

## Mrs. Criswell Says Farewell to Freeman

**Sydney Tyler**  
Sports Editor

After 34 years at Freeman, Suzanne Criswell has decided that the 2020-2021 school year will be her last as Freeman's Director of Student Activities. Mrs. Criswell has dedicated her life to education, spending 42 years in the field, 34 of which have been at Freeman.

With her fifth grandchild on the way, Mrs. Criswell will be stepping away from the Freeman family to focus on her immediate family. "I never missed anything my kids did and this job would require me to miss those things for my grandkids and I don't want to do that," she said.

While impactful, Mrs. Criswell's years at Freeman have not always been smooth sailing. On her first day of work as a physical education (PE) teacher here at Freeman, Mrs. Criswell entered the big gym to discover that the floor had developed two large bubbles over the weekend, making it unusable. This bump in the road took until December to get fixed, so she was forced to adapt. "We ended up having to play volleyball in the small gym that year," said Mrs. Criswell.

Since then, Mrs. Criswell has been involved in numerous



PHOTO: CLAIRE MORRIS

**Mrs. Criswell has worked at Freeman for 34 years.**

projects around the school and athletics department. Some projects she's worked on include the new turf field, updates to the upper fields and softball field, and improvements to the baseball area. "All [the projects] have been challenging, but if you love a family you do what you can for them," said Mrs. Criswell. "This is an extraordinary community that does whatever they can to support Freeman without question."

"Mrs. Criswell's legacy is one of commitment," said Chapin George, Boys Varsity Basketball coach. "She was, and will always be, committed to this school,

committed to these students, committed to the values and

*"She was, and will always be, committed to this school,"*

- Chapin George

image of Douglas Freeman."

Mrs. Criswell has been flexible over the years, doing whatever she could to benefit the Freeman community. In 1987, her first year at Freeman, the student activities director at the time asked her to coach gymnastics. But as she was

scheduled to have her second child in the middle of the season, she instead challenged herself to coach Junior Varsity (JV) girls basketball. "I knew nothing about basketball, but if they were willing to teach me I was willing to coach," said Mrs. Criswell.

Since her time as girls basketball coach, Mrs. Criswell has found the most rewarding part of her job to be helping students discover their passion. "I hate watching sports on TV, so having the opportunity to watch young athletes [in real life] work hard and play at [their] passion is always rewarding and fulfilling," she said.

But supervising athletics only makes up part of Mrs. Criswell's job. She is also in charge of overseeing, planning, and coordinating all student activities including quiz bowl and theatre's one act competition. She said, "Seeing students' phenomenal work in the one act competition is always a highlight" and "watching battle of the brains answer questions I don't even understand is amazing."

For Mrs. Criswell, the job of student activities director goes deeper than the job description. "I hope that whoever sits at this desk understands the scope of this job- it's helping kids find and realize a passion," said Mrs.

Criswell.

"Mrs. Criswell preaches responsibility, accountability, [and] discipline," said Mr. George.

From PE teacher to coach to Student Activities Director, Mrs. Criswell has helped every student that has walked through Freeman's doors find and pursue their passion.

Mr. George said, "When I realized I wanted to teach and coach at my alma mater, I went by [Mrs. Criswell's] office to thank her and with a huge smile. She said, 'Welcome home.'"

"Mrs. Criswell has always made an effort to watch and support us," said junior girls basketball player AK Canavos. "She would come over after games and talk with us about different things that happened that game and it always made my night."

After 34 years and impacting thousands of lives, it is no surprise that Freeman has been a special place for Mrs. Criswell. "Freeman is family, it's seen me through a lot," said Criswell. "I came to work every day loving this place and loving the jobs I've had here. I love this place."

The Freeman family will miss you. Thank you for your dedication and hard work Mrs. Criswell!

## HCPS Greenlights Outdoor Graduation



PHOTO: HENRICO SCHOOLS

**Henrico County principals and administrators on the Richmond Raceway track**

**Jack Harenchar**  
Online Editor-In-Chief

Despite spending most of their senior year online, things appear to be in order for Henrico County Public School (HCPS) seniors to end high school on a high note.

On March 17, HCPS announced that they plan to hold in-person, outdoor graduation ceremonies for the Class of 2021, adhering to Governor Ralph Northam's COVID guidelines. The governor's guidance on graduations provides that outdoor ceremonies may take place with a maximum occupancy of 5,000 people, or 30 percent of a venue's capacity, as long as patrons wear masks and adhere to social distancing and hand-cleaning protocols.

