ernst has many Thanksgiving traditions and memories that she holds dear to her heart. For one she never misses a Thanksgiving at her mom's house. She said, "for as long as I have lived she has hosted at her house every Thanksgiving".

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FRESH PRODUCE BUYS!

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49¢

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8¢

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4:39¢

Potatoes

10:49¢

Cranberries

4:1

Grapes

4:1

Navel Oranges

6:1

"Whipping" CREAM

25¢

Libby's 2 1/2 Can Pumpkin

19¢

Sour Cream

39¢

Rice Mixes

49¢

Mandarin Oranges

4:1

Marshmallows

5:1

Princella 2 1/2 Can YAMS

24¢

Ripe Olives

4:1

Corn

6:1

Green Beans

6:1

Marshmallow Creme

4:1

Spreckels - 1 lb. Powdered or Brn. SUGAR

15¢

Choc. Chips

49¢

Sweet Pickles

49¢

Party Treats

3:1

Dressings

3:1

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Beer

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Left: 90's Thanksgiving grocery advertisement. Right: 2024 advertisement. Some things change, others remain the same.

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US NET 1.0 LB BAG Full Apples

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\$3.39

Places can have such a special meaning during the holidays, especially when we gather somewhere with loved ones we haven't seen all year. As everyone knows, food is the staple of Thanksgiving and something everyone looks forward to all year. Mrs. Ernst has one dish in particular that holds special meaning to her and her family. A sweet potato souffle is a dish she has loved at Thanksgiving after Thanksgiving and her aunt made it every year. This year Mrs. Ernst was put in charge over the souffle and it held such great memories of family, especially her dear aunt.

Below: YouTube Thanksgiving recipe channel. Above: A 1990's

This Thanksgiving was especially memorable since the day before there was a memorial service held for her aunt and there was triple the family at this year's Thanksgiving feast then there has been in years. Mrs. Ernst said, "it was a sweet thing to come out of a sad thing".

Although some things stay the same, there are things that have changed for Mrs. Ernst over the years. She mentioned to me how "having children certainly changes the holidays". She told me that although times are different it is sweet to watch them enjoy the holidays. I asked her about the parade and how that has changed. She has noticed how she does not recognize as many people performing on the Macy's Day Parade. It is clear Mrs. Ernst values every single Thanksgiving she spends with family. Her values of love and family are crucial to her and will continue to live on throughout her family.

Editor's Note: This series will feature a different aspect of generational communication each month. Let us know if you're interested in being interviewed by a teen YAB member.

quick read

or read-aloud

The Midnight Marshmallow Hunt

AI Generated. Edited by WYP Staff

Late one summer night, just as the moonlight spilled into the cozy backyard, Ella and her little brother Sam were snuggled in their sleeping bags by the firepit. The stars twinkled above them, and their dog, Max, wagged his tail happily, enjoying being outside with his family.

"It's time for s'mores!" Sam announced, reaching for the bag of marshmallows. His face froze. "Wait...where are the marshmallows?"

Ella leaned over to check. The bag was gone! All that remained was a chewed-up piece of plastic near Max's paws.

"Max!" Ella groaned. The golden retriever tilted his head innocently, as if to say, What marshmallows?

Sam gasped. "No marshmallows? How will we make s'mores?"

"We'll just have to go on a marshmallow hunt," Ella said, standing up. She grabbed a flashlight and handed Sam her headlamp. "Max, you're coming too. Maybe your nose can help us."

The trio set off, determined to find replacements for the lost treats. Their first stop was the kitchen. Sam opened the pantry and pulled out a box of crackers. "What if we used these instead? Marshmallows are squishy, crackers are crunchy... close enough?"

Ella wrinkled her nose. "Crunchy s'mores? No way. Let's keep looking."

Next, they crept into the living room. Sam shined his headlamp under the couch. "What about cotton balls? They're white like marshmallows."

Ella snatched the bag from him. "Sam! You can't roast cotton balls over a fire. They'll smell awful, and they're not edible!"

They walked up the stairs, and peeked into the laundry room. Sam held up a white sock. "What if we—"

"No!" Ella hissed, yanking the sock away. "We're not eating socks!"

Max sniffed the air and barked excitedly, wagging his tail. He bounded out the door and into the garage. The kids followed him, barely keeping up. Max nosed a forgotten tote bag in the corner and started digging. Out popped a bag of marshmallows, perfectly intact!

"Max, you genius!" Ella cheered, grabbing the bag and holding it up triumphantly. Sam hugged the dog tightly. "You saved s'mores night!"



Back at the firepit, the marshmallows were roasted to gooey perfection. Sam squished his between chocolate and graham crackers, while Ella enjoyed hers charred and crispy on the outside.

"Best marshmallow hunt ever," Sam said, taking a huge bite. Max wagged his tail, clearly proud of his part in the adventure.

As the fire crackled and the stars winked above, the kids leaned back in their sleeping bags, full of marshmallows and laughter. Max flopped beside them, his nose resting on Ella's knee.

And just as they started to drift off to sleep, Sam whispered, "Next time, let's hide the marshmallows before Max finds them."



JOIN US NEXT MONTH FOR ANOTHER GREAT STORY!

Middle Grades
6th - 8th

quick read

THE MYSTERIOUS ISLAND



AI Generated: Edited by WYP Staff

They glanced toward their home. Warm lights flickered behind closed curtains, their parents likely finishing up dinner, unaware of the dangerous adventure the twins had just survived. It would have been so easy to barge inside and spill everything, but when Mia and Alex exchanged glances, they knew neither of them was ready to explain something they hardly understood themselves.

Instead, they collected their courage and walked slowly up the beach, the surf rolling gently behind them. Near the dunes, they shoved the old rowboat into a cluster of tall grasses, wiping it down so no one would notice its recent use. Every so often, the compass gave a little shiver, its needle spinning in circles before pointing—directly toward the island they had fled.

“Look at that,” Alex said with a nervous laugh. “It’s like it wants us to go back.”

Mia tucked a strand of sea-salt hair behind her ear and narrowed her eyes at the compass. “Eventually, maybe we will. But not before we learn more. If there’s a curse or a secret... or something worse... we should find out what we’re dealing with.”

They continued up the path toward their house. The sun dipped lower, painting the horizon with streaks of orange and purple. Wind rustled through the beach grass, and for an instant, Mia thought she heard a distant echo—like the low rumble they had heard in the temple, only fainter.

“Tomorrow, let’s see if there’s anything about the island in the town library,” Mia suggested quietly. “Old books, local legends, maybe an old fisherman who knows something. Anything that can tell us more about this place—and this compass.”

Alex nodded, pressing the makeshift stick-turned-weapon close to his side. “We’ll find out what we can. But promise me one thing: if it starts getting... weird, we tell Mom and Dad, okay?”

Mia swallowed, thinking of the glowing carvings in the temple walls, the twisting trees, the eerie feeling of being watched. “Okay,” she said softly. “Deal.”

They reached their front door just as the porch light flicked on. For a moment, they paused. Beyond that door was home, normalcy, safety. But each of them felt a subtle pull in their hearts—an urging to return to the island’s mystery.

Mia slipped the compass into her pocket, its glow now muted but still thrumming with an uncanny energy. She and Alex shared one last look, half-fear, half-thrill. Whether it was a curse, a secret civilization, or something beyond their wildest imaginations, they were in this together.

“This summer just changed everything,” Mia whispered, as if confessing to the night.

Alex sighed but managed a shaky smile. “One thing’s for sure,” he said. “It won’t be boring.”

Inside, their parents called them for supper, their voices warm and comforting. Mia and Alex stepped over the threshold and closed the door behind them, knowing full well it wouldn’t remain shut for long. Somewhere across the water, hidden by mist and ancient secrets, an island waited—waiting for the twins who had awakened it to retur. And in Mia’s pocket, the compass’s glow was a silent promise: there might be more adventures ahead yet.

JOIN US NEXT MONTH FOR A BRAND NEW STORY, PUZZLE, OR ART WORK

THE SHADOWS' WARNING...

The darkness wasn't as absolute as it had first seemed. As Liam and Amira stood frozen, the faint outline of a narrow pathway began to glow under their feet, pulsing softly like a heartbeat. The air smelled of damp earth and something faintly metallic, and the sound of their breathing was the only thing breaking the eerie silence.

"We should leave," Amira whispered, her voice trembling.

Liam shook his head. "There's no way out. The door locked behind us."

He held up the notebook, hoping it would offer some kind of guidance. As before, the pages began to shift, letters rearranging themselves until new text appeared:

to leave the path is to invite the shadows. Follow the light.

"Shadows?" Amira asked, stepping closer to Liam as if proximity would shield her.

"I don't know, but I don't think we should stick around to find out," Liam replied. He started forward, his sneakers crunching on the glowing path. The sound felt too loud, like it echoed off unseen walls.

Amira hesitated but followed, glancing nervously over her shoulder. The shadows around them seemed to move, stretching and twisting like they had lives of their own.

As they continued down the path, strange carvings began to appear on the walls—twisted faces frozen in expressions of anger or fear. Liam tried to ignore them, focusing on the notebook, but Amira couldn't tear her eyes away.

"Do you think those are... real?" she asked, her voice barely audible.

Liam didn't answer. He didn't want to think about the possibility.

They walked for what felt like hours, though it could have been minutes. The path finally opened into a vast underground chamber lit by an otherworldly blue light. In the center of the room stood a pedestal, and on it was a small, intricately carved box.

"That has to be the next clue," Liam said, stepping toward the pedestal.

Amira grabbed his arm. "Wait. What if it's a trap?"

Liam hesitated, but the notebook flipped open in his hand, as if impatient with their indecision.

The new message read:

The box holds the key to your next step. But beware—each choice carries a price.

Echoes in the Lab: Pt 2.

"What does that mean?" Amira asked, her grip tightening on his arm.

"I guess we're about to find out," Liam said. He approached the pedestal, his heart pounding. With trembling hands, he reached for the box and lifted the lid.

Inside was a single piece of paper, folded neatly. Liam unfolded it, revealing another message:

the shadows are watching. Choose wisely

Before Liam could process the warning, the shadows in the chamber began to shift. They coalesced into figures with glowing, hollow eyes that seemed to pierce right through them. The temperature plummeted, and a low whisper filled the room, though the words were impossible to make out.



Amira grabbed Liam's arm. "We have to go!"

"But the notebook—"

"Forget the notebook! Let's move!"

The figures began to advance, their movements slow but deliberate. Liam stuffed the paper into his pocket and clutched the box as they sprinted back toward the path. The glowing line beneath their feet flickered, and the walls seemed to close in around them.

"Faster!" Amira shouted, her voice echoing down the corridor.

Just as the last of the light threatened to fade, they burst through another door and into the forest clearing. The air felt cool and alive, and the crimson sky from earlier had softened into a twilight blue.

You can't leave. Not yet. Not until you finish.



Liam collapsed onto the ground, clutching the box like it was the only solid thing in the world. Amira sank down beside him, her face pale.

"Did... did we win?" she asked between gasps for air.

Liam didn't answer. He opened the box again, but this time, it was empty. The notebook in his other hand was also blank, every word and clue vanished.

"What was the point of all that?" Amira asked, frustration creeping into her voice.

Liam shook his head. "I don't know. But I don't think it's over."

As if in response, the faint sound of whispers carried through the trees. The shadows of the forest stretched unnaturally long, and the air seemed to hum with anticipation.

Amira looked at Liam. "We need to get out of these woods."

"Yeah," Liam agreed, rising to his feet. He tucked the notebook under his arm, glancing nervously at the shifting shadows around them. "But something tells me this game isn't going to let us go that easily."

Together, they turned and headed toward the edge of the forest, the whispers growing fainter but never quite disappearing. Somewhere in the distance, the box in Liam's hand began to glow faintly, its carvings shifting like a puzzle waiting to be solved.

They hadn't won. Not yet. There was one last message.

the game has just begun



This story is AI written and edited by the WYP News Staff. Look for the next installment in the next edition of the WYP News.

JUSTICE: *Cont. from page 2*

Obviously, this shows a lot of maturity from this group of kids which shows that they are more self-aware than they are often given credit for. As a matter of fact, both people who said yes and no (Mrs. Corrente who said no, and Caroline Dury, a teenager who said yes) agree that “teenagers have valid opinions and deserve to be heard.” So it is possible that teenagers and adults are not as different as one might think, even with differing views. Tisha McRae, the Executive Director of the Walton Youth Advocacy Board and also the only adult in support of teenage voting, says, “She firmly supports it” and “proposes granting a learner’s permit in local elections first,” not to mention, as she brought up that, “in Takoma Park, Maryland 16-year-olds and 17-year-olds have been voting 2013, with positive outcomes.” This other side of the argument reveals that although it is an opinion that is not carried by many, it should still be considered. Overall, the outcome of this experiment shows that although teenagers are often portrayed as irresponsible, the maturity shown by the surveyed group proves otherwise. The results seem conclusive that teenagers should not vote, but that does not mean that they don’t have knowledge, opinions, and self-awareness, even if they do tremendously stupid things. It, of course, should be taken into account that the group surveyed was a specific group of teenagers and the interviews were not randomized or anonymous, however; with the number of students eager to share their opinions, if it is true they are not ready to vote, then it can at least be said these students have a bright future.

We would like to hear from you! Please let us know what to include in our next issue. interviews, businesses, issues, we look forward to your input! bit.ly/WYPNewsfeedback.



WALTON YOUTH ADVOCACY BOARD



We'd like to share a little about ourselves. We're a group of 27 high-school and college-age students from Walton County. We are youth-led and advised by an adult board of directors. Membership applications open in April, interviews in May, and we may serve on the board from 10th grade - age 21 if we choose to. We started this paper with the goal of creating reliable youth-generated content relevant to Walton County families. We are mindful of all viewpoints, respect privacy, and honor our differences. We protect each other. We will never post a photo without approval, we are careful when posting last names of minors, we are mindful of "sharenting" and we strive for constant improvement. We hope you enjoy our publication. Please email or text your suggestions, article ideas, etc.

walton.youthproject@gmail.com, or call 770-207-3174.

Thank you for reading!

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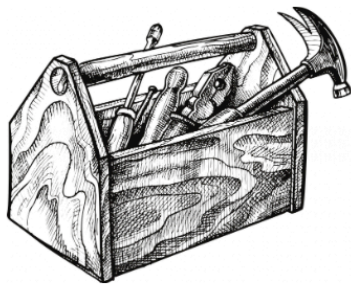


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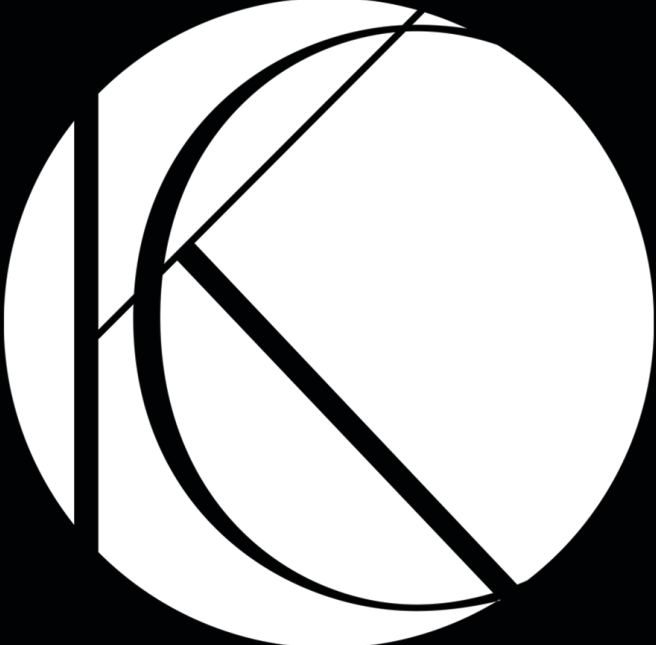


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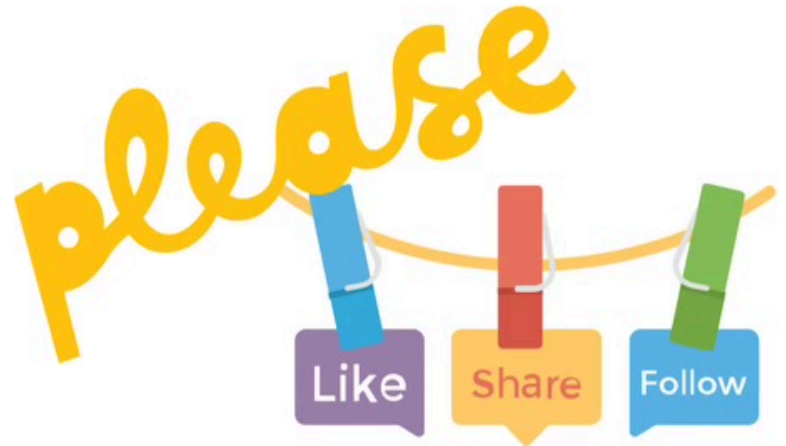
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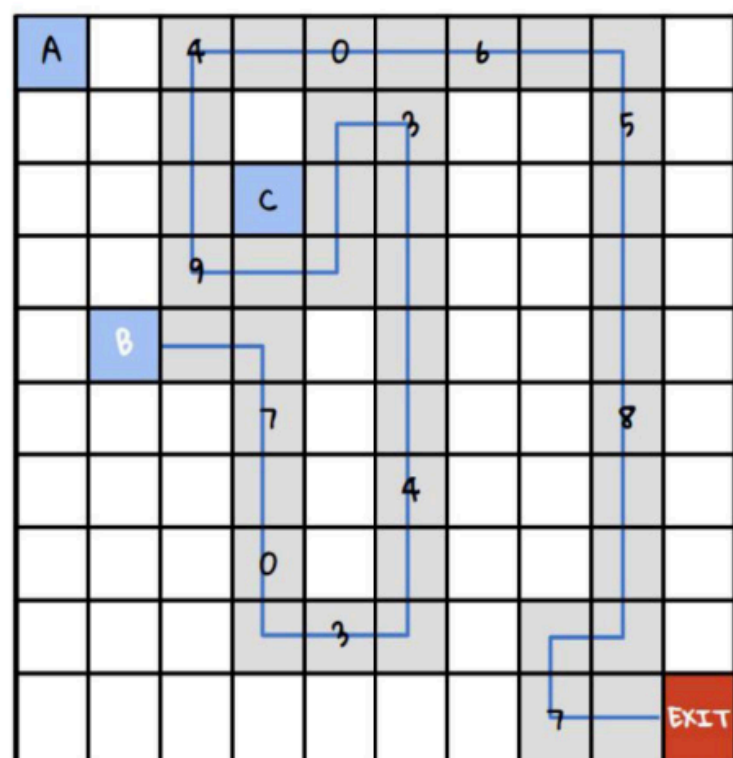
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