

December 2023

Colonial Courier

Colonial Heights High School

Photo by Heather Claytor



The long-awaited, new fine arts wing of the school will be open to students after Winter Break. This space includes classrooms for drama, health, art, band and chorus classes.



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Colonial Heights High School

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Seniors serve community through projects

by Abigail Dodson and Carleigh Harrison

Service learning projects are a requirement for all seniors taking English 12 with Ms. Tabitha Strickler and Mr. Zach Bullis. Service learning projects are important for expanding students' learning outside of the classroom and getting teamwork experience in problem solving.

"Service learning experiences enable students to learn and apply academic, social and personal skills to improve the community, continue individual growth and develop a lifelong ethic of service," said Ms. Strickler. "We want students to think of how they can affect change in the world around them."

Addy Yin, and her group members, Anne Ramos and Ben Taft, collected donations for The James House.

"We had to pick an issue in the community, so we decided to address domestic violence since October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month," said Yin.

"We wanted to go door-to-door in Conjuror's Neck, passing out bags to donate items, but it wasn't

changes and donating the money to Colonial Heights Food Pantry. His motivation for this project started when

Photo courtesy of Tabitha Strickler



For their senior service project, Hannah Brewer, Megan Rosenberg and McKenzie Poniatowski made a poster for students to sign to show appreciation for the Colonial Heights Fire Department.

approved due to safety hazards, so we did Hat Day instead," said Yin.

The James House is an organization that helps victims of domestic violence. This group project sold \$1 heart stickers that allowed students to wear a hat. They raised \$200 to donate to The James House.

Jeff Lockhart and his group are doing discounted oil

he was 10 years old and his mom got him to volunteer at the food pantry.

"It's a skill of mine, so why not do that and donate to the food pantry?" said Lockhart. "I work at AutoZone to get them to donate the oil."

Davonte Lowry and his group members, Deyonte Owens and D'asia Owens, are collecting canned food to donate to the food pantry.

Photo courtesy of Tabitha Strickler



Aliyah Ward, Alondra Sanjurjo and Leo He served the community by picking up trash throughout the city.

“People who are hungry need food, and it is good to give to the less fortunate,” said Lowry.

They have put boxes around the school and some by a Christmas tree to encourage people to donate food.

McKenna Clendenning is doing a project on getting care for wildlife rehabilitation animals.

“My goal is to gain more help and care so these animals get a second chance at life because today many people don't care about animals at all,” said

Clendenning. “They kill, hurt, neglect or abuse them.”

“We need more volunteers and rehabilitators to take care of these animals, and people could always give a part of their time to doing this,” said Clendenning. “People can volunteer, help out, donate and many other things to help out our wildlife.”

She hopes her project encourages people to give their time to help our

Photo courtesy of Tabitha Strickler



Dylan Adams and his project group served the community by making Colonial Heights a cleaner city.

beautiful wildlife animals.

Many issues need to be addressed, and seniors get to

help the Earth by participating in problem-solving skills and teamwork through service learning projects to get involved in the community.

“After the completion of our service projects, I hope that my students will realize that they are capable of affecting change in their lives, their schools/places of employment and their communities,” said Mr. Bullis. “Helping others can sometimes seem daunting, but students now have the skills to analyze an area of need, determine the best course of action and implement a solution.”

“We want students to realize that service learning goes beyond participating in community service,” said Ms. Strickler. “It encourages them to consider areas of interest and how they can create or promote awareness. We want service learning to inspire our students and others to take action to make a change in the world around them.”

Photo courtesy of Kathleen White



For her senior service project, Kristina Henry painted and donated one of her paintings to the high school. "My painting is a representation of the weight of the world being on top of students' shoulders, the highs and lows of their responsibilities being depicted as beauty," said Henry.

Ackerman strives for excellence

by Logan Buck

"Kendall strives for excellence," said Mr. Mickey Alderson, art teacher and cross-country coach. "She sets goals for herself and works extremely hard to make them a reality."

Kendall Ackerman, 12, was awarded with the title of November Senior of the Month. Most people who know her will attribute her success to her hard-working and kind nature.

Along with her outstanding academics, Ackerman is also a runner on the CHHS cross country (XC) team. In 2023, she placed 14th at the 3A State Cross Country Meet, earning her all-state honors.

Ackerman looks forward to attending college, preferably somewhere in Virginia, and majoring in some variant of science. While she is excited, she is also going to miss her family and friends.

"I don't want to leave my family, but I'm excited to graduate," said Ackerman.

