

Mustang Musings

MORRIS CENTRAL SCHOOL NEWSLETTER



*For last year's words belong to last year's language / And next year's words await
another voice —T.S. Eliot, Four Quartets* *January/February 2021*

From The Superintendent's Desk

As I write this article, the headlines in the news continue to be about COVID-19. We have the amazing news that the first vaccine to protect people from the terrible virus was just approved and health care workers in the United States have received the first doses. This is juxtaposed against the very heartbreaking news that we have now lost over 300,000 Americans to COVID-19. As a district, we have had to move to remote learning through holiday break due to the number of positive cases in our district and the fact that we now have nearly 20 faculty/staff members who have had to quarantine.

I am asking parents, students, faculty, and staff to make sure that you are doing the daily health assessments and not coming to school if you are displaying any symptoms. It often appears that the initial symptoms are mild such as a headache or a runny nose, so some people have come to school. Later they find that they are positive for COVID-19 and then many people who may have had close contact with them have to be quarantined. I know that some people don't believe that this virus is more contagious or dangerous than other types of viruses. No matter what your feelings are, as a school district, we have extremely strict guidelines and mandates that we must follow. We simply will not be able to have in-person learning if we don't have the faculty/staff to be in the classrooms, to drive the buses, provide the meals or to clean our facilities.

I am sad to report that the state has continued to delay the start of many winter sports, including basketball. As the positivity rate across the country and in New York continues to increase, our leaders do not feel it is safe to commence certain sports that are considered high risk. Even though we now have a vaccine that will protect people from COVID-19, it will take several months before it will be widely available to the public and before we develop the herd immunity that we desperately need to protect us from the virus.

I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday and that we will continue to provide in-person learning to our students. I know how difficult it has been to families, students, faculty, and staff, but hope that we will be able to get back to "normal" very quickly.

—*Mr. Matthew Sheldon, Superintendent*

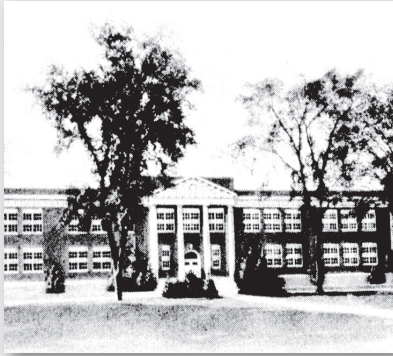
The Bus Driver's on the Bus Go Clean, Clean, Clean

Mrs. Nadine Lasher and Ms. Tara Jorgensen, bus drivers, getting ready to clean the buses in their PPE. They are all suited up and prepared to wash the bus seats and seatbelts with a disinfectant solution. After the disinfection of the seats, they wipe down all the handrails, driver areas and all high touch surface areas. Then we use an electro-static (aerosol) backpack sprayer to sanitize the rest of the bus, ceiling, windows, etc. The buses also get swept and mopped frequently to keep foot germs down.

This is our duty every Wednesday before and after meals and homework deliveries. The other days all the buses are sprayed with disinfecting solutions and all high touch surface areas are wiped down after each and every run. Our first and foremost goal is the safety of all our students and staff!

—*Mallory Jorgensen, Transportation Supervisor*





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From Mr. Harmer's Desk

Usually I write a little tidbit about each class and what we are doing. It would go something like this: The Global 1 class has begun its trek through history. We began with prehistoric cultures and have worked our way through . . . , or The Global 2 class picked up where they left off last year. Global Studies is a two-year course ending with a Regents exam in June. We are getting into the material of . . . , or The Government class has worked its way through the Constitution and now working on political parties. We were fortunate to have a national election this year . . . , but this year has been anything but normal. We have done all of those things; however, nothing is normal about how we did it this year. We started all remote, and then moved to a two-day hybrid model, and then a four-day hybrid model.

Through it all, our students took every new challenge in stride. It is a testament to all those at Morris Central School! For lack of a better saying, we have taken lemons and made a delicious pitcher of Lemonade! Students have Google Met, Google Classroomed, and other technological fun times to start our year. One positive is most realized that going into school isn't as bad as they once thought. The light at the end of the tunnel will be upon us sooner than later, I believe.