Last spring, the coronavirus pandemic forced Henrico County to cancel typical graduation ceremonies, held at VCU's Seigel Center. Abbreviated graduation ceremonies for the Class of 2020 took the form of driving around the Richmond Raceway and individual cap and gown photo sessions as students received their diplomas.

While graduation last year wasn't ideal, Freeman Class of 2020 graduate Hill Nystrom said that "the Nascar and small group ceremonies were safe, fun replacements and gave us an opportunity to say goodbye to friends and teachers." He added that

he was not as upset about losing graduation as he was about "los[ing] the entirety of [his] senior second semester."

Senior Amanda Gagen said that "[she] had a bunch of friends who graduated last year and they had ... little group gatherings with each other ... [but] it's definitely missing something not to have everyone all together." That won't be an issue this year.

With HCPS giving the go-ahead for traditional graduations in 2021, Senior Amanda Gagen said that she was "really happy to see that we are going to be in person for [graduation]."

While not releasing details initially, the school district finally announced on April 23 that the Richmond Raceway would hold the ceremonies for 9 of this year's graduating classes. Each student will be given four tickets for friends and family who will sit socially distanced in the grandstands while students graduate on a stage down on the track. Freeman's graduation ceremony is scheduled for Wednesday, June 16, at 10 a.m.

Until recently, current seniors were unsure of the form that their ceremony would take with graduation rapidly approaching. "Me and a lot of my friends were worried that we weren't going to be able to have in-person graduation," said Amanda. "[It is] really important to me ... [and] I feel like it's a really nice way to get closure on high school."

Despite not sharing the same

anticipation towards graduation as students, teacher Rob Peck understands the sentimental value that the celebration holds for students and their families.

"A public moment where we acknowledge all the graduating seniors, where we think about next steps, where we celebrate past successes," said Mr. Peck, "[holds] enormous value."

In regards to graduation for the Class of '21, Mr. Peck said that he "applaud[s] the county's decision to do what it can to give our graduating seniors as normal an experience as they can." He added that

*"Anything we can do to celebrate the work the students have put in has to be a good thing.."*

- Rob Peck

"anything we can do to celebrate the work the students have put in has to be a good thing."

"[Graduation is] a chance to celebrate the people who have helped you along the way," said Freeman Principal John Marshall, noting that he remembers his own graduation vividly. "[It's] a moment for families to celebrate all the little sacrifices that it takes to raise a child and for students to gather one last time with their community of friends, classmates and teachers who have contributed to their journey."

Looking forward to her graduation day, Amanda says that she is most excited about the class's commencement speaker. "I admire them a lot [because] it takes a lot to get up in front of the class and speak and I just think it's really sweet to hear what they have to say to people that they've had so many experiences with."

While certainly, no plans in the COVID-19 era are completely safe, Hill said that seniors should try to, "have a good time... but enjoy your last moments as a high schooler," no matter what graduation looks like.

### How to Register to Vote



**You must:**

- be 18 years old by the next election
- be a U.S. Citizen
- have no criminal record

**Important Dates:**  
Online, in-person, and mail registration must be completed or postmarked 22 days before Election Day

These forms can be obtained from your local registration office or online



# Collegeboard's New AP Schedule

	12:00 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT)	4:00 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time
Tuesday, May 18, 2021	English Literature and Composition	Computer Science A
Wednesday, May 19, 2021	European History	Art History
	United States History	Macroeconomics
Thursday, May 20, 2021	United States Government and Politics	Psychology
	World History: Modern	

The schedule for the first week of AP testing.

**Grayson Horner**  
Online Editor-in-Chief

2021 has presented more than its fair share of setbacks, and nowhere is that more true than in the classroom. Teachers have struggled to teach course content in a timely fashion, and many classes have fallen behind.

This spring, the College Board recognized these setbacks and decided to update the Advanced Placement (AP) Exam calendar significantly. The vast majority of AP Exams will be administered after May 18, an almost three-week delay from the standard AP testing window.

The new tests have elicited many different reactions, but a common theme is relief for the additional time to work on assignments. Junior Brett Bishop, who is currently

enrolled in seven AP classes, is thrilled with the change. "I am excited about the new AP testing schedule," said Brett.