Ackerman, however, won't be the only one missing someone. Her XC team and coach are also sad to see her go.

"Kendall will be missed by the

Colonial Heights XC team," said Mr. Alderson.

While Ackerman's academics and athleticism may be intimidating, Mrs. Dana Barefoot, chemistry teacher, believes "unassuming" is a more fitting word for Ackerman.

Photo courtesy of Kendall Ackerman



Kendall Ackerman has been heavily involved in various sports, clubs and honor societies during her high school career.

"I feel the one word describing Kendall is unassuming," said Mrs. Barefoot. "Kendall is modest and humble. She loves to give back to others selflessly."

Catherine Alderson, 12, is a classmate and teammate of Ackerman's. Not only does she recognize Ackerman's character, but also her efforts to be the person she is today.

"I would describe Kendall as

determined," said Alderson. "Whether it's sports or school, she'll always put in the extra work to be successful. She's constantly running: on the weekends, in the off-season and even sometimes after practice. She does all that she can to be the best that she possibly can be."

Like Alderson, Mr. Alderson has also noticed Ackerman's ability to motivate others to do their best through her devotion.

"Kendall leads by example, and she is a quiet leader," said Mr. Alderson. "Kendall does not take shortcuts, and her teammates see this and admire her dedication."

Whether it's through Ackerman's hard-working mentality, her kind character or her modest attitude, Ackerman brings a positive light to the lives of those around her, whether she knows it or not.

"Teaching Kendall brings me joy," said Mrs. Barefoot. "She is kind, curious, and the dedication she shows to her work is admirable. Kendall is accepting and kind to all her classmates."

Stay active during the winter to boost health

by Leaha Restom

In some people's opinions, it's too cold to stay active in the winter, but it's important and benefits health. A few of the best ways to stay active in the winter are weight training, going to the gym, participating in a sport and just walking around. All of these activities help people stay active and in shape.

Weight training can benefit both athletes and those who are just trying to stay fit.

"There's a myth that lifting weights makes you slower, which is the exact opposite," said Mr. Justin Keeler, PE/weight training teacher.

Going to the gym with a friend on a daily basis is another way to stay active and motivate friends to stay active, too. A gym can be a great place to do many different types of training, like biking, running, weight lifting and even swimming. A trip to the gym with a friend creates some accountability, which is especially needed in the winter.

Photo by Heather Claytor



Travis Marks, 12, takes advantage of the high school's weight training class in order to stay in shape during the winter.

Staying active in the winter is extremely important for both athletes and people who don't play sports.

"It helps combat disease and is great for overall health," said Mrs. Misty Gunder, PE and driver's ed. teacher. "For athletes, it helps keep them at their premium level for the sport they play."

It can be easy to slack off and not stay active during the winter, but there are many benefits to continuing

activities during the winter just like the rest of the year. For athletes, staying in shape will help when they get back on the court or field to feel in shape and prepared, not weak and winded.

"It is a good thing to want to be active in the winter and moving and lifting weights and maintaining what you have been building on in other pre-seasons," said Mr. Ray Sells, PE teacher.

Superstitions bring luck in new year

by Emily Chavez-Ponce

“Take a leap of faith and begin this wondrous new year by believing,” said Sarah Ban Breathnach, author, according to Parade.com.

With the new year comes goals and wishes for the upcoming year to be better than what the last one was. Many people believe in superstitions, which are specific activities that will bring them corresponding good luck for the new year.

New year's superstitions have been around for many years. People fear that if they don't do these activities, they will be unlucky and won't get anything good out of the new year.

Superstitions are common among many people, but a few are more popular than others. According to Parade.com and Indy100.com, one superstition includes running with an empty suitcase. The purpose behind this superstition, which originated in Colombia, is to bring a year

filled with adventure and travel.

Another superstition is putting cash in a person's own wallet before the clock hits midnight. It is said that if they do this, they will have a year of prosperity.

Eating grapes is a superstition practiced by many Hispanic/Latinos. It originated in Spain. They eat 12 grapes, one for each month. If someone eats the grapes before 12:01 a.m., the grapes will bring them good luck for the year. Another superstition claims that the person should eat 12 grapes and make a wish for every

grape.

Sitting under the table is another Latin American custom. This superstition is targeted toward single people. They sit under the table at midnight in hopes of finding love in the new year.

CHHS staff and students have some of their own superstitions.

Emily Gallahun, 9, eats black eyed peas in hope of getting good luck. Gallahun believes in superstitions because “sometimes things happen that just can't be explained by normal logic.”

Mrs. Tara Seely, counselor, eats pork and sauerkraut and

Photo courtesy of Conner Roach



Conner Roach, 10, believes his new year's superstition to be goal-setting rather than just a wish for good luck. He plays a song before midnight on New Year's Eve and makes a plan to improve his music skills in the new year.

burns a bayberry candle in hopes of prosperity in the new year.

"My mom is [superstitious] and was raised, with a lot of superstitions," said Mrs. Seely. "She has definitely impacted me feeling compelled to carry on certain traditions."

Last, but not least, Conner

Roach, 10, invented a superstition for himself. Roach plays a song before the new year in hopes of his music skills improving, which in the end came true for Roach.

"To a degree, setting a goal always helps improving because it makes you want to work hard," said Roach.

"Setting a goal and committing to it helped me write catchy lyrics and catchy riffs that I can remember and other people can remember."

Although superstitions may not come true by themselves, they might push people to set goals and work toward achieving them in the new year.

What is your New Year's superstition that brings good luck ?



Kymani Brennan, 9:
"I keep up my Christmas tree until New Year's Day."



Daniel Beltran, 12:
"As a Colombian tradition, I eat 12 grapes for good luck in the next year."



Eddie Clements, 9:
"My family eats black eyed peas and cabbage and stays up until midnight."



Andrew Davenport, 12:
"I eat black eyed peas to promote good luck."



Mrs. Major, AP Government teacher:
"We'll eat collard greens on New Year's Day, which will provide good luck for wealth during the coming year."



Gifford Scott, 12:
"My family eats cheesy hot dogs. We split the hot dog open and put Cheddar on the inside and cook it so that the Cheddar melts."

Gift giving brings joy to the giver

by Cameron Blankenship

Gifts aren't meant to be kept by us, but are to be shared with everyone. As the saying goes, it's better to give than to receive.

People can give very special gifts as Cadence Martin, 11, did. She drew a portrait of herself as a baby to give to her mother.

"The gift was very special to my mom because she is a very sentimental person and the fact that I had created the piece so that it perfectly resembled me when I was little made her emotional," said Martin. "It was special to me because I was very proud of how it turned out and I knew she would love it."

Skylar Rush, 11, also created artwork for a present. She created a gift for her brother to commemorate the opening of his new business, Windsor Lavender Farm.

No matter what time of year it is, people can give a present, like Alexis Hall, 11, did. She gave a late birthday present of concert tickets for her 10-year-old sister.

"The gift was special because she and I like a lot of the same music and have always been super close," said Hall. "Her birthday had passed not too

long after I got the tickets so I decided to give her the other ticket as a surprise for always being there for me."

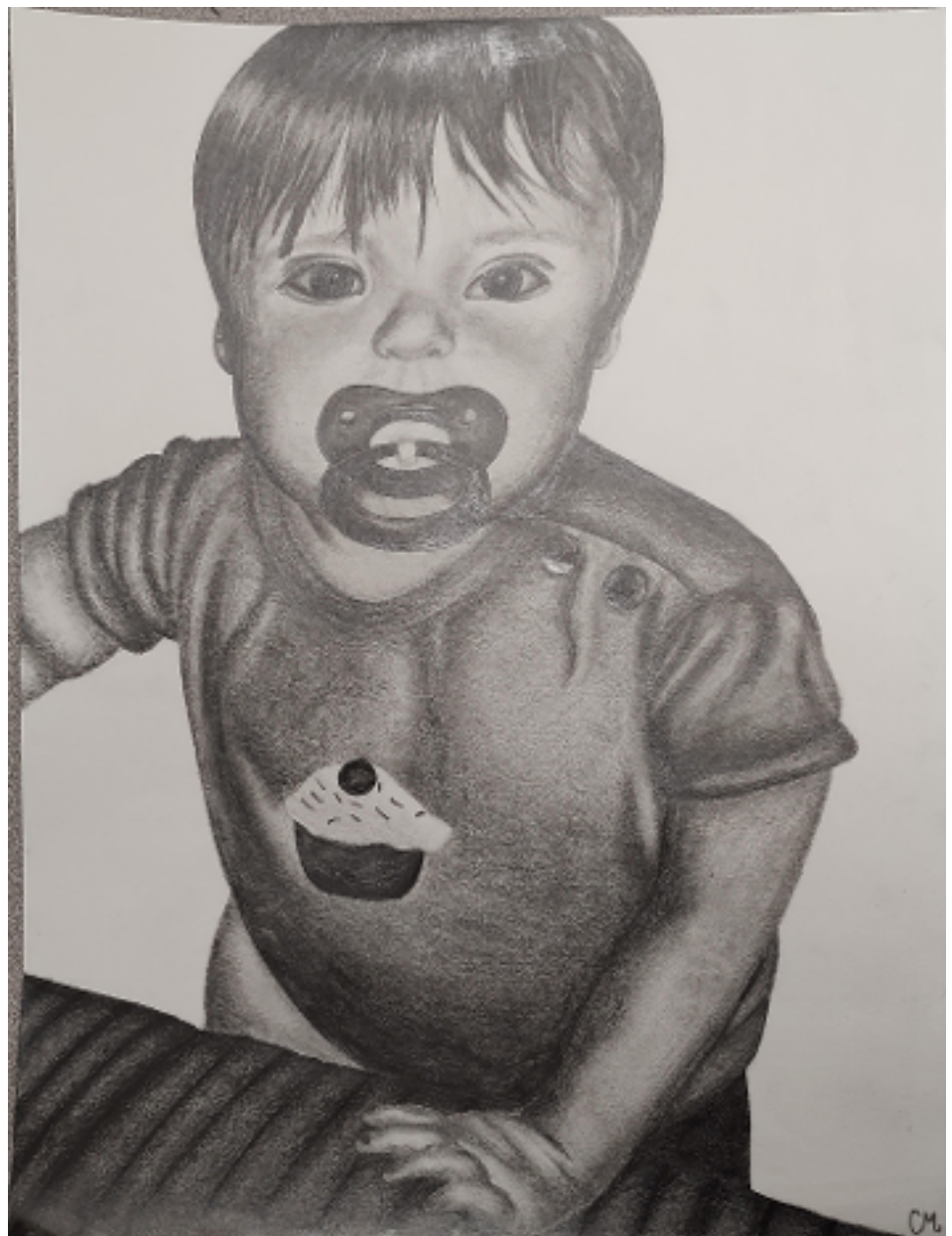
Sometimes gifts aren't items; sometimes they're experiences. Mrs. Taylor Puckett, history teacher, gave her three nieces a

weekend to Great Wolf Lodge.

"Gifting a trip was much more meaningful and appreciated, and it has sort of become a tradition in my family that the adults gift the kids experiences," said Mrs. Puckett.

The memories and the

Photo courtesy of Cadence Martin



Cadence Martin, 11, sketched a baby photo of herself to gift her mother on Mother's Day.

Photo courtesy of Melissa Anderson



Mrs. Melissa Anderson, science teacher, gifted her children, Brooks and Chandler Anderson, with two different trips to Disney World. She believes that experiences and adventures are often more valuable gifts than tangible objects are.

experiences make up for the money spent. Mrs. Melissa Anderson, science teacher, took her kids to Disney World. Mrs. Anderson knew her kids would have an amazing time.

"I knew that the kids would be excited to see their favorite characters and see them perform," said Mrs. Anderson.

In regards to gift giving, Mrs. Katherine Rudolph, Spanish teacher, believes putting thought into the gift is what makes the gift special.

"I think that it's important to think about the person you're giving the gift to and your relationship to them," said Mrs. Rudolph.

Festive songs prepare students, staff for holiday season

by Logan Coker

From “Jingle Bells” to “Rockin Around The Christmas Tree,” everybody has a favorite Christmas song. The *Colonial Courier* staff surveyed students and staff about their favorite holiday songs.

“Silent Night”

“I love this song,” said Ms. Deona Guy, school counselor. “I just feel like it holds so much emotion and makes me feel like the holiday season is here.” Ms. Guy described the song as “happy” and “makes me think of home and family.”

“Santa Claus Is Comin’ to Town” by Bruce Springstein

“My mom was a huge fan of Christmas music, so it was constantly blaring in our house growing up,” said Mr. Justin Keeler, weight training teacher and varsity football coach. “As soon as the day after Thanksgiving, she must have blared it all up until December 25.”

“All I Want For Christmas Is You” by Mariah Carey

“It gets me hype for Christmas,” said Reagan Catron, 9. “It makes me so happy and excited for Christmas, like I just wanna’ dance when I hear this song.”

“O Come, O Come Emmanuel” by The Piano Guys

“It is a really special memory to me of a time I was working in the orphanage,” said Mrs. Samantha Smith, ELA and Spanish teacher. “All the volunteers sang it half in English and half in Spanish.” Mrs. Smith said this song “makes my heart feel happy” and “reminds me of that really special time in my life.”

“What Christmas Means To Me” by John Legend

“It’s super upbeat,” said Mrs. Taylor Puckett, yearbook and history teacher. “The song makes me want to dance.”

“Being together with family is the most important thing around Christmas,” said Mrs. Puckett, “especially my kids since ultimately Christmas is about them.”

Photo courtesy of @lifeforstock



Astrological signs provide enjoyment to believers

by Anylah Thompson

According to Britannica.com, astrology's original purpose was to inform the individual of the course of his/her life based on the zodiac sign at the moment of his birth. According to lovetoknow.com, there are 12 zodiac signs, and each has unique personality traits. By understanding your zodiac signs, you can identify your strengths and weaknesses.

Aries

The zodiac sign starts March 21 and goes through April 19. Some personality traits are that they are very self-centered, they act independently, they are very confident, they are selfish at times and very risk taking. They can be out-going individuals who are friendly but also can be very competitive. They often get frustrated fast and exhausted over the little things at times.

Taurus

The zodiac sign starts April 20 and goes through May 20. Some personality traits that reflect on some Tauruses are they engage with the physical senses and they are very hard headed. When it comes down to them eating, they are very greedy.

They can be very loving and warm hearted, and you can rely on them, but they also can be self-indulgent and very stubborn. They have a bad temper when they don't get their way.

Gemini

The zodiac sign starts May 21 and goes through June 20. Some personality traits that can relate are that Geminis love to chat with people but can be messy. They want to know the information and spread it around. If you're in a relationship with a Gemini, they may lose interest quickly because it can take a lot to keep up with their attention. They are noncommittal, have trust issues, overthink a lot and are very indecisive. They are wonderful at making friends, but they are very nervous around people.

Cancer

The zodiac sign starts from June 21 and goes through July 21. Some personality traits are being sensitive and easily feeling offended, wounded and hurt about things. Cancers are very clingy because they have a fear of abandonment. They will seek reassurance and closeness so they feel they are secure in their

relationship. They are also very overprotective. They are big manipulators, and they will make you feel guilty.

Leo

The zodiac sign starts from July 22 and goes through Aug. 22. Some personality traits are that Leos are fearless and can be very stubborn; they can be very childish when you make them angry. Leos are very confident but can be indecisive; they have childlike spirits. Leos are generous and very warm-hearted but can be bossy.

Libra

The zodiac sign starts from Sept. 23 and goes from Oct. 22. Some personality traits that go with the sign are they are very easy going, they are very indecisive, and they can be changeable all the time. One thing about Libras is they are friendly and easygoing to make friends with kind-hearted people. They tend to be very flirtatious and really self-indulgent.

Scorpio

The zodiac sign starts from Oct. 23 and goes through Nov. 21. Some personality traits that go with this sign are they sense

but they won't show it, and they are very secretive about things. Scorpios can be very loyal and passionate but also can be a manipulative person. They are known for being distrusting.

Sagittarius

The zodiac sign starts from Nov. 22 and goes through Dec. 21. Some personality traits of this sign are they seek the ultimate truth, and they have a lot of faith in themselves. They are very honest and straightforward with everything but careless and very impatient, and they procrastinate a lot. Sagittarius are very independent and very open-minded.

Capricorn

The zodiac starts from Dec. 22 and goes through Jan. 19. Some personality traits of this sign are Capricorns have too much pride but also can be very patient and careful, and they can be cold, distant and sometimes stiff. Capricorns are very loyal and committed, but don't take it for granted because they are very stubborn and unforgiving.

Aquarius

This zodiac starts from Jan. 20 and goes through Feb. 18. Some personality traits of this sign are that Aquarius are friendly, honest and loyal. Aquarius are independent people; they don't need anyone to tend to their emotions. They can be very

unemotional and very unpredictable.

Pisces

This sign starts from Feb. 19 and goes through March 20. Some personality traits are Pisces are very imaginative, creative, kind, supportive and can be very emotional. They can be very gentle and compassionate with others. Pisces are really secretive and vague; they can be sensitive with criticisms and a fear of them stepping out of their comfort zone.

Even though some people might not believe in astrology, they might enjoy seeing if they fit any of the characteristics of their zodiac sign.

Photo courtesy of iStock



Survey: Sheetz voted best gas station food in town

by Bellamy Foster

Have you ever been on the road for so long and didn't know at which gas station to stop for gas, food, drinks or just a quick snack? Well, let's break down three gas stations: Wawa, Sheetz and Royal Farms, so you'll never have to wonder again.

The staff of *Colonial Courier* surveyed the CHHS students and staff to ask which local gas station has the best food. The results were as follows: Sheetz, 51.1 percent; Wawa, 37.8 percent; and Royal Farms, 11.1 percent.

Jade Goyco, 9, goes to gas stations a lot before she goes to cheer practice.

Although she goes to a lot of gas stations, she ultimately chooses Sheetz over all of them.

"I would pick Sheetz easily," said Goyco. "It definitely is the winner for me. It's very accessible and always has what I want or need."

Goyco loves Sheetz so much that every time she goes, she

has to try something different, but in the process of always getting something new, she still has a favorite item.

"I love Sheetz's mozzarella sticks," said Goyco. "They're always so cheesy and made just how I like them: crispy and flavorful on the outside with the breading being lightly salted and flavored with -- I don't even know what the seasoning is called, but it's like green, I don't know. It's perfect, like the perfect bite, and the cheese is melty and not hard in any spots. It's amazing."

Goyco said she goes to Sheetz about three times a week, after cheerleading

practice and just for everyday reasons.

"Since I go so much, describing it to someone who's never been is a walk in the park," said Goyco. "Walking into a Sheetz is like walking into the gates of heaven. The smell is like all your favorite foods and the visuals are like all your favorite snacks. It's definitely an experience."

Goyco said she can't eat without a drink.

"A Mango Arizona Tea is what I get with my food from Sheetz," said Goyco. "They're my favorite, and they are never out of them."

Goyco said her mom uses Sheetz as a reward for her

Photo courtesy of www.wfxrtv.com



being a cheerleader and a good daughter.

"Sheetz is the best," said Goyco. "No other answers are valid."

Jayden Creech, 9, said when he goes to Sheetz, he gets everything.

"I personally like their chicken tenders or their fry platter and their pizza," said Creech. "The barbeque sauce is pretty good. I like to make the fry platter like a loaded plate of fries, so I put lettuce, tomato and some form of meat on it. I like their pepperoni pizza."

He rarely eats at gas stations, but when he does, he said he goes to Sheetz and gets their slushies and mixes flavors. Creech says he would describe Sheetz like a better version of Wawa.

"I really like Sheetz because their hot fries [are] always

Image courtesy of Sheetz.com



stocked up," said Creech.

Creech loves milkshakes and said that Sheetz has the best of the best.

"I get the milkshake, the cookies and cream one," said Creech.

Jordyn Chandler, 9, had a difficult time choosing between Wawa and Sheetz as her favorite. She said she likes to get the little stuff instead of actual appetizers. She said she really likes getting small stuff like fries or mozzarella sticks and making them into a meal.

"When I go to Sheetz, I get the loaded cheese bites," said Chandler. "They're so good right after school, like 3-6 o'clock on a regular day."

Chandler said she's really picky, and if she goes anywhere like fast food, she gets a dark soda, such as Coke, Pepsi or Dr Pepper, but

when she goes to Sheetz, she said she can't refuse their strawberry lemonade.

"Their strawberry lemonade with light ice is to die for," said Chandler.

"I'd say that Sheetz has better qualities than Royal Farms and Wawa, not even mentioning their food, and when I go, I get good customer service, like I haven't had a bad experience with them," said Chandler.

Lastly, Mr. Nicholas Davis, science teacher, said he thinks Sheetz is the obvious winner.

"I picked Sheetz for the M.T.O. (made to order) food," said Mr. Davis. "I won't go and get something if it isn't M.T.O."

He said he gets the nachos when he goes and that they're the best nachos in town.

"Nachos -- 110 percent -- is what I get every time without fail," said Mr. Davis.

Mungro-Johnson receives numerous college offers

by Shamaya Desmore

Kenyez Mungro-Johnson, 12, positioned as running back and safety for the varsity football team, has been heavily recruited by college scouts. According to Mungro-Johnson, his greatest

achievement was getting his first offer from the Air Force Academy.

Mungro-Johnson's mother insisted he stay busy and active.

"Honestly, nobody [inspired me], but my mom forced me

to play sports, so I started playing football," said Mungro-Johnson, who also runs indoor track during the winter.

Mr. Justin Keeler, head varsity football coach, described Mungro-Johnson as "very coachable, hardworking, and a great team player." According to Mr. Keeler, who has been coaching him for three years, Mungro-Johnson does whatever the team needs to be successful.

Mungro-Johnson likes being "on his game" and studying when he's not doing football-related activities.

"School comes first," said Mungro-Johnson. "Then, after school, I do football stuff."

Right now he has seven offers, but his main goal is to get more. His seven offers include Air Force, Army, Navy, Colgate, Bryant, Delaware State and Old Dominion University.

These colleges are interested in him because his credentials are valid.

Photo courtesy of Kenyez Mungro-Johnson



Out of his seven offers, Kenyez Mungro-Johnson, 12, is currently leaning toward committing to Old Dominion University.

Mungro-Johnson runs a 4.5, and he has the size, height, weight and speed that college recruiters are looking for.

Mungro-Johnson learns from both wins and losses.

“Losses, you just learn from them and get better, and wins, I still figure out what I did wrong,” said Mungro-Johnson.

A few of his teammates, Tamiq Francis, 12; Lashawn Spencer, 12; and Isaiah Taylor, 12; had a few words to

Photo courtesy of Kenyez Mungro-Johnson



Kenyez Mungro-Johnson, 12, learns from losses, which he said make him a stronger player.

say about him. Francis said that Mungro-Johnson “hustles

and handles business.”

Spencer said that Mungro-Johnson “pushes everyone around him to go hard and he wants everyone to succeed and do as good as he does.”

Taylor added that “he never slows down” and “he gets things done if he gets the ball.”

These teammates describe Mungro-Johnson as “caring, reserved, hardworking and dedicated to the game.”

Photo courtesy of Kenyez Mungro-Johnson

**Region 3A 2ND TEAM
LINEBACKER**

COLONIAL HEIGHTS FOOTBALL

KENYEZ MUNGRO-JOHNSON | OLB | SR

**79 TOTAL TKLS | 6 SACKS | 8.5 TKFL INT | 1 TD | 2 FF
5 FR | 6 PBU | 8 QB PRESSURES**

Nicholson competes at national level

by Heather Claytor

For 14 consecutive years, Lyric Nicholson, 11, has dedicated her life to her favorite sport: cheer. Nicholson is now cheering for the varsity football sideline team, the competition team and the boys JV and varsity basketball team. Outside of school, she competes for FAME SUPER SENIORS.

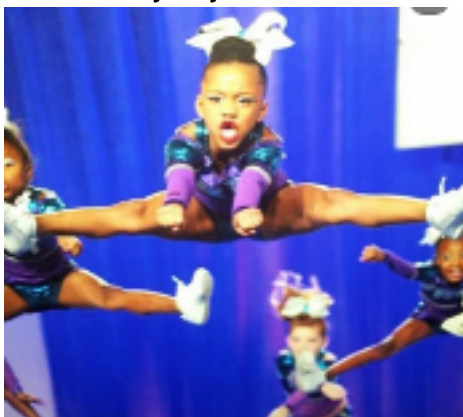
Nicholson started with FAME on a level-two team named Supermodels for two years, and then she cheered on a junior, level-three team named Rockstars. After those years, she competed on a junior, level-five team named J5 for nine years, and now she is cheering for her second year on FAME SUPER SENIORS, which is a senior,

Photo courtesy of Lyric Nicholson



Lyric Nicholson, 11, has gained many skills throughout her years of cheering. Along the years, she has also made many friends with people from all over the area.

Photo courtesy of Lyric Nicholson



Lyric Nicholson, 11, has devoted 14 years of her life to cheer.

all-girl level six team.

Throughout her cheering years, Nicholson has traveled many places for her competitions.

“My most favorite competition is called Battle at the Capital or now considered Coastal at the Capital, located

in Northern Virginia,” said Nicholson. “I enjoy seeing old friends from different teams and old coaches. The food is also amazing down in that area as well!!!”

After being on so many different teams, Nicholson has made friends from all

over the area. Her favorite aspect about cheer includes the bonds she has made with her teammates.

"I enjoy cheering with Lyric because she motivates you to do your best and over achieve," said Destiny Childs, 11, and one of Lyric's teammates.

Along with creating friendships with her teammates, Nicholson has developed plenty of bonds with her coaches.

"She is one of the politest girls I have coached," said Mrs. Mary Vaughan, college and career specialist and Nicholson's sideline cheer coach. "She does a great job teaching her teammates motions, skills and new cheers. She does all-star cheer as well as high school and balances all her practices and school work."

Cheerleading involves the risk of injuries, Nicholson suffered a hard ACL tear three years ago, and just last year she tore her MCL.

"It had a huge impact on me," said Nicholson. "It was

sad that I couldn't do the one thing I love. I got hurt doing a tumble pass called a three-double."

Although she went through these difficult injuries, she still continues to cheer competitively for FAME and hopes to possibly continue her cheer career in college.

"A long-term goal I have for

cheering is to make it through this cheer season with a positive outcome no matter what happens," said Nicholson. "I am still debating on if I want to cheer in college. I feel like I am able to get a scholarship to a school and provide my skills to be the best!"

Photo courtesy of Lyric Nicholson



Lyric Nicholson, 11, has cheered and been friends with Destiny Childs, 11, since middle school.

It's never too late to start a new sport

by Noah Patsel

Just because a student has never played an organized sport before doesn't mean that it's too late to start. One of the best ways to get started is to work on their skills in that sport and get

and faster, it is also important to learn how to play the game. Some sports, like field hockey, require more skills than other sports do.

“Stick work, or like footwork, just working with a ball, in your

Knowing how to play the sport is important, but this knowledge is useless if people don't know how to control their mental state. In all sports, there is big room for error, so it is important to understand that failure is a part of the game.

“Being prepared physically and mentally comes from being confident,” said Mr. Brennan Hoffer, varsity baseball coach. “The best way to be confident is to put yourself in a position to succeed by coming to workouts and working hard to get better.”

Mr. Brandon Greenwood, history teacher and football and softball coach, thinks it is important to play many sports. Mr. Greenwood also believes that attending off-season workouts is a good way to prepare for tryouts, whether if it is someone's first time trying out for the team or they are a returning players.

Mr. Gerald Carsley, activities director, offered some advice for students who want to try out for a sport for the first time.

“Reach out to the coach and attend workouts to see if it is something you might be interested in,” said Mr. Carsley.

Photo courtesy of Casey Crow



Being physically and mentally prepared for the sport a potential athlete is interested in is very important. They must know a certain set of skills and also be ready to see failure so that they can learn and see the results they are hoping for.

faster, bigger and stronger.

“The best thing you can do when you try out for a team is being in the best shape that you possibly can,” said Mr. Justin Keeler, weight training teacher and varsity football coach. “Conditioning is the most important thing.”

Apart from getting stronger

backyard,” said Mrs. Casey Crow, field hockey coach and English teacher, about ways for prospective field hockey players to learn the game. “Getting comfortable with using [the field hockey stick] would be the best thing to do. Also, maybe watching YouTube videos. If you have no basic idea, go to YouTube.”

Opinion: Holiday drinks lighten up holiday season

by Lamoni Jordan

Starbucks and Dunkin' Donuts have been going up for the holiday drinks this year. Starbucks' beverages include the Iced Sugar Cookie Almond Milk Latte, Caramel

Photo courtesy of starbucks.com



Brulée Latte and Chestnut Praline Latte.

In comparison, the Toasted White Chocolate Signature Iced Latte, Iced Cookie Butter Latte, Peppermint Mocha Signature Latte and other seasonal beverages are available on the Dunkin' Donuts menu.

Starbucks' Christmas menu contains four new drinks this year. There are three at Dunkin'.

First up at Starbucks, the

Caramel Brulée Latte scores a 9 out of 10. I usually get the Iced White Mocha Latte, and this tastes a lot like it. The drink is perfect for people who enjoy caramel.

Next up for Starbucks, the Toasted White Chocolate

Mocha tastes a lot like what I usually get as well. This drink is great for people who prefer white chocolate candy; in my opinion, it's a 10 out of 10. It's going to be a lifetime favorite of mine.

I wasn't a fan of the Cookie Butter Cold Brew at Dunkin', but it wasn't horrible. Like with cookies and milk, I don't like the soggy cookie texture. I give this drink a five out of 10 for the drink itself; I could not stand the mushy cookies inside.

Dunkin's Toasted White Chocolate Signature Latte and Starbucks' version are highly comparable. Since both tastes were so close, I would choose Dunkin' since it had a more melted white chocolate flavor. I give it a perfect score for looks, flavor and all-around quality.

In the end, I would give the entire experience of sampling this season's drinks a 10 out of 10. If you need some holiday treats to go along with your holiday beverages, try the newest cake pops at Starbucks and the festive donuts at Dunkin'.

Photo courtesy of dunkindonuts.com