*Until then, remember we are **MORRIS STRONG AND MUSTANG PROUD!***

—Mr. Patrick Harmer, Social Studies

How We Avoided Boredom During the Pandemic

While the pandemic has limited various activities and gatherings, and has even cancelled school sports, students at Morris central school have found different ways to have fun while in a pandemic. Some students such as **Alex Page**, a Junior, and **Brandon Card**, a senior, worked at their jobs through the pandemic to cure their boredom while other students such as **Hannah Swayer**, a Sophomore, and **Jessica Walling**, a Freshman, played sports to cure their boredom through the pandemic.

I spent my time volunteering at the local animal shelter Superheroes in Ripped Jeans. I learned that I enjoy volunteering because it allows me to take my mind off of anything that could be bothering me. My favorite days are when the veterinarian comes in to perform vet checks and sometimes surgeries too. I like these days because I get to assist the veterinarian in the various procedures being done. Since I want to be a veterinarian someday, I think this was a great way to get hands-on veterinary experience that would be important for me to have.

—Aiden Moore, Junior



A Different School Year

This year has definitely been a different way to begin a school year. Many things have changed. We are all used to waking up early every morning and going to school to see our friends and teachers. Instead, high school students only go to school two days a week, and some students don't go to school at all. It worries me to be on-line instead of in-person because it is harder to learn information and get work done without distractions. It is especially stressful for the high school students that are preparing to take Regents Tests at the end of the year.

I sent out an interview since I sadly don't get to talk to or see most students in school because of social distancing about how school this year is affecting them. My first question was, what do you miss most about normal school? Junior, Hannah Pope said, "Being able to hang out together in the halls and at lunch," and Junior, Fiona Ventura agreed that she'd also like to spend time with her friends more as she said, "It feels a bit weird and distant." I feel the same way.

Next, I asked what was better and worse about hybrid/remote learning? For Justine Norton, a Sophomore, it is worse because she gets less work done, and she likes it better because "being home for most of the week is good." She also said, I get "more one-on-one time with teachers if I need it." Brandon Card, a Senior, also said it is harder to get school work done at home, but he likes not going to school so often.

Stepping outside of school, I asked what students are doing in their free time instead of sports and clubs? Most of the Morris students have jobs like Junior, Mackenzie Graves who is working at McDonald's. Other students spend their free time hanging out with friends and family, working out to get in shape for possible sports teams, and just relaxing by themselves.

I asked what everyone they did over the summer to deal with boredom, and many of them spent it the same way. Being with family and spending time outside without breaking quarantine rules.

My last question for the middle and high school students of Morris Central School was "What are they thankful for?" Baylie Boglioli, a senior, along with many others said she's "thankful for her family." Junior, Laurel Brigham shared, "I am thankful for my cats."

My view on this school year is I'm thankful the staff has made the school safe and we are able to attend classes in person even though we don't get to see all of our friends. Hopefully, things will slowly start to feel normal or even return to how they were with time.

—Leah Rehrmann, Junior

All-County

Although there will not be any All-County Concerts this year, we still have students who were selected to represent our school at All-County. Congratulations to the following students:

ALL-COUNTY JUNIOR BAND

Maddie Coleman
Asa Dugan
Maiya King
Everett Pondolfino
Aislinn Ray
Levi Waffle
Jessica Walling

ALL-COUNTY JUNIOR CHORUS

Maddie Coleman
Rachel Hill
Tatianna McAdams
Levi Waffle
Brodie Coleman
Sawyer King

ALL-COUNTY ELEMENTARY BAND

Jacob Johnson

ALL-COUNTY SENIOR BAND

Kate Morano
Hannah Swayer
Lincoln Waffle
Ethan Franklin
Thomas Pondolfino

SENIOR CHORUS

Hannah Swayer
Jon Child
Lincoln Waffle

—Ms. Heather Powell, Instrumental Music



MTA News

Between rioting, forest fires, election unrest and, of course, COVID, people say that 2020 has not been kind. Maybe they are right, but faculty and staff at Morris Central have been working overtime to make up for the meanness of this year. Besides recreating lesson plans, making new lesson plans, learning new technology, and adapting their teaching styles in new and creative ways, they have also been taking classes, workshops, and publishing.

BETH COLLINS

Ms. Collins is taking an on-line class through the Modern Museum of Art in NYC. It is called "Seeing Through Photographs." The class uses the museum collections to understand photography's role in our visual culture and throughout history.