Brett is particularly thrilled at the prospect of "more opportunity for studying, and also more time to learn all of the content."

AP Students are also questioning the online format of the exams and are looking for more information from the College Board, "I am not exactly sure what to expect from a fully online exam," said Brett.

While navigating the online exams will present a unique challenge, students taking foreign language exams will have to navigate both online and in-person exams.

The new 2021 schedule takes a burden off of pressured teachers and students, but students wonder how they will use their additional time to prepare. AP Spanish teacher Mrs. Carroll recommends that

students "familiarize themselves with the test format and environment."

Mrs. Carroll is teaching one of the exams that is scheduled to be administered in-person and not virtually. Her advice to students is that they "should try and familiarize themselves with the in-person environment, and particularly the recording devices."

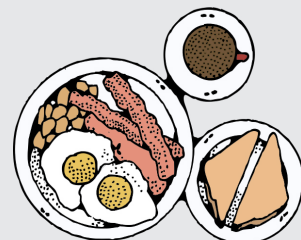
Managing both in-person and online exams presents a new challenge for AP testers this year. Students will be forced to familiarize themselves with two ways of taking tests, and teachers will bear the burden of teaching them how to do it.

But overall, the new testing schedule should help teachers and students alike. According to AP Calculus Teacher Ryan Densley, "this [schedule change] is a golden opportunity, don't waste it."

PHOTO: COLLEGEBOARD

## AP Test Checklist

- Studying?
- AP ID?
- AP Software?
- Calculator?
- Pencil?
- A Good Night's Sleep?
- Breakfast?



# Hybrid Learning Commences At Freeman

**Madeux Cassidy**  
Copy Editor

When Henrico County Public Schools (HCPS) decided to allow students to return to school, Freeman students faced a decision about whether to return in-person or stay online. On March 8, 2021, Freeman welcomed back 753 students as in-person learners and commenced hybrid learning. Hybrid learning is a new experience for most students, teachers and administrators, and poses a learning curve for everyone.

Many students elected to return to in-person learning. "I decided to come back in-person because I couldn't focus while in virtual classes and I felt disconnected from my classmates," said freshman Annabelle Nee. "I have adjusted pretty well to hybrid learning, I think. It is definitely easier to pay attention in my classes and I overall enjoy my classes more, but lunch isn't as fun."

*"I have adjusted pretty well to hybrid learning,"*  
- Annabelle Nee

On the other hand, many students decided to stay online. Senior Alex Roever said, "When I learned of what in-person learning would be like it didn't feel like real school." The main factor that kept students at home was their lunch freedom. "I can go where I want during lunch, which is super nice," said Alex.

This decision was complicated for all, and many students chose to sample in-person learning before making their final choice. Parents played a key role in encouraging an experimental period before coming to a final decision. Sophomore Grayson Archibeque said, "I was really up in the air with my decision to either stay home or go back, so I tried it for a week to help me make that fi-



PHOTO: MRS. MCMUNN

Students attend Mrs. McMunn's 2nd period in-person class.

nal decision on where I wanted to learn for the remainder of the year." Henrico County allows students to opt out of in-person at any time but does not allow online students to opt into in-person learning from virtual.

Many students followed Grayson's approach, which led to a decrease of total in-person learners to 689 students, as some students opted back into online learning. When asked about her decision to pull out of in-person learning, junior Charlotte Hare said, "Most of my grade [level] did not come back [to] in-person, so my class sizes were very small and none of my friends came back. If given the option again [to return], I guess it would depend on whether my friends came back in-person as well."

"I started out with about half of each of my classes returning for in-person. About half [of those] have since returned to virtual learning,

" said Jeremy Booher, a science and math teacher at Freeman. "It's a tough call to make, and I was glad to hear how many of my students were allowed to make the decision for themselves."

Despite the difficulties of hybrid learning, students on both sides think it has been a success. "I think it's kinda tricky balancing virtual with in-person students, but most of my teachers are doing a really good job, and we all try to help when we can," said Annabelle Nee.

Charlotte Hare shared similar sentiments from an online student's perspective. She said, "Hybrid learning has worked extremely well. All my teachers have been really good about making sure they are communicating with both in-person and virtual students."

"I think we can all agree that, even a month later, the adjustment to hybrid learning is still in progress," said Mr. Booher. Hybrid

learning creates a natural divide between students which leads to different connections. "Even after coming back, I still don't feel like people are connecting to each other in the same way they would if we weren't in the midst of a pandemic," said Mr. Booher.

"Maybe we've all forgotten how to interact with groups of people in [a] year that we've been without." Annabelle said. "I do not feel as connected to my online classmates as my in-person classmates, because those people I get to talk to during transitions and when we aren't actively doing anything, but I really like my online classmates and I look forward to getting to know them better next year."

Despite the estranged connections, many online students have seen benefits. Charlotte said, "Personally, since online learning started I have gotten better with time management. It is important as a virtual student to really

*"Personally, since online learning started I have gotten better with time management."*  
-Charlotte Hare

make sure you stay on top of your work since you are not with your teacher. I have also gotten better at reaching out to teachers when I need help."

Hybrid learning has been new for everyone but Freeman has adapted well and we will see what the future holds for our education. The constant adjustment is one of the effects of the pandemic and there will certainly be more to come.

"I feel like I'm still gonna be 'off' next year when the hallways switch up and I finally find out where the cafeteria is," said Annabelle.

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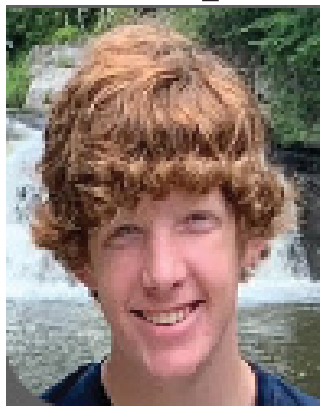
**Freeman Cheer-leading During COVID-19**

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**In 5...4...3...2...1... iCarly Reboot**

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# School Sports: Recreational?



**Cameron Cavender**  
Sports Editor

Just about all of us grew up playing recreational (rec) sports, whether it was soccer, basketball, football, baseball, or something else. We all remember that one parent who brought snacks for the whole team, or when the team got a treat or a trophy at the end of a long, fun season.

Recently, Virginia Governor Ralph Northam classified high school sports as “recreational.” However, they are far from that. We all know rec sports growing up were a way for kids to have fun and improve at the sports they love. High school sports, on the other hand, are focused on winning.

There’s an old saying in rec sports that “everyone’s a winner as long as you have fun”. This is mostly the case at that young age, but once you get to high school, the mindset changes. In high school and beyond, “you play to win the game” as former college football coach Herm Edwards famously said.

The fine line between recreational sports and competitive sports is when there are tryouts where only the best players make the team. In high school, the majority of sports are exactly this way. Coaches are looking for the best players and athletes to construct the best possible team they can. This

is a stark contrast to parents “coaching” in rec leagues when we were younger, with the sole job to make sure the kids had fun. In high school, players have to earn their playing time, while in rec leagues, everyone gets equal playing time to make sure everyone gets to contribute to the game.

Being a high school athlete also comes with a lot of dedication. Many, if not all, high school teams practice every single day after school. Some even watch film, and many train outside of school. This is all to become the best player, the best athlete, and ultimately the best team that they can be. Bottom line, high school athletes want to be the best, and they want to win. This is vastly different from rec teams with one team practice a week to have some fun and learn the basic fundamentals of the sport.

There is no pressure at the rec level because it’s just a game. There are no college scouts at rec sports games. Yes, in high school, players should still have fun. There’s no reason to play if you don’t enjoy what you’re doing. But high school athletes also have something to play for. They play hard to win, and maybe, just maybe, they have a chance to get seen by college recruiters.

It’s not all about scholarships either; high school sports give players a much better chance to keep playing in college. They give players an opportunity to potentially play the sports they love at the next level and compete at an even higher level.

All this being said, Ralph Northam missed the mark when he classified high school sports as “recreational,” because they are far from it. Playing rec sports is important for everyone - it’s a part of growing up - but high school sports are a completely different story.

## She Said



**Cindy Xie**  
Opinions Editor

It’s alright, but *Community* and *Parks and Rec* are elite.

Ian Somerhalder is way overrated.

Everyone who’s watched *Grey’s* has gone through a phase where they wanted to be a surgeon... me included.

Couldn’t even finish the first episode, sorry not sorry.

I don’t remember the plot, but that theme song was banging.

I’ve never watched the show, but the bathroom scene where they sing “Telephone” is iconic.

