

The Rambler

RIVERVIEW GARDENS HIGH SCHOOL * 1218 SHEPLEY DRIVE * ST. LOUIS, MO 63137 * VOLUME I * ISSUE I



RGHS New'Zine



"It's a new day, it's a new day, it's a new life" ... it's a new 'zine (photo by Desiree Thomas). Be sure to check out Desiree's pix in the center spread, pp 25-26!

Welcome *Rambler* reader!

By Lady Mariposa

Welcome to the readings of *The Rambler Rams*! A publication unlike any other, we call ourselves a "new 'zine," which means we are more than news or a magazine.

We are an outlet for the young, an insight for the elder.

Most importantly, this publication is our chance to grow and expand the way we think, entirely.

Not just for you, but for everyone around you, to feel something. Something that's new. Something that's bright.

And most notably, something that is worth your time and attention.

Simply put, *The Rambler* is important to our world, the one we live in, and walk around in, every day.

We here have something to say, so listen up! Let the *Rambling* begin!

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The Rambler cover art by Deanna Taylor. Cover design by Desiree Thomas.

insideSCOOP...

Explorers	3
Visitor's Pass	4
Losing Battle?	5
Food	6-8
Prom Pix	9-10
Profiles in Learning	11-12
Fashion Forward	13-14
Drama Schooled	15-16
Drill Team	17-18
Graduation	19
Sports	20-22
Poetry Pros	23
OP-ED:RGHS Report Card	24
Photo Op-Ed	25-26
Reporters' Notebooks	27-29
Memory Wall	30



Seniors lookin' sharp! Jaylen Davi (top); Javant Watson (close right); and Laila Williams (far right) dress to impress for Senior Lunch.



Intrepid travelers find adventure

By *Rambler* Staff

In coming days, Riverview Gardens students and faculty will head south ... far south to Costa Rica.

It will be the first trip in a couple of years because of the pandemic, and it will be led by Mr. Josh Gaither, biology and zoology teacher, and Senora Abena Bradley-Madkins, Spanish teacher.

In June 2023, the two faculty members are taking a group of students to Panama, and in 2024, they just announced they plan to head to Belize.

At least one *Rambler* staffer has signed up for the Panama trip, so stay tuned to learn more about these adventures from the travelers themselves.

If you are a student and would like to go on one of these trips, contact Mr. Gaither at jgaither@rgsd.k12.mo.us or Senora at abradleymadkins@rgsd.k12.mo.us.

In the meantime, if you want to view a video about the program, click this [LINK](#).



Cori Bush is in the House



Photos by Talisha Crawford and Ariyah Roundtree.

By Talisha Crawford and *Rambler* Staff

U.S. Representative Cori Bush (D-MO) visited Riverview Gardens High School to speak to students about her time as an activist and a congresswoman.

Bush urged students to get involved in making change happen for themselves and the larger community.

She discussed her work providing funding to her constituent community organizations, ensuring that those in the most need got funds first.

Bush was invited by Social Studies Teacher Dr. Angela Early. Her AP government students led questions and then Bush spoke to students about a range of issues and how she uses "the power of the pen" to

work for her constituents.

After the talk, she shared breakfast and posed for photos with students, faculty and administrators.

Bell chimes in about need for prosecutors of color

By *Rambler* Staff

St. Louis County Prosecutor Wesley Bell spoke to students at Riverview Gardens High School about current laws, the need for prosecutors of color and issues of profiling, drug use and other topics.

Bell spoke about individual rights during a search and in dealings with police. He also answered a range of questions involving cell



phones and technology and the law, what is private and what is retrievable.

He spoke of the need for prosecutors of color and representative of minority groups as a



Photos by *The Rambler* staff.

whole. He explained that it is his office and his job to determine when and under what circumstances criminal

charges are filed.

JAG Specialist Timothy Londoff invited Bell to speak to students.

Losing Battle?

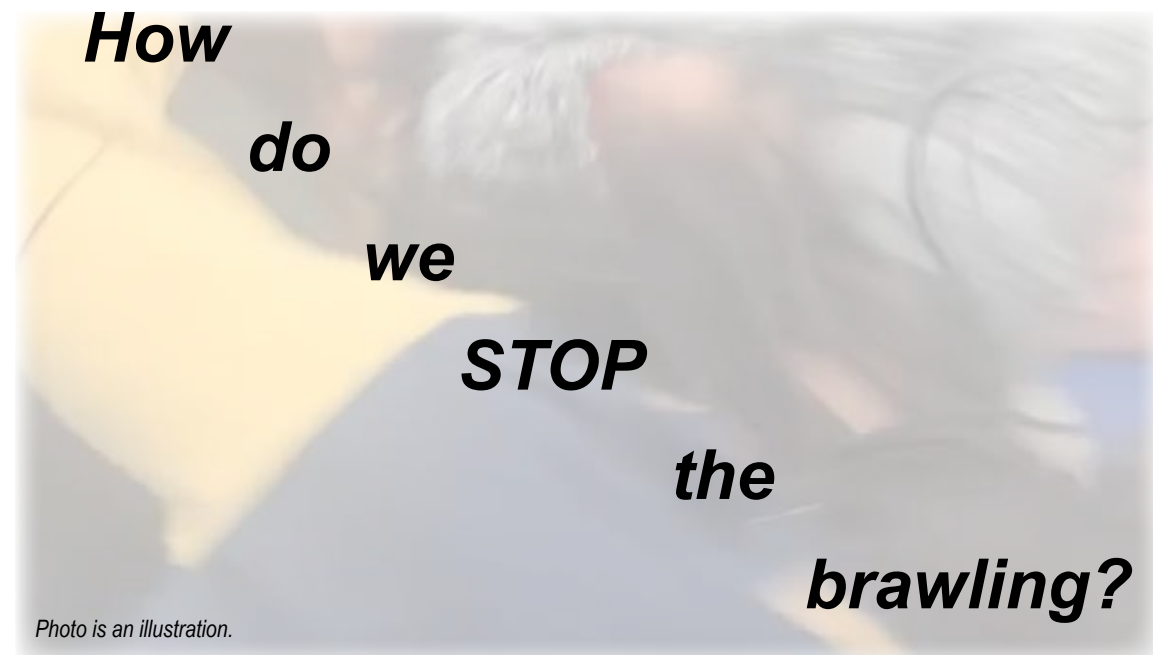


Photo is an illustration.

By Sanchez Smith and **Rambler Staff**

Recent, mass shootings at a school in Texas and a grocery store in Buffalo, NY have raised concerns about school shootings and hate crimes directed at People of Color.

These tragedies have been well-documented in the media. What is more immediate and happens far too often at Riverview Gardens High School is not shootings thankfully, but fights.

No one needs to be told that we have had fights in the hallways, the lunch spaces, the bathrooms, the classrooms and on the buses.

“There has been an increase in fighting which we have not seen before,” Assistant Principal Dr. Monica Perry said.

So why is this happening?

Fighting in schools is a nationwide problem. In the fall, *Washington Post* reporters interviewed Christina Conolly, who “chaired the School Safety and Crisis Response Committee of the National Association of School Psychologists.”

“The toxic stress of everything going on during the pandemic, it’s building up with kids — and adults,” Conolly told *The Post*. “Now that they’re around each other again, they need to relearn how to do school again.”

Sophomore A’Mire Gray said he believes that the pandemic is part of the problem, but there are other explanations, too.

“People wanna be tough, show for the females, and a lot of people haven’t been able to do anything for

a while,” he said, “This is the first year off of the pandemic, and they got a lot of pent up energy.”

Perry agrees it is not just the pandemic, but she sees more going.

“I do not believe that the behavior is solely linked to the pandemic,” she said. “I see a lack of social skills and a link to social media and scholars not knowing how to solve their problems without fighting as a first resort.”

So what is being done here at Riverview?

“What we are doing to remedy the situation is to incorporate restorative justice practices such as peer mediation, boxing therapy, and conflict resolution training for scholars, as well as trauma training for staff.”

Faculty, administrators and staff have been involved in Alive and

Well, a trauma-informed approach to teaching and operating an educational institution.

Perry said this is only the beginning.

“Moving forward,” she said, “we hope to have a holistic ISS component that focuses more on character education and social emotional components and continue with the restorative justice practices and more parental involvement because they are critical to this whole component and I hope that will help alleviate some of these challenges.”

In May, the district notified teachers and staff that the district is offering a restorative practices workshop.

According to an email from district administrators, “Trauma-informed practices were the first step toward supporting the mental well-being of

our school community, the next step is Restorative Practices.”

Specifically, the email noted that, “Restorative Practices are ways for the school community to build relationships, problem-solve and learn. In this approach, relationships are the most important way we learn about the world and ourselves. A Restorative Practice school community embodies, in both belief and practice, the following:

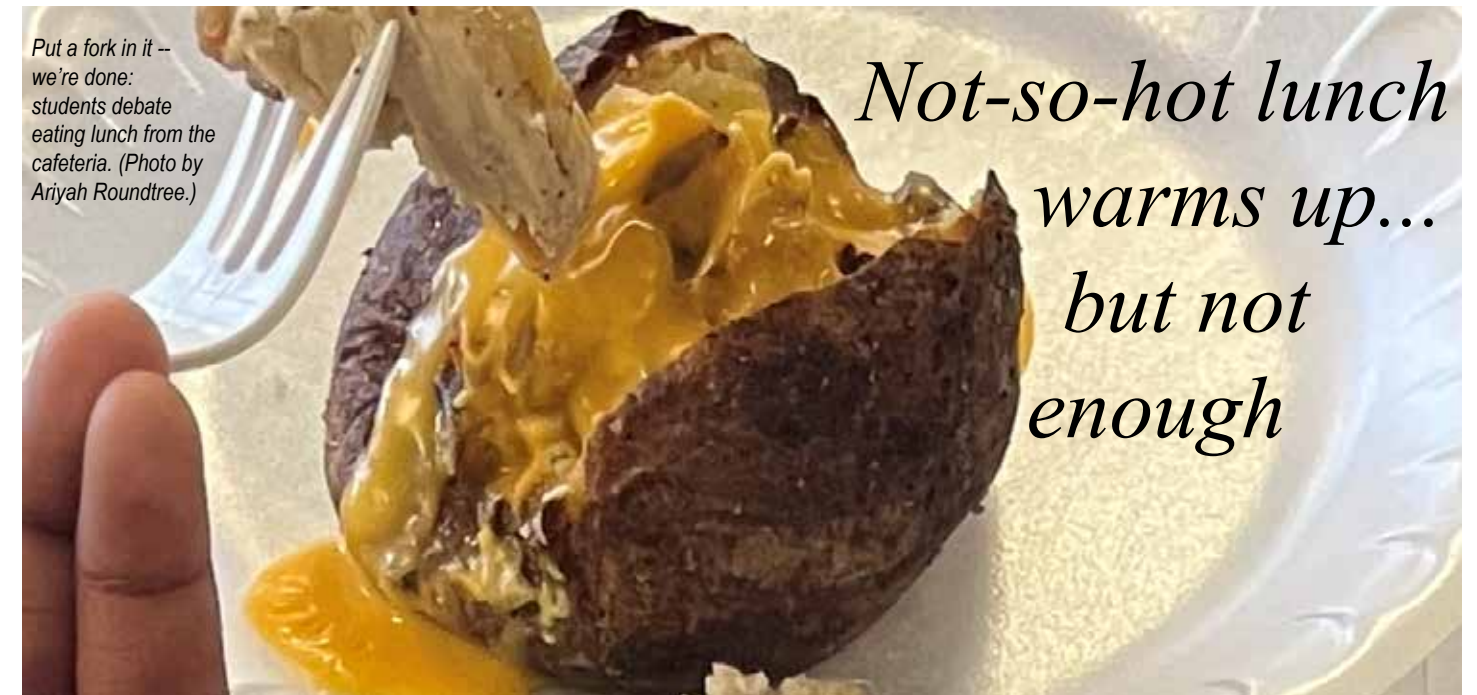
We are all connected to one another.

All of us want to have good, healthy relationships with others.

We all have talents and gifts we bring to school.

It takes time, habits, support and consistency to build and maintain positive relationships, practices, impulses, and mindsets that nurture positive relationships.”

Grub Hubbub



By Tatyana Bass & **Rambler staff**

Some students at Riverview Gardens High School say the food options, quality and quantity have improved in the last weeks of the school year, but many agree that the district has a long way to go.

“The food has been bad,” said Junior Julian Foster as he bit into a fried chicken sandwich. “This is decent — that doesn’t mean it’s good.”

Still better is better than worse, said Junior Tyrae Cherry. A few months ago, Cherry and her classmate, Jonathan Clay, refused to even go down to the cafeteria. They had many complaints:

“The food is not cooked all the way,” he said. “The burgers be all pink on the inside, and the bun’s just soggy.”

Clay and Cherry, like so many others, also complained about the portions being small.

“You get like 5 or six nuggets,” Cherry said. “That’s just not enough.”

“Ya, you need at least like 10,” Clay said.

The two disagree about when complaints began. He said the food was fine when they were freshman, (before the pandemic). Cherry said it never good.

“Like for real, they shouldn’t even be able to give us that food,” Clay said. “If you wouldn’t give it to your mamma, don’t try to give it to me.”

Their complaints extend beyond food to drink

choices. Both students said they don’t like milk.

“Why we gotta drink milk?” Clay said. “They could leave us bottles of water or something.”

Some students, like one of the authors of this story, are lactose intolerant. What are those students supposed to do?

Cherry said she would like to see a daily choice of three options – two meat-based options and one vegetarian. She said she would be happy to see a choice of burgers, nachos or vegetarian lasagna one day and then chicken, fish sticks or a big salad for another. Whatever the school makes, Clay added that he hopes it will be well-cooked.

The complaints have reached administrators, including Mr. Ishmael Sistrunk, the district’s executive director of communications; Mrs. Traci Nave, RGHS principal; and Dr. Monica Perry, assistant principal.

“Those concerns have been expressed weekly to the Central Office and the Director of Food Services,” Perry. “We have noticed some improvement in the quantity and quality of food over the past six to seven weeks, and we hope that will continue.”

In a [VIDEO ANNOUNCEMENT](#) Sistrunk encouraged students and staff to take a survey about food.

“We have a food service survey that is coming out,” he said. “This is going to be for scholars, this is going to be for parents, this is going to be for staff members to let us know how we can improve our breakfast and lunch program.”

Pizza to pazzazz, St. Louis puts the 'eats' in greats!



Juniors Zannia Holman and Dria Smith share a square of Imo's. (Photo by Ariyah Roundtree.)

By Lady Mariposa, Joycelyn Johnson, Timothy Williams

My new favorite spot is the one and only **Healthy Habits Nutrition!** Located at 3234 Parker Rd. in Florissant, MO, this exciting cafe really speaks to me because I'm a foodie, and good food makes me excited!

Healthy Habits Nutrition serves fresh smoothies, famous teas, and great smoothie bowls. The smoothies consist of things like strawberries, kiwi, pineapple, blackberries, and of course ... oranges! They even have a special drink that is served with an entire orange! That drink is called the "Sunrise Sweet"!

Staying true to their name, Healthy Habits also serves proteins, such as flaxseed and granola that can be added into your smoothie!

While a lot of their dishes have fruits and veggies and proteins, they also serve one of my favorites – loaded toast! It comes on fresh bread, along with fruits of your choice, and a topping of protein, sugar, or more fruits! It's delicious!

Healthy Habits Nutrition is a great place to eat and I would recommend it to anyone who is wishing to eat better. And if you're not, still eat their food – too good to pass up! – **LM**

Nephews Grille is a soul food restaurant that offers a taste of everything. They've got seafood, chicken, potatoes and more. And their desserts! Simply Wow!

Now in the interest of full honesty, my dad is really close friends with the owners. But that makes no difference because the food is so good!

I love the seasonings in the chicken quesadillas, and their potatoes are my favorite! There's baked potatoes, skinned potatoes, mashed, fries, skillet potatoes – you get the idea!

Just so you know, they've got two locations: 8624 Frost Ave. in Berkeley and the other one is downtown at 5753 Page Blvd. When you really want some good, filling food with plenty to bring home, check them out! – **JJ**

I grew up on **Imo's Pizza**. Now that I think about it, my first pizza I ever remember eating was Imo's.

I go to the Imo's that I call "the one on the circle," but for everyone else, it is located at 1192 Riverview Blvd., which is about a 10-minute drive from school.

It has been there forever, as far as I can remember, and for me, it got me hooked on pizza and now, it is the only way I like my pizza to be made.

They are the ones who put me on to thin crust. I like that crunch – it is the best part.

The Imo's I go to does not put on too much sauce like some places. Because they don't use too much, their pizza is more tough and crunchy. Some people may not like that, but that's how I like my pizza.

The most important thing about Imo's is the cheese. And cheese makes a big difference!

Other places use mozzarella, but Imo's uses provolone, which is a mixture of swiss, provolone and cheddar **cheeses**. They always put a lot on wherever I go and make it tuff!

Imo's is known as "The Square Beyond Compare." That's because it is like no other.

I don't know anyone in St. Louis who has not tried Imo's But you haven't yet, you ARE missing out. – **TW**



Sophomores Jannah Holland and Steve Jones enjoy lemonades made and delivered by Brew Crew. (Photo by Christiana Cooper.)

Brew Crew delivers

By Raven Steele

It wasn't my intention, but the sweet, steamy smell of french vanilla almost compelled my \$5 bill right out of my hand.

I thought of the snacks I had planned to buy later. But now I found myself standing in the doorway of Room 310 eyeing the Brew Crew counter, inhaling that sweet smell of French Vanilla.

As I approached the door, I saw two students quickly demanding three lemonades – and not just any lemonade – raspberry flavored.

I realized that it must be that good. Good enough that a friend who couldn't make it down to Building 3 still wanted to place an order. Good enough that he was willing to give someone else his money to get him one. Good enough that any chance to get one should not be missed.

"It's no way I could get a regular lemonade without a raspberry one," one of the students at the counter said I was convinced I had to try something for myself. Indecisive, I hesitated on what to order.

I weighed by options: On the one hand, I had found the Brew Crew from the smell of hot french vanilla. On the other, everyone there was ordering lemonades.

Before I could ask even a single question, Mrs.

Harris addressed me. I guess she could tell by my expression that I wasn't in a familiar place. Instinctively, she handed me an order form with a variety of refreshments and brews.

For a second I almost had it, I almost had a decision of what I wanted.

Although I had my mind surely set on a French Vanilla, it was almost impossible to decide. Seeing so many options!

I wouldn't mind a Peach or Raspberry Tea, I thought.

I've always been a fan of French Vanilla, but the mocha that was brewing almost sold me.

The bell was almost in front of me, and I still hadn't made a decision. As I read swiftly over my order form I search for prices:

- \$2 for every brew and special,
- \$1.50 for Tea,
- and \$1 for original lemonade.

I still couldn't decide, and it was almost time to leave.

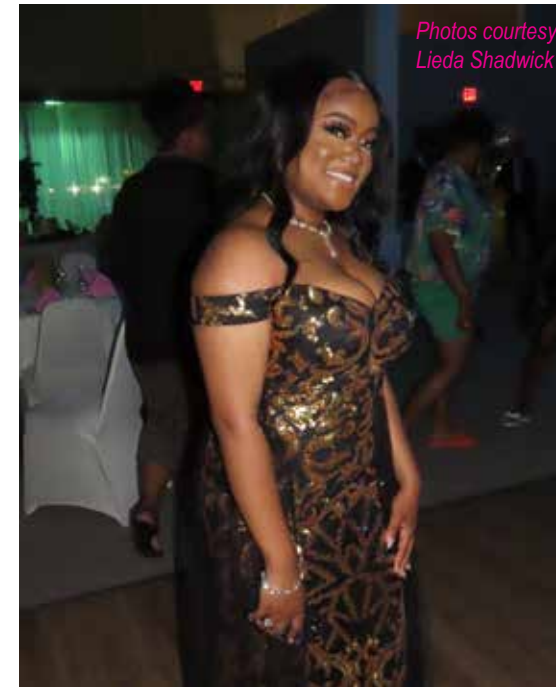
So I did the most sensible thing, given what I knew.

"Can I have a lemonade please?" I said. Afterall, I was sure to come back!

Editor's Note:

After he wrote his story, Raven Steele, junior, moved, and sadly must get his brews somewhere else.

Before he left, he did get to try all of the drinks he was craving, particularly that French Vanilla latte that led him to Brew Crew in the first place.



Cell-le-brate Good Times! Come On!!!

By **Rambler Staff**

Prom 2022 was everything it was supposed to be. Fun and food, dresses and dancing.

Mykale Gladden, and Junior King was Jonathan Clay.

Also on the court were Kara Johnson and Javant Watson.

Seniors were greeted by very excited staff, faculty and administrators who were thrilled to see all of the gorgeous gowns, glamorous guys and big smiles.

Through the magic of Ms. Christina Atkinson, the Bridgeton Banquet Center sparkled like a jewel. Seniors and juniors dined on a sumptuous buffet before kickin' it on the dance floor and posing for pix on the 360 photo platform.

Senior King was Donavin Hodges and Senior Queen was Naudia Jackson.

Junior Queen was





Making a Difference:

- Junior class President
- Named one of the 2022 Living Legend Heroes by *Be The Change*
- Class Ambassador
- Member, Student Council
- Member, National Honor Society
- Guest of Honor, Little Bit Foundation's inaugural gala
- Activist working with U.S. Representative (D-MO) Cori Bush



Q & A with Precious B

By Journei Cole

Ram: What are your biggest accomplishments?

PB: Becoming student Ambassador, becoming the Class of 2023's President. Also representing Riverview Gardens High School at a The Little Bit Foundation Gala. And with everything that has happened this year, just being here.

Ram: You obviously love school. What is your favorite part about the school and being at Riverview Gardens?

PB: It's the energy. It's like a family here.

Ram: What made you interested in activism and how did you get started?

PB: As a junior that does not just attend Riverview Gardens High, but also North Technical High School, learning about African American and political attributes has always been my passion for my future. Certainly, triumphs and tragedies that are going around in my environment play a big part in me and it motivates me to cultivate mindsets to make a difference in our society.

Photos, clockwise from top left: St. Louis County Humanity St. Louis area diaper bank; with U.S. Congresswoman Cori Bush at a celebration in honor of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.; Speaking to students at the Empassioned Youth St. Louis program; and attending the Little Bit Foundation's inaugural gala as the guest of honor in 2019.



The Politician in her own words ...

Being a young individual does not mean our voices should not be heard. Stories about police brutality, crimes, daily news, presidency, and voting are extremely important.

I ask myself: "What can I do, by being so young, to help my acculturation?"

I say speaking out,

having a voice that should be heard and inspired by would make a difference. The most predominant fact about being on this earth is having a gift and finding your purpose.

The things that were an eye opener for me under quarantine were not giving up on learning and knowing that, during difficult times, things

are going to knock you down, but you have to find the strength to get back up to succeed.

In the future, one of my goals is getting schools deeper into Critical Race Theory. We know it is not easy to get these types of topics in schools, but the best we can do is boost up the percentage of what is being taught. I see

myself in an HBCU one day studying law and political science. I plan on earning a doctorate and on becoming a civil rights activist.

I plan on this major because it is especially important for me to become more knowledgeable. I am also working on organizing Zoom meetings for youth and talking about what is

going on in our society and what we can do to help prevent any type of violence.

We are the change, we are the future, we are the empowerment the world needs.

— Precious Barry



Fashion teacher, Mrs. Damika Day helps Aja Henderson sew pajama pants out of polka dot fabric.



Fashion design students work on projects.

Most photos and story by Lady Mariposa

Day Wear

Let's take a minute and slip into Mrs. Damika Day-Brant's story. She goes by Mrs. Day and is the cheerful fashion design teacher who came to RGHS last fall. Now that she's rounding out her first year, let's check in and learn more!

Mrs. Day started designing clothes when she was 14 years old. Once she got into high school, she took a fashion course. She exceeded expectations so well that by the time she was a senior, she was in Advanced Fashion. Around the time of her high school graduation in 1997, Day and others at her school began exploring her options. Her teachers and others told Day and her classmates that if they wanted a career in clothing design, they should travel to New York, where fashion is made.

But, at the time, Day couldn't afford to travel to New York, so she had to design her own life pattern, and that's just what she did.

After high school, Day first became a nurse, but she soon realized this was not her passion. She still loved fashion! She started slowly, sewing clothing, designing small pieces.

Soon Mrs. Day was designing for everyone! She's made clothing pieces for her students, clients, and many influential activists – even U.S. Congresswoman Cori Bush! For her, she got to design the outfit Ms. Bush wore the night of her election to Congress.

For Mrs. Day, specialty items are her specialty. She has made prom dresses and wedding

dresses. She even has her own clothing website for young girls and women! Mrs. Day's inspiration for her pieces are to allow young ladies, hard-working women, and plus-size women to be comfortable in clothes that fit and they can feel good in at the same time!

Here at RGHS, Mrs. Day gets to know all of her students and understands that each one is unique. In her classroom, her students have the chance to express themselves through each project she presents. Students can work together or independently and they often listen to music as they work! Their styles and ideas are an expression of who they are and what they like.

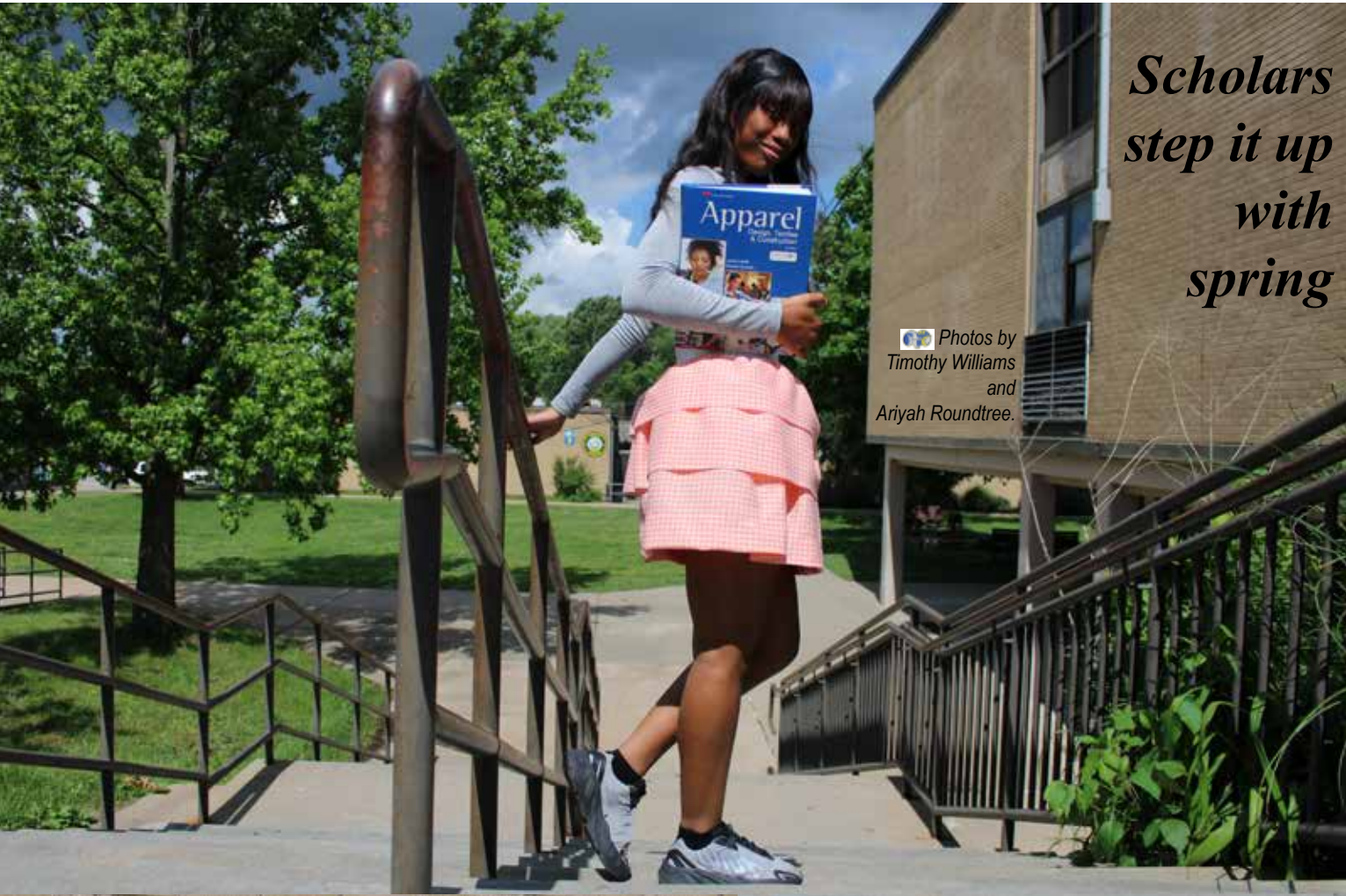
Junior Caitlyn Fielding



said that Mrs. Day's fashion design class is her favorite.

"When I first walk in, she be greeting me," she said. "She is real current and stuff. With our sewing and fabric, we are making a shirt and jacket. We draw what we want on there, and she went out of her way to get the jackets for us

to put our logos on." Part of the joy of the class is Mrs. Day herself, Fielding said. "It's very comfortable – you can be yourself in there," Fielding said. "Mrs. Day's real, real caring. She gives us food and helps us with our other classwork. She made my friend's birthday dress – it was real, real cute."



*Scholars
step it up
with
spring*

Photos by
Timothy Williams
and
Ariyah Roundtree.



Larden Blackmon, sophomore, makes her debut as a designer, under the guidance of Mrs. Damika Day-Bryant, fashion design teacher. Models Alondria Smith, junior in tiered skirt, and Akia Smith, sophomore in flat front skirt, showcase Blackmon's work.



Lights! Camera! Action!

Drama Department brings Black History Month to life



By Jocelyn Johnson

Theatre is a place where people can come and embody someone else. A place to escape and pretend. To show characteristics of yourself and BE yourself.

For Riverview Gardens High School students, Room 230 is a space and atmosphere dedicated to expressing our talents and sharing them with a community of talented people.

Mr. Kendrick Hooks, Speech and Drama Teacher makes it a place where people can be themselves. A safe place where people can express themselves without feeling denied. Most importantly, theatre is all about fun. We want everyone to take part, enjoy themselves, grow and learn about our world, about ourselves and others, and grow.

Room 230 is truly a theatre room. It is a place that encourages friendship. Mr. Hooks sets the stage for us to feel love and respect and connection.

In our theatre space, creativity lives. Everyone is able to show their talent, share their gifts, develop their singing, acting and dancing talents.

Theatre involves a lot of activities that allow each student to tap into their own creativity. In the pantomime project, each student played a character without using words. Expressing the wants and needs and personality of each character came only through body language and facial expressions.

The crowning jewel of our work is a video we created that celebrates African Americans in honor of Black History Month.

Watch it and enjoy!
Here is the [LINK!](#)



Lights! Camera! Action!



Photos: Clockwise: Drama students learn stage makeup, perform shadow puppetery and create music videos. (Photos courtesy of Mr. Kendrick Hooks.)

RGHS presents BHMP

C r e d i t s

BHMP Stars:

Marcus Alexander
Ashton Bramlett
Emony Canada
Tyrae Cherry
Keviyah Dean
Jocelyn Johnson
Kenyera Johnson
TayeAnthony Jones
Kellyn Lenard
Antoniette McCaskill
Riaa Noldon
Ebony Parker
Davion Prince
Mekhiya Smith
Mic'Keal Sykes
Tyler Thompson
Jordan Wynne
Antonio Young
Mr. Matthew White

Soloists:

Arissa Ford
Laiden Blackmon
Kellyn Lenard
Props Crew:
Emony Canada
Tyler Thompson

Prompters:

Riaa Noldon
TayeAnthony Jones

Choreographer/Dance Captain:

Kellyn Lenard

Co-Choreographer/Co-Dance Captain:

Kenyera Johnson

Pianist:

Mr. Darius Wallace, Sr.

Music Director:

Ms. Arnecia Wallace

Assistant Director/Cinematographer:

Davion Prince

Director/Writer:

Mr. Kendrick Hooks

Special Thanks To:

Mr. Darius Wallace, Sr.
Mr. Matthew White
Mr. Alex Clark
Dr. Monica Perry

And All RGHS Staff & Administrators!

***Disclaimer:**
Please note that all News Footage, Photos, and Audio Belongs to Their Respective Owners And Is Used for Education Purposes Only. Thank You For Watching!



RGHS Team knows the Drill

By Railee Goins
Drill Team Member & Rambler Staffer

The Riverview Gardens Drill Team is like family.

“The uniqueness of the team for us as educators is that we get to see them grow over the four years of high school,” Senior Chief Cesar Diaz said.

Part of the draw is the instructors. Senior Chief Nathaniel Hernandez and Chief Keelan Bridges do everything they can to make us feel welcome.

“I hope I set a good example for all the cadets,” Bridges said, “and would like to help them establish a solid work ethic.”

The leaders give us lifelong skills and stress the value of hardwork and not quitting when things may seem hard at the moment.

“My vision for our NJROTC program Cadets is, and always will be, to be able to inspire young men and young women to be the best person they can be by providing an environment and opportunities where they can excel,” Hernandez said. “My proud-

est moments are when I witness a young man and or a young woman perform a selfless act. Being part of the Drill Team, Color Guard, or contributing to a Community Service Project exemplifies commitment beyond one's self.”

This team is open to all grade levels, and this year, there are about 20 people on the team.

Seven are freshmen: Emilee Weaver, Jewel Minner, Havanni Norman, Sa'Maya Brown, Bradley Harvey, Davien Jackson and Destiny Boyer.

“I joined the drill team because I was intrigued from watching their first performance at the Cardinal's game,” Minner said. “This team means so much to me because they have given me a lot of opportunities for extraordinary things.”

Six are sophomores: Timberly Duckworth, Keviana Bass, Lawrence Boswell, Niya Pennington, AAliyah Donaldson, and Imani Jones.

“When I first joined the team I was nervous and excited to see what would happen on the drill team.”

Pennington said. “Now that I'm on the team I have created bonds with everyone and I love how we get along with each other and the way we have this family vibe that we showcase every single time we are together at practice or at school.”

Three are juniors: Jaylen Wilburn, Robert Randle, and myself (Railee Goins).

“Considering I am the XO of the unit already, I think moving up further becoming the CO of the entire unit I'm sort of nervous,” Wilburn said, “but I have confidence in the fellow upperclassmen and staff to get me through it with no issues.”

Helping to lead the team are seniors Jordan Hutchins, Laila Williams and Sheniah Hall.

“These past four years, the drill team for me has been like a family. ... we've laughed together, and suffered together, Williams said. “I hope my underclassmen have the luxury to get to know amazing people like I have. If I can do it all over again, I 100-percent will.”

The team practices Tuesdays and Thursday, sometimes more often, always preparing for an event. In the beginning of the school year, the team presented colors at Busch Stadium.

“At the first Cards game of the year against the Padres which ended in a victory for the Cardinals, and it was a pretty fun event with random people coming up to us and talking about things,” Wilburn said.

Recently, the team spoke to Central Middle School students about Drill Team and the ROTC program.

“Well, we were at the middle school to really show what we do here at ROTC,” Randle said. “It was an amazing presentation, if I do say so myself. I loved every minute of it.”

On April 22, the team cleaned out abandoned houses in honor of Earth Day.

“I was excited to be a part of a team to have the same beliefs to have a good community as I do,” Brown said. “I was excited to be a part of the community clean up. I feel like it was a great experience, and I encourage others to do so. If we can all do our part we can have a better community.”

The following day, the participated in the Little Bit Foundation's 5K run after we presented the colors.

All of the Drill Team members especially had fun at the Joint Services Ball. Many members said it



Photos clockwise from left: Color Guard presenting; Jewel Minner, at attention; marching downtown; at Busch Stadium. (Photos courtesy of Senior Chief Nathaniel Hernandez.)



was an amazing experience and opportunity that being a part of the Drill Team gave us.

“When we first got to the cadet ball, we networked with the other cadets,” Havanni said. “When we got seated they did their pow/mia table ceremony and everyone stood for the national anthem. After everyone ate, we played a couple games – musical chairs with a twist is one of the games we played,” he said. “Overall, it was really fun meeting new people and meeting their senior officers.”

Rams Runners



How do you get to state? Practice!



Ramly Graduation Pictoral



For these Rams, the future is now



Battle Royal



RRRRRRRRRamily RRRRRRRRRumble



Battle Royal

Senior-Staff ballers take it to the boards

Story and photos by Lady Mariposa, Talisha Crawford, *The Rambler* Staff

Students, faculty and staff eagerly climbed into the bleachers and stood around the gym. The air was electric with excitement and anticipation. On this day, the Rams were not playing some conference or state championship. No, this was more important. This day was about bragging rights and standing up, or dribbling past authority.

Actually, it was all in good fun. As the teams took to the court. In the blue shirts were the Class of 2022 seniors, ready for any challenge. And they got some in the form of staff and faculty members wearing golden yellow t-shirts and bringing their A game. And bring it, they did. Staff beat students xx-xx. But everyone had fun -- making us all winners!



Students publish poems

Reconnecting ...

🌐 By Toryon Love, Junior

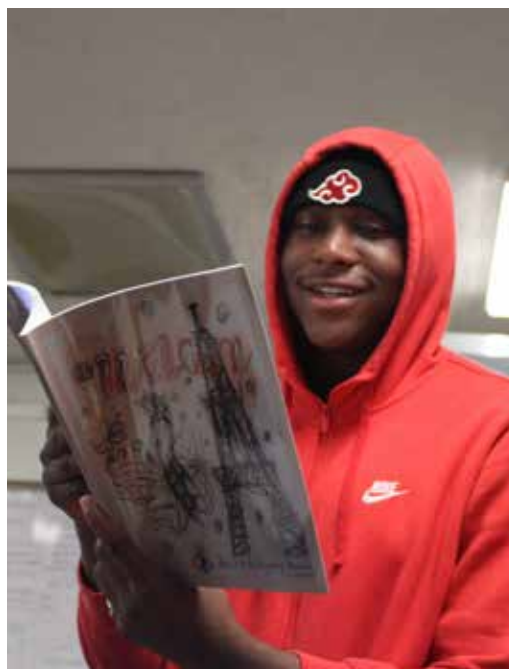
Stuck behind the mask
 Can't wait 'til that is in the past
 Lost connections from my friends
 And that is not an easy task
 Losing people left and right
 Thinking how long will this last
 We were friends and now we fight
 Everything is moving fast
 Knowing how it feels
 Paralyzed, can't do a thing
 Everybody quarantined
 Can only see you through a screen

And no, I'm not alright
 All I want to do is scream
 And just because I smile
 Don't mean that's what it seems

Back in person things have changed
 See my friends! Good! Okay!
 Somethin' botherin' my brain
 Realized you are not the same
 You started drinking, started smoking
 I mean we all feel some pain
 But all the promises we made
 How'd it all just go away?
 I got a job to get a check
 While your life was in a wreck
 I can't stand to see you down
 We just have to reconnect

And no, I'm not alright
 All I want to do is scream
 And just because I smile
 Don't mean that's what it seems

At this point, you're getting worse
 I want to see you at your best
 And it's hard as it is
 When they see us as a threat
 As a whole we lost a lot
 Now let's try to get it back
 Rekindle friendships, relationships
 And whatever it is you lack
 we'll probably be alright and maybe
 live the dream
 That's IF we come together and we do
 it as a team



Junior Toryon Love and Sophomore Ta Jackson have become published poets.

Love and Jackson submitted poems that were accepted and published in a book of ekphrastic poetry.

The new book *Welcome, An Art & Poetry Book*, is part of an annual series of art inspired poetry, published through a collaboration involving the Gateway Writing Project, Artists Speak, TRiO, the Saint Louis University Educational Talent Search Program.

Students are given postcards of paintings, photographs and sculpture created by artists and students in the St. Louis region.

This year Love and Jackson along with more than 200 students from more than 20 schools contributed works to the book.

Both wrote their poems in response to a sculpture which was a bust of a head made of measuring tape.

Their poems are included here.
 -- Rambler Staff



The Measuring Tape

🌐 By Tia Jackson

As though I feel I'm surrounded by fears
 Darkness has been upon me for years
 I feel as I am where darkness and light meet
 Ready to feel happiness beneath my feet
 Present to the world my true desire
 To become one with the one I admire
 They glued me together and closed all my vines
 But in my tape is where the truth will lie

Editorial

First Annual Report Card for RGHS

This year *The Rambler* staff has chosen to present a report card on the high school itself. The goal of this evaluation is to note areas of success and to point out where there is a need for improvement. The idea is to recognize where we are and where we are trying to go. We, as a staff, will offer suggestions about where we see possible solutions, and we invite and encourage you, our readers, to participate in this process by offering letters to the editor to share your thoughts.

Area of Review	Grade	Performance Evaluation
Student Academic Excellence	C	Despite the pandemic, many students are on track to passing their classes. Most students are working hard for their grades, but it is a mix, and we can and must do better.
Student Behavior	D	While much of this can be the result of the lack of social interactions with other students throughout last year, overall this year has been troublesome with regard to students' behaviors.
Teaching	B	More often than not, teachers are doing a good job: They are patient, despite students behaviors, the mask mandates, and the complications surrounding the Coronavirus.
Facilities and materials	C	Getting enough Chromebooks for all students has been a real and significant problem that has impacted students' success. Also, our Wifi has been sketchy in many spots throughout campus and Hot Spots have only recently become available to students, but more are needed. Also, the school in some sections, particularly, outside, needs cosmetic work, like fresh paint, as well as tennis courts that function and more.
After School Activities	C	On the plus side: New afterschool activities include Dungeons & Dragons, Newspaper, Fashion Design, Drone navigating, the Sapphires Drill Team and more. Also we continue to have Band, Color Guard and Theatre, among many others. Still, Covid and other issues have sidelined opportunities for clubs, other than sports teams, to meet, which is so sad.
Leadership/Discipline	B/C	While the students behavior is still rowdy, generally, the disciplinary actions have been fair and justified. <i>The Rambler</i> continues to dig into this matter for further updates. This school year has been a bit messy because of the online schooling, student conflicts, district leadership changes, etc. It has been complicated for Mrs. Nave and her team to face significant challenges including Homecoming, lockdowns and other matters. At times, this has left teachers confused, and students more than a little frustrated.
Student Support & Services	B	Counselors offer resources. The school offers breakfast. And there are a range of ways our school supports students. Still it would be great if we had more elective choices and more choice in our electives. We do have the chance to pick but students often get put in classes we have no desire to take and don't get to take courses we might like.
Food	D	As students, we are unhappy with the quality and variety of choices at lunch each and every day. We know there are other schools where the food is tastier, the options are better and the lunch experience is a highlight of the day. That is just not the case here at RGHS. We need more than a few chicken nuggets or sloppy joe's that are undercooked or sad looking salads.
Newspaper/Magazine	B	While we strive to put out a quality paper, we have not had regular issues and we are still learning how to do all of this. We are trying and growing, but we need to have more issues than just this one.



The Sky's The Limit

🌍 Photos and story by
Desiree Thomas

I decided to take a break from looking at screens from the electronic devices that have taken over the world.

Instead I focused my sights on the skies that surround us.

Here I hope to show you the real beauty that surrounds us all. The pictures here offer views from my work in Old Town Clayton, where money and privilege flow like wine, as well as pictures from Bellefontaine Neighbors, where there is lots of room for wanting and needing, and dreams sometimes ebb more than flow.

My challenge to you, *Rambler* Readers, is to see if you can tell where I am. What does this say about our world, our region, our community?



Deep Background ...

On the next three pages, you will find personal stories written by three Rambler staffers. Each story is personal. Together, they reflect our diversity and humanity. Each glimpses a very specific experience and bears witness to the challenges and triumphs, the questions and observations each writer has faced with courage, resilience and kindness.



Reporter's Notebook Reflection No. 1

Taking Pride



How many people can confidently raise their hand and say, "I'm part of the LGBTQIA+ community?" No? Just me? Why?

It's the label. The label that is put on us by society saying that we are not accepted.

I have friends who are Bi, Gay, Pansexual, Asexual, Demisexual, Transgender, and Lesbian, and we wear it proudly.

Why? Because we learned that society is going to judge us or treat us differently – even if we was all straight – so why not?

I learned that being more than one sexuality or loving someone of the same sex puts you in a different category more than anything in this society. Being a lesbian and non-binary (meaning identifying as no gender or identifying as the opposite gender) makes people look at you oh so differently.

Because I have been misgendered so often, I sometimes misgender myself.

Within the LGBTQIA+ community, it is considered rude if you don't refer to someone by their chosen pronouns. To misgender someone intentionally is to reject their authentic selves.

Some people don't use traditional pronouns. Instead of saying she, he, they, neopronouns, such as xe/xem/xyr, ze/hir/hirs, and ey/em/ei, are their go to for pronouns.

I've noticed a difference in the way society looks at gays and lesbians, and I have never understood why society seems to say that it's not right for a man to be gay, but it's ok for a woman to be gay.

because society says that men should be the tough, strong, backbone of life. But these days, being a man means going through a fight with a weapon like a gun. The weapon is part of how they are supposed to live up to the image, a way of being the backbone. It's a known fact, and when they wanna step down, they get harassed.

Then people judge another before even knowing what that person has gone through. They don't want to know why someone identifies as gay.

In my experience, some folks are drawn to the LGBTQIA+ community from a young age, while others experienced trauma or life-defining moments that lead them to find themselves among the queer community.

The sad part for some is the comfort they find cannot make up for the judgment and othering. It can be so painful that they choose suicide with the idea that they would rather just not be on the planet, than be their most authentic selves – especially when they are still trying to figure that out.

On the behalf of everyone who is part of the LGBTQIA+ community, I congratulate you for being you and for knowing what you wanna be in life. I give thanks to the men who can walk around and be comfortable in their own skin without a care in the world. I also wanna recognize those who still don't know how to come out of their shell. It's ok to be you, you're gonna be judged your whole life, so take life by the ears! Also to the women, you who can be themselves, even when you're at your lowest. You're all courageous and beautiful inside and out. Be you.

Story and Art by Anonymous (Name withheld because the student is a minor.)

Boys go through so much harassment for being gay

Reporter's Notebook Reflection No. 2



After nearly completing my sophomore year of high school, I figured it was time to think about how far I have come. If I had the chance to speak with my 5-year-old self or even my freshman self, what advice would I offer?

I would tell my 5-year-old self the importance of following your own story in life and of creating your own morals that you stand by.

Keep your circle small and keep your heart big. Don't overthink things. Just enjoy life as a kid.

Don't worry about what others say to you and think of you. Use their words as motivation and power.

Prove everyone wrong and keep your head up. Because at the end of the day, your success stems beyond God's own beliefs.

Be yourself. Be confident in yourself. Then everything else will follow.

I'm still learning some of the lessons that I'm currently preaching, but that's okay, it's a part of life.

Don't rush success. Success comes in many different forms, the same with love. You gotta love yourself before you're capable of extending that love to another human being.

Things are going to be hard. You're going to cry. You're going to feel like giving up. You're going to feel lonely. You're going to feel like you're the only person on your team.

These feelings are going to be the exact thing that'll lead you to success, I promise. I'm still standing on that 'til this day.

One last thing I would say is that hard work will always surpass natural talent – no matter what.

And remember:

Don't let people choose your fate or make you feel lesser than what you really are.

You are a star, born in another universe that landed on earth.

Reporter's Notebook Reflection No. 3



By Railee Goins

When my mother was five months pregnant with me, we discovered my heart and I would not get along, and that we may not have as much time together as we'd like.

Doctors diagnosed me with congestive heart failure and heterotaxy syndrome, which is when you may have missing organs or multiplied organs. In my case I have no spleen and two gallbladders.

As a result, I have needed multiple surgeries to try to fix these conditions – 27 in all. That's right – 27 surgeries – maybe more by the time you read this.

I had my first surgery the minute I was born, that's when they put in my first pacemaker, a device that pumps the heart on a regular rhythm. It was tiny. The two weeks later, the

doctors performed my first open-heart surgery. I've had about nine cardiac catheterizations alone and four pacemaker replacements, as well as two open heart surgeries and many more.

When I was three years old, my mom thought I was sick with the flu. It turned out I was having a stroke. They figured it out only after they took me into the operating room. I had a seizure. It turned out that I had a blood clot that doctors said was "twice the size of a ping pong ball." It went from my heart to my brain, causing my seizure.

Fortunately, throughout my life modern science has helped me live many years with my heart and other medical conditions.

Now I am facing a new challenge: My heart doesn't beat on its own.

When I was younger I had an artificial mitral valve put in my heart, ever since then, my valve has been "narrowing" making it harder for the blood to make its way through my body. On top of that, I have had two open heart surgeries, leaving my heart tissue scarred and damaged. It is so damaged, doctors say they cannot do another surgery, if one is needed.

As I am now, on a daily basis, I function pretty normally. However, that could change – literally in a heartbeat.

I'm not on the transplant list yet, but they have spoken to me about needing a new heart because my issues are worsening.

I've been in this situation for a while now, and it's quite frankly very scary.

To wonder when my heart will finally fail on me, just quit, it's scary.

Although I have all of that going on, I still strive to be the best I can be. To show up every day. To use my time and make the most of it. I want to not just live, but to succeed.

Ironically, I do find an upside to all of this: The people, my people. Those amazing people at the hospital, at home and at school who have supported me.

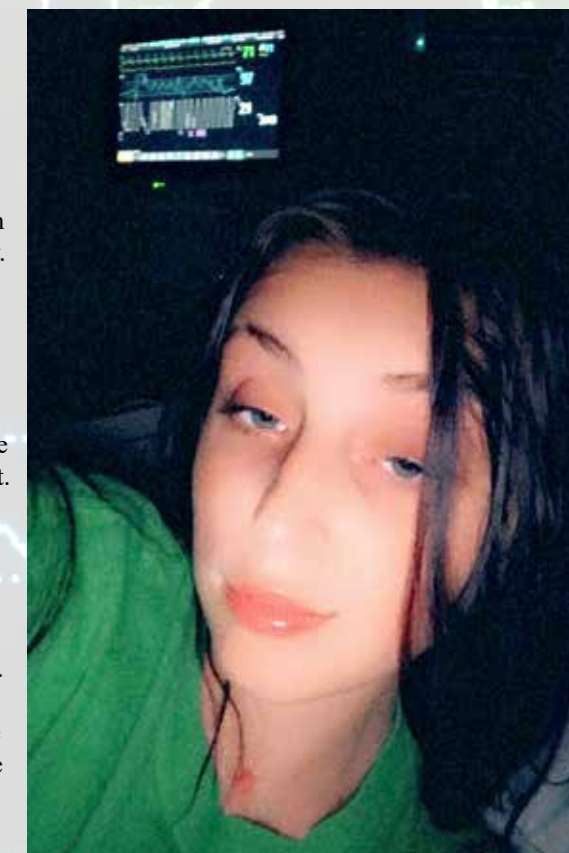
In November, I had a pacemaker removed and a new one implanted. – this was my fourth pacemaker. I was in the hospital for about two weeks. My support team of nurses and doctors were kind, thoughtful and always looking out for me.

My mom, my sister and my dad were at the hospital with me any chance they got.

When I came back to school, Mrs. Holzer, Senior Chief Hernandez and Chief Diaz were there for me, too.

And then there are my friends: Kevianna, Havanni, Timberly and basically everyone on the drill team, but most importantly Daylen. They all helped me in some sort of way and I appreciate them the most for that.

Photos: Goins at 5 (top) and at 15 last November (bottom). The shadow image behind these words and the entire story is a photo of the EKG monitor of Goins' heart rhythm. (All photos courtesy of Goins and her family).



Memory Wall

By Jaheim Times

Death isn't the end as long as the story continues. What makes death so natural is the unprecedented impact that it can leave on a community, on a person, or on a culture. This memory wall is a page that's dedicated to all the lost souls that've been lost due to unfortunate events, events that could have been rather prevented. Take time to read this page to lay witness to people's stories, pain, and their anguish. To be able to grasp a part of their heart and to know that everyone has a story that's much deeper than the cover.

"Death is not the end. It's more of a stepping off point."

-Black Panther

Mrs. Bintha T. Lewis

My grandma died in my mother's bed from Covid19 in 2021. She was the Matriarch (with a capital M) of our family. She was very creative, strong, artistic and active. She wasn't a pushover at all, even at her weakest.

The backbone.

She, the anecdote and we as a family, the poison

She healed us

She kept things going

Like a motor

A motor of a car

Without that? A car would be nothing

It couldn't go anywhere

It wouldn't be anything

The heart of our family

That was my grandma to my family and still is

A spider web

Holding everything together

Like the bones of a body

She was the structural support of our family

She's gone, unfortunately

We fell apart, sad to say

Our back bone fell apart, sadly

The heart of our family, stopped beating

No support

Nothing to hold us

The backbone.

- Jerrisha Lewis, sophomore

Anoth'r Broth'r

There are times in life when you don't know what to say.

And when those times come, all you can do is pray

Bloody, in the street - that's where his body lay

Who'd have thought this would be his last day....

This tragedy, this travesty caused riots and looting.

We really need answers for this senseless shooting.

We continue to chant, "Hands Up, Don't Shoot!"

"I feared for my life" becomes another excuse.

Great kid with potential and so much to offer

Great son to his mom and also his father

We must all stick together - blood's thicker 'n water

In the eyes of the law, this murder's not even manslaughter.

A lot of progress must be done to turn this thing around

So many buildings damaged and also burned down

He screamed, "Hands Up," but was still gunned down.

Forever live on - Say his name: Michael Brown!

- A'Mire Gray, sophomore



Artwork created by Melvin Hampton, senior

Philando Castile

This poem is for Philando Castile who lost his life in July of 2017 when he was stopped, questioned about his legal firearm and fatally shot by a police officer in front of his girlfriend and 4-year-old daughter. The officer was acquitted of all charges.

It doesn't matter
if you're hardworking,
soft spoken,
gentle, or joyful.

It doesn't matter who
or what you
are as a person,

some people
don't care
for your life, wellbeing.
They will kill you
in seconds

without even a thought
of their own misjudgement -
Of how this will affect people
around that person -
Of people all around the world.

Philando Castile
was an innocent man.
An innocent man,
killed in cold blood
An innocent man
Killed because
the color of his skin
is intimidating.

An innocent man
Killed in the time it
Took you to read this poem.

- Javant Watson,
senior