SARAH SAGGESE

Over the summer quarantine, Ms. Saggese completed a book study through our local BOCES. The book was *Take Time for You: Self-Care Action Plans for Educators*. She said, "This was an interesting book study to participate in with others. The first thing that we were told was that we needed to be honest and 100% devoted to following the steps. At first it was easy to take time each day to read, reflect, and answer the questions, but then as I expected, it became harder and harder to take time for me each day. Once I finished the book study, I realized how much better I was feeling since I took time for myself. I highly recommend this book for educators who struggle to step back from their careers. This fun interactive workbook, paired with online discussions; it really helped me reflect on what I can do as a teacher to take care of myself so I can in turn be the best I can be for my students."

CARLENA JOHNSON

In preparation for adjusting her Living Environment science class to possible periods of remote learning this year, Ms. Johnson took two virtual workshops this summer. One workshop was "Teaching Science Remotely 2" led by Paul

Andersen of Bozeman Science and focused on helping students engage with data as scientists when teaching remotely. In particular, the workshop had teachers go through an ecology lab as students to experience how to engage students in argumentation from evidence, recognize patterns in data, and develop and use their own models. The second virtual workshop Ms. Johnson participated in was "Navigating Lab Work in Online Biology Courses" led by Ann Brokaw and focused on giving teachers tools to convert labs traditional hands-on labs to work in a remote classroom using a combination of videos, virtual lab experiments, and student discussion. Both workshops have greatly helped Ms. Johnson to adjust the lab experience for her Living Environment students this year to work for both in-person and remote instruction, while still providing the lab experiences necessary for a Regents level class.

JULENE WAFFLE

In addition to adjusting all her lesson plans and methodology for school all summer, she took two short webinars to hone her technology skills for teaching with on-line platforms. In addition, Ms. Waffle attended several poetry workshops where she learned the craft, thought of ideas for her students, and because of which she was able to publish her first chapbook of poems entitled *So I Will Remember*. In addition, she has had several poems selected for publication in two anthologies (*Seeing Things* and *Civilization in Crisis*) as well as two on-line literary pages (Albany Writers' Institute and Silver Birch Press). She had a poem (inspired by something Ms. Smith said early on in the pandemic) accepted for publication by the National Council for Teachers of English in *The English Journal* as well as forthcoming international literary magazines, *Fresh Words*, and *La Presa* (where her poem will be published in English alongside its Spanish translation). She even published an article in *The Daily Star* early on during the pandemic. She said, "Writing, my kids, and being outside has kept me sane during this pandemic."

Partners in Education



MORRIS EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Wampum Belts

While learning about the Haudenosaunee nation, the Fourth Graders made wampum belts, which were used by Native Americans to send messages, tell stories, and make treaties.

—Mrs. Stacia Norman, Four Grade Teacher

Longhouse and Palisade

The Haudenosaunee made palisades. Palisades were big walls around their longhouses. The palisades were built to keep bad guys out, like the Algonquin. It would keep out bears and wolves. It would protect them from wind and snow.

A palisade was built from tall, skinny pieces of wood. They were held together by a type of grass. Their top ends were pointed. They had one opening to get in.

—Chris Kara

Snowsnake

The Haudenosaunee played the game snowsnake. Snowsnake was played with a curved stick. They made the track out of sprinkled water, creating a slick, frozen track for the snowsnake to travel on.

Snowsnake is played by having the teams throw sticks down a frozen track. The team that throws the stick the farthest wins the game. There are two types of snowsnakes: the longsnake that is seven feet long and the mudcat, which is three feet long. At the end of the round the team that throws the stick the farthest, gets awarded with two points. There are two round and four teams. And the team gets four throws. And when they throw it four times at the end of their throw they take the one that they threw the farthest.

—Sierra Coyle

Longhouse

Haudenosaunee men and women built their longhouses. Women peeled large sheets of bark to use as shingles over the frame. The men cut poles made from young trees that they pushed into the ground and bent into a frame. One long house could have many families living in them, with up to 100 people in total.

—Bryson Johnston

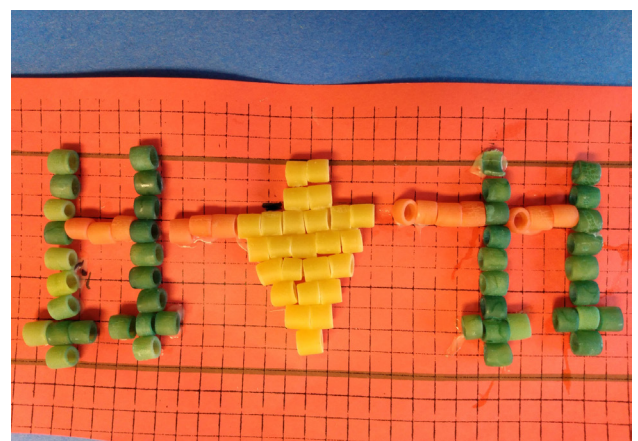
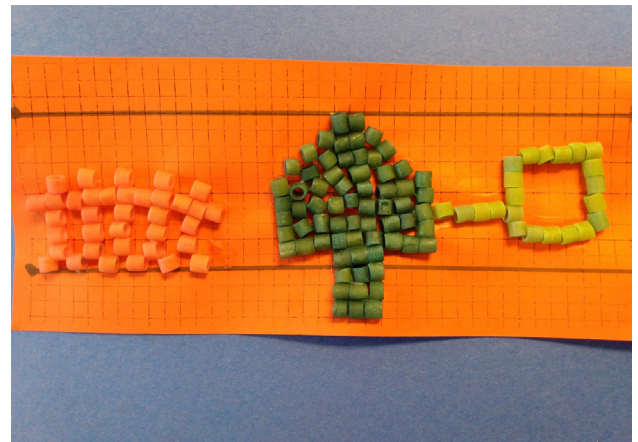
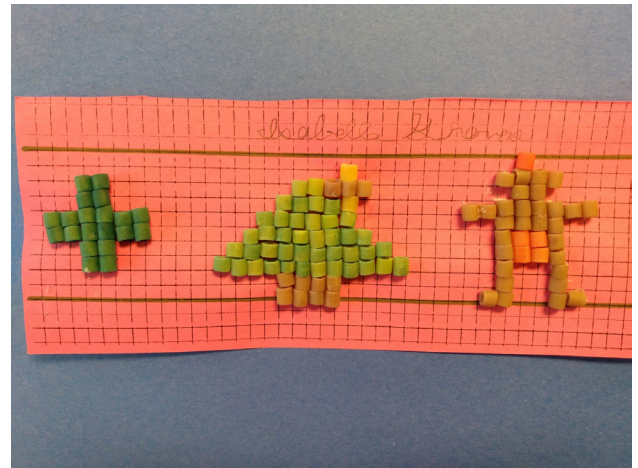
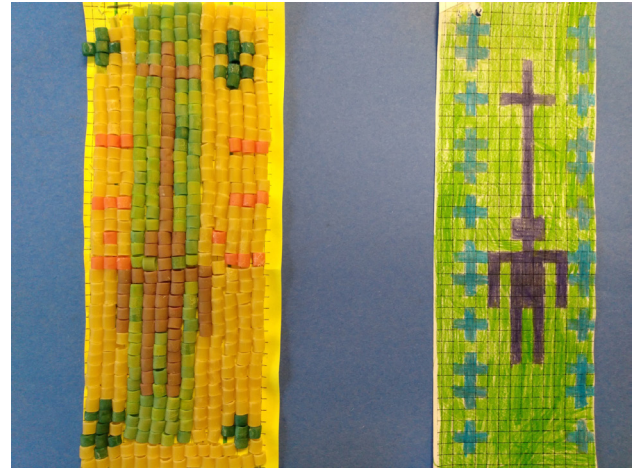
Haudenosaunee Clothing

The Haudenosaunee women and girls made the clothing for the Haudenosaunee people. The women used stone scrapers to remove the hair and flesh from deer skin. Then they soaked the hides in solution of boiled deer brains to soften them. The next step was to dry and then smoke the hides. Pieces of leather were then cut shaped and sewn together.

The Haudenosaunee used a method called tanning to keep it from spoiling or rotting.

They tanned the leather with bark acorns or leaves of oak trees and other plants. After the hides were stretched and dried, they smoked the hide over a fire. Then, they sewed the pieces of leather together.

—Kendall Gould



Third Graders Traveling the World

Ms. Fraser's and Mrs. Norton's Third Graders "traveled" around the world during December, studying winter holidays celebrated in various cultures. They have recently stamped their passports to Germany, Italy, France, and Japan. Students have realized that children around the world celebrate the holidays in similar and different ways just like the similar and different ways we celebrate in our very own classrooms. Children in Italy wait for Babbo Natale, a woman who brings gifts, while children in Germany wait to catch a glimpse of Christkid in the middle of the night.

—Mrs. Norton, Third Grade

Election Year

This year's presidential election was one like no other. In the midst of a global pandemic and people flocking to the polls in large numbers, there were a lot of things that had to change this year. Available options to vote were in-person on November 3, going in-person early, and voting by mail. A lot of people changed the way they voted this year in order to keep themselves and others safe.

At Morris Central School, most students are unable to vote because they aren't old enough. There were, however, two seniors who were able to vote for the first time. When asked why she thought voting was important, **Sierra Ratliff** said, "I think that voting is important because it is your chance to express your rights in a major way, and you get to have a say in what goes on in your country." In regards to her first time voting, she said, "Voting for the first time felt very odd; it felt like I was doing something that as a kid I thought was so boring, but now as I am getting older, I realize that all these things I thought as a child were boring are extremely crucial to my rights and the country I live in. It was still boring having to stand in line, but I felt like I just took part in something beneficial to everyone."

The other senior able to vote was **Ian Rehrmann**. He said voting is important because "Everyone should have a voice." Rehrmann said of his first time voting, it felt "good to vote" and was excited to "have a voice to help determine who will be our leader/president."

While not many students were able to vote, teachers were, and they all recall it was a little different than usual. Mr. Degan, an English teacher, said he did the early voting this year, and it was a piece of cake. He recalled that everything ran really smoothly, and it was very easy. Mr. Gregg, a history teacher, thinks voting is super important and said he would wait in the line for hours if he had to just to vote. He was also very determined to vote on election day and waited until November 3 to cast his vote. There were a lot of people who voted differently this year, but nevertheless, still performed their civic duties and voted.

—Erin Herring, Senior

Bookmarks

Reading has become a popular activity for many of us since the pandemic started. As a way to appreciate our community and our faculty and staff, Seniors in Mrs. Waffle's English class designed bookmarks and printed and laminated them after reading an inspirational book entitled *Tuesdays with Morrie* by Mitch Albom. Although a sad book, it taught many great lessons!

Seniors made enough book marks to give each faculty and staff member and to provide the village library with at least enough to last them through the New Year. If you are looking for a good book to read, pick up anything by Mitch Albom. Not only is he an excellent sports writer, but he writes fantastic novels.

—Mrs. Julene Waffle, English

Yearbook

The Morris Central School yearbook department, despite certain limitations, has been working hard to ensure the book's completion. The theme this year mixes the nostalgia of old years with the coming of new ages, represented through the color blue. Each week, the members work by creating page templates, taking photos, writing articles, and calling businesses to sell space for advertisements.

One of the main struggles this year involves the lack of photos available. The yearbook staff asks students to submit any photo they have that they would like in the book, whether it's within school or not. They would also like to ask for a brief description of what occurred at the time the photo was taken. Volunteers are also needed to help take photos of the students and staff around the school during the day. If a student is in the National Honor Society, this could be a good chance to obtain hours for their volunteer service quotas. If you have photos, please see the announcement on the next page that tells you how to directly upload them to our yearbook site. Thanks in a advance!

While slightly shorter than previous books, the book will still provide a good summary for the events that took place during the school year. It will bring about many memories that parents, students, and the school staff can look back on and enjoy for years to come.

—Matthew Wendler, Senior



The Class of 2021 Senior Play

The Senior Class Play was quite different this year, both for the actors and the director! The play, *A Less Expendable Husband*, takes place in the bathroom of a very posh golf and country club. We used the Sixth Grade ladies' room to film!

Kate Morano was our propmaster and sound effects gal, and went way beyond the call of duty! "I cannot thank Kate enough for her help and support through this play. I'm not an editor, and Kate made the project fun and seamless," said director, Joanne Telfer. The actors, **Miesha Neer**, **Victoria Ranc**, and **Emily Lincoln** had only five rehearsals (all of which took place in the bathroom) and although it was difficult, came through with flying colors. **Baylie Boglioli** helped with the filming when she could.

The play can be viewed here on the school's facebook page. It's only 28 minutes long, so grab a cup of hot chocolate and settle in for some humor . . . and please disregard the terrible editing!

All in all, it was fun and definitely different! Thanks to the members of the Class of 2021 for the help and support in this very unusual circumstance.

—Mrs. Joanne Telfer, Senior Class Advisor

Yearbook Needs Your Help

We need your photos of your MCS students doing something other than sitting at a desk. We could use summer photos, fall, holiday, anything! Nothing is boring (except sitting at a desk). Please share your photos and a brief caption for each photo at the following URL: <https://images.jostens.com/415474229>. The password is the number at the end of the the URL: 415474229.

Happenings in the Art Room: In Person and Virtual

It's been a fun and busy school year so far, full of challenges and opportunities in the art room. The elementary students have been working with the Otsego County Office for Aging to create artwork and write inspiring notes for senior citizens. Second Grade students have been learning about Vincent VanGogh, and drew sunflowers inspired by his style. They also drew rural landscapes, and are creating snowflake sculptures. The Third Grade students have been learning about folk art, and the famous Vermont artist Grandma Moses. They have been making winter landscapes. Fourth Graders have been making woven baskets from repurposed materials including paper cups. The Fifth Graders have been carving soap sculptures and creating woven straw bracelets. The Sixth Graders have been studying medieval art and calligraphy. Soon they will be creating their own medieval coat of arms! The Seventh Graders have been studying and inventing their own optical illusions, and practicing weaving with looms. Eighth Graders have been making rolled paper sculptures using recycled magazine pages, and Picasso style guitar drawings.

In our painting and drawing class, we've been doing landscape painting, with a focus on light and shadow. The Studio Art class has been creating sculptures using sliced paper, and have been creating cut linoleum prints. The online students have been practicing their drawing skills. Our photography class has been mastering the fundamentals of camera use and shooting still-life photos. Mrs. Collins has been learning new things too, and is currently taking a course through the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA).

—Ms. Beth Collins, Art

Three Cheers to . . .

- All the cleaning staff and bus drivers for keeping building and busses clean.
- The cafeteria staff for keeping our students fed, even on days off!
- All the teachers and teacher's aids and teaching assistants for being creative, flexible, and hopeful during their difficult teaching times.
- All the students for working hard in spite of the unusual ways we have had to adapt our learning and teaching this year so far.
- All the families who are working hard at home, too, to support their students and the school.
- All the supporters of the sophomore class mum sale--Thank you!
- All the supporters of the junior class fundraisers
- All the supporters of the Sixth Grade Cherrydale Fundraiser for Safety Patrol! A Much Appreciated Thank You!
- Drama Club--for being adaptive and improvising so well during this unscripted time.
- All the teachers aides for helping teachers with the busy work of being a teacher, making copies, stapling, sorting, cleaning, laminating--this work is a huge time saver and the effort is much appreciated.
- Mrs. Strain for helping Mrs. Waffle with the Senior class bookmarks that they made for all faculty and staff and the Village Library as holiday gifts.
- Mrs. Parker for being the best proofreader ever!
- Mrs. Matson and Mrs. Parker for always being helpful with yearbook stuff.

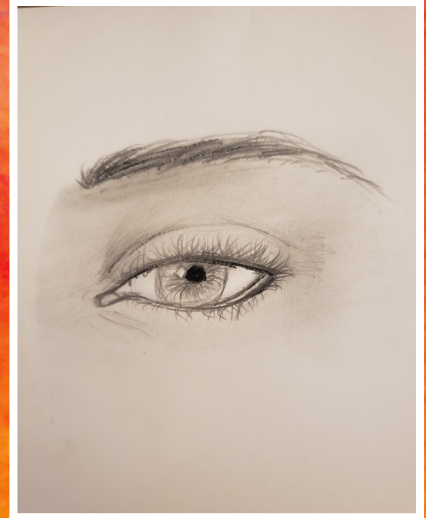
From the Art Room



Fourth Grade Basket Weaving



Fifth Grade Soap Carving



Halley Ward,
Freshman



Michelle Gates, Fifth Grade



Jed Dugan, Sixth Grade



Sierra Ratliff, Senior