## She Said



**Isabelle Hevron**  
Opinions Editor

People who don’t like *The Office* have no sense of humor and think they’re better than everyone else.

Team Stefan all the way!!!

I tried to watch it, but I refuse to sit through 17 seasons of people working in a hospital.

The show is interesting and I <3 Spencer Reid.

It was something to get through quarantine, thought it was good but looking back at it I was probably just bored.

Matthew Morrison starring in it? No thank you. I will never watch this show.



**The Office**

**The Vampire Diaries**

**Grey’s Anatomy**

**Criminal Minds**

**Outer Banks**

**Glee**

# Review of the New Schedule



**Cindy Xie**  
Opinions Editor

Usually, when someone thinks of their “first day of school,” it is a day filled with the excitement of reuniting with peers and teachers, and hope of a new school year filled with lasting memories. Usually, you end the day by catching up with old friends and gossiping about the teachers you have. However, this year, my first day ended with a pounding headache and tears, not of joy, swelling in my eyes while I lay on the floor. From 9:00 a.m. to 3:55 p.m., members of the Freeman community were staring drowsily at their bright screens, barely moving throughout the whole day. To say the least, it was definitely not the ideal first day.

When hybrid parallel learning started in March, the new school day ran from 9:10 a.m. to 2:45 p.m. - a difference of 1 hour and 20 minutes from the original schedule. This new schedule change was not only convenient for the functioning of parallel hybrid learning, but necessary for the wellbeing of students and faculty at Freeman.

After the first day of virtual school, I felt completely drained and unmotivated. I thought, “How will I be able to do this for the next nine months?” Junior Grace Johnson felt similarly. “The original schedule was very difficult for students who had to [look] at a screen for seven hours at a time, so I think that moving the end of the day from 3:55 p.m. to 2:45 p.m. was a good decision,” she said.

Senior Morgan VanHimbergan said, “With [the new schedule], I feel like I have more of my day



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK

to be proactive and take my own time to focus on the material.”

Being virtual, the part I enjoy most about our new schedule is that I get to sleep in for a few extra minutes - every second counts. In person students benefit from this modified schedule as well. Junior Clarke Wickham said, “I can get to all my classes with plenty of time to spare.”

Even though this new schedule was a great change to fit the abnormal school year, there are still parts of it that students wish to revise. “If I could change one thing about the schedule, I would not make it required for virtual students to log into Freeman Focus because it only lasts one minute and is right in the middle of lunch, which splits the break into awkward sections,” Grace said. I wholeheartedly agree with this; the attendance in Freeman Focus seems unnecessary as we already take live attendance in each class period.

In-person lunch hasn’t been perfect, either. Clarke said, “[During lunch], it is difficult to talk to friends through the plastic shields. I wish we had a little longer [time].”

I can’t talk about the new schedule without addressing the new addition of “Wellness Wednesdays.” It’s pretty clear that Wellness Wednesdays are one of the best things to come out of this school year so far. Having an asynchronous day to catch up on work is a big relief for students and teachers. There are only 25

minutes of work assigned per class, and many times, it’s possible to knock all of it out before lunchtime. The option to not attend the wellness lesson during Freeman focus on Wednesday mornings and instead fill out an attendance Google Form is accommodating to those who are not early birds - like me. Without the implementation of Wellness Wednesdays, the students and teachers of Freeman would have burned out long before the school year ended. We should all thank Wellness Wednesdays for being the hero we needed.

The new schedule has received positive feedback from Freeman students and faculty alike. The incorporation of Wellness Wednesdays, two lunches, and modified class times allow for more independence for online students and safety precautions for those in person. “Nearby private schools have stuck to the previous longer school day schedule and from hearing what their students think about it, I believe Freeman made the right decision ... during this difficult time,” said Morgan. The new schedule is definitely a 10/10; it’s reasonable and doesn’t feel as draining as the schedule we had at the beginning of the year. It was not realistic to directly translate the schedule from normal school years to this online school year - it had to be changed. Thankfully, I no longer have blistering headaches and strained eyes by the end of each day!

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Letters to the editor are encouraged. They must be signed before they can be printed. Because of variety and space, only a limited number of letters can be published. The Commentator reserves the right not to print a letter.

## What Time Is It? Summer Time!



**Isabelle Hevron**  
Opinions Editor

June 18, 2021. The last official day of the 2020-2021 school year. For most Freeman students, this academic year “has been weird and definitely stressful,” according to junior Niamh Preis. Classic Freeman traditions that students are usually able to enjoy, including chanting the C.W. during pep rallies, going all out in camouflage for Godwin games, and marching down Three Chopt Road before the homecoming game have been replaced by Microsoft Teams meetings and Schoology posts. Although this year of masks and social distancing is “starting to feel like our new normal” said Niamh, it seems “we’re making real progress to get back our regular life.” According to National Public Radio (NPR), over 205 million Americans have received at least the first dose of their vaccine as of April 18, 2021. As the vaccine becomes more available, Freeman students are collectively hoping that in the summer of 2021, “everything is going to get better and we are going to start transitioning back to normal life,” said senior Jonah Ratner.

Around Richmond, there’s a variety of things students are looking forward to during their three-month break. “Spending the day at the James River during the summer, listening to music, and hanging out with friends on the rocks is a good way to get outside,” said Niamh. Senior Gavin Jones agrees that the river is a great way to spend time with friends. “Going down to the James is always fun, it’s something I’d recommend to anyone bored this summer,” said Gavin.

Belle Isle and Pony Pasture, two popular spots on the river, have hiking trails and festivals throughout the summer, making them well-known spots around RVA. However, there is much more to Richmond than just the river. “I’d recommend going to the Circuit Arcade downtown, it has very cool art and is always a fun time,” said Jonah.

The best way to end a summer day, whether it is spent at the James River or the Circuit Arcade, is with music. “I love just driving around with the windows down and the music blasting,” said Niamh. “It’s the thing I look forward to the most, honestly!” Niamh has a few go-to songs that she will definitely be playing this summer. “I love ‘The Backseat Lovers’ by Kilby Girl, and ‘The Worst Guys’ by Childish Gambino, they’re both on my playlist,” she said. You can also catch Jonah, a Kanye West enthusiast, listening to “Father Stretch My Hands Pt. 1” on his summer drives. However, according to Gavin, “‘Unwritten’ by Natasha Bedingfield is the best song to play in the car.”

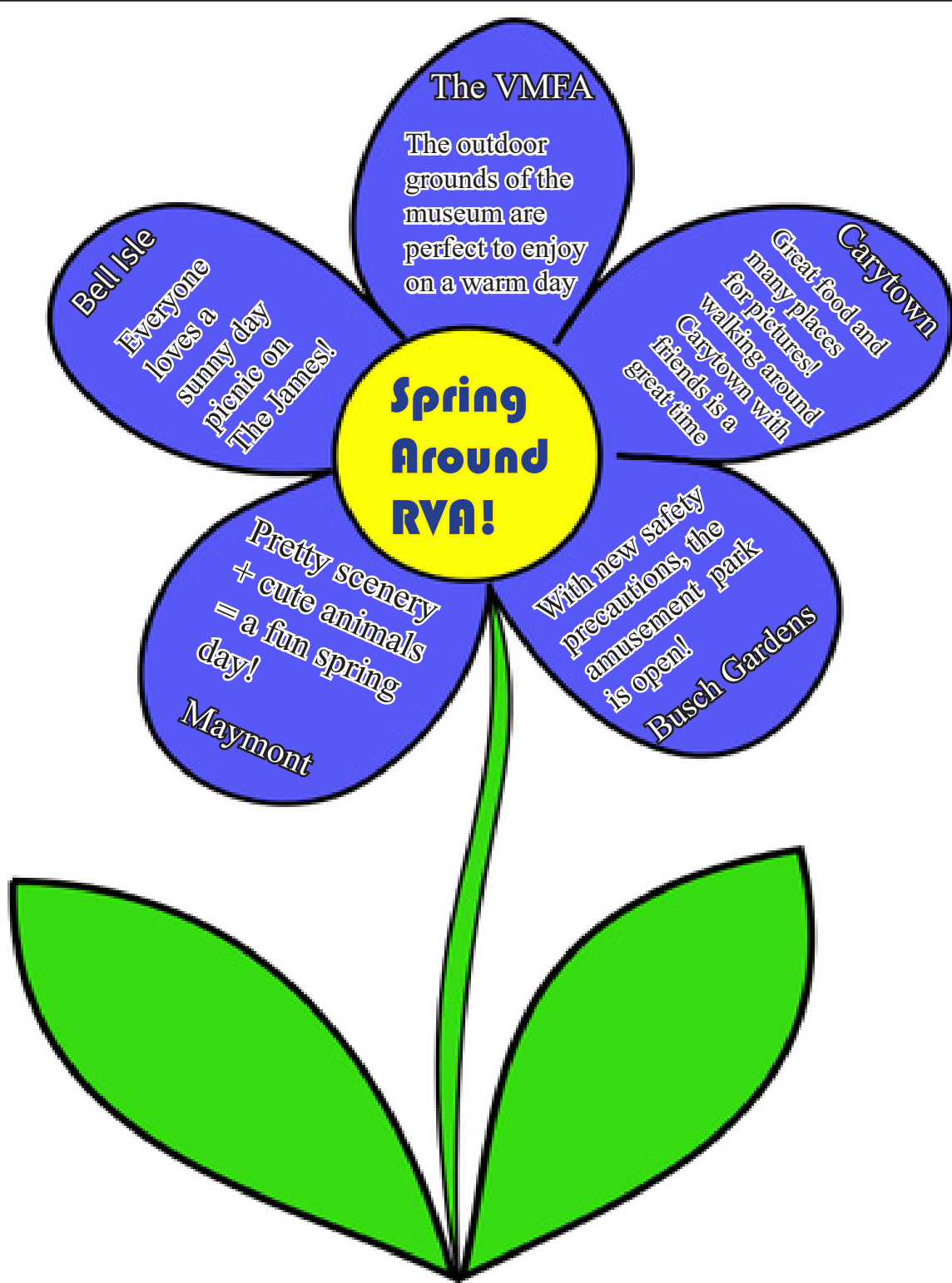
Everyone has their own idea of what the perfect summer day would be, and after all the snow and cold this year, Freeman students are ready for warm weather. “For me, a sunny and breezy day at the river with friends, good music, and yummy food is ideal,” said Niamh. Similarly, Jonah’s ideal day is, “Clear skies, 80 degrees, and a slight breeze.” However, no matter the weather, summer helps create some of our best memories. “I’ll never forget playing basketball at 2:00 AM with my friends,” said Jonah. Niamh also remembers meeting some of her closest friends in the summer. She said, “We all hung out almost every day, doing and going to fun places, I hope to continue that this summer.”

Despite the 2020 school year causing a disconnection between Freeman students, Summer 2021 is just around the corner, and Virginia continues to make progress with COVID-19 vaccine distribution. “While this school year has had its obstacles, I’m keeping a positive attitude and looking forward to having fun this summer,” said Gavin.



PHOTO: NIAMH PREIS

Niamh’s favorite summer spot, her family farm.



## Community Service Requirements: Fair?



**Taylor Widdifield**  
A&E Editor

Many high schoolers have experience participating in community service; oftentimes, they have done so to meet a requirement of some sort. Specific centers in Henrico County, like the Center for Leadership here at Freeman, have set community service requirements. Nearly all states, including Virginia, have no graduation requirement that involves student completion of service hours, but many districts have optional community service, Henrico County included. According to the county website, this optional community service awards the student with a special seal on their diploma and a notation on their transcript. Since completing community service requires transportation and accessibility, amongst many other things; and this all begs the question, are community service requirements fair to students?

To fulfill community service requirements, students need a multitude of things that not every student has access to. From finding places that provide students the opportunity to perform the ser-



Volunteers clean up after a tornado in Eagle Point, Alabama

vice, along with transportation, both of which are outside factors that typically are not the responsibility of the student. “A lot of what goes into completing community service is out of the student’s control,” said junior Nafisa Anjum. “That’s why I don’t think it’s really fair to require [it].”

While many schools provide their own opportunities for students to get their community service hours, some students still rely on the county to provide them with transportation to and from school. Even if the school campus has community service opportunities outside of office hours, that does not necessarily make it more accessible. “A lot of people have working parents,” said junior Virginia Johnson. “What if they don’t have someone to drive them after school?”

Students who are in specialty centers in Henrico county are aware of the service requirements when they agree to be in the center, but that does not necessarily make it fair. Students within centers may similarly find it difficult to find transportation or opportunities for community service. “Those students deserve to be able to

be in centers, too,” Nafisa said.

Most years, these issues are still very prevalent, but the past year has brought new challenges when it comes to community service. The pandemic has complicated things greatly, as now even students who have transportation and accessibility

“Those students deserve to be able to be in centers, too.”

- Nafisa Anjum

are left struggling to find places that allow community service. “Students who were already struggling have it even worse with COVID,” said Virginia. “It just doesn’t seem right.”

Participating in community service is extremely beneficial to many young students and those students deserve to be rewarded for their work. Community service teaches students about their impact on the community around them and encourages them to help others; but when every student is not allowed that opportunity so easily, it is simply unfair to require.

## End of 3rd Quarter Memes



PHOTO: MEME GENERATOR

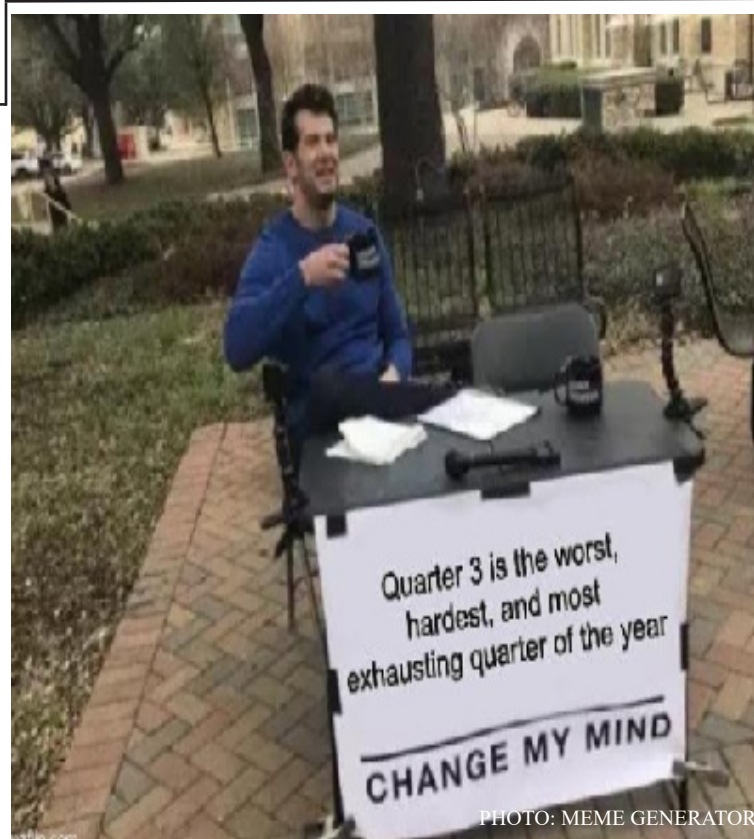


PHOTO: MEME GENERATOR

# Behind Henrico's Plan For New 17,000-Seat Arena

**Russell Nystrom**  
Design Editor



PHOTO: GREENCITY LLC  
GreenCity Partners LLC

Recently, Henrico County announced its plan to support a 2.3 billion dollar development site. The site is to be called "GreenCity" and is set on a 204-acre piece of land, will include 2 million square feet of office space, 280 thousand square feet of retail space, two hotels both having 300 rooms, up to 2400 residential units, and its focal point, a 17,000 seat arena.

The planned development site sits along East Parham Road and I-95. In 2011 the county bought this piece of land from Best Products, a company that was formerly headquartered there. Originally, the county planned to create governmental offices there, however, after analyzing the strategic location, decided to wait for better uses. Over the years several potential projects had been proposed to the county. But, when Richmond City Council voted down the proposed Navy Hill project (Richmond's plan for a new arena), there was a prime opportunity for the county to step in and introduce their own stadium, leading to the conception of GreenCity.

### A model mock-up plan of what the development will look like.

A new company named GreenCity LLC formed between Concord Eastridge Inc. and Future Cities LLC will be executing the project. The two priorly existing companies had been part of a group behind the Navy Hill proposal, but GreenCity is a larger undertaking, carrying a higher acreage and an increased emphasis on environmental standards. After having received so many proposals for the piece of land that the future development will sit on, the GreenCity proposal was initially well-received. "The GreenCity

concept was a breath of fresh air – environmentally, realistically, and creatively," said Tuckahoe District County Supervisor Pat O'Bannon.

GreenCity will feature many different forms of entertainment for people of all ages to enjoy. The arena plans to host everything from concerts to new potential indoor professional sports teams, including ECHL Hockey and G-League Basketball teams. "It will be really nice to be able to go to concerts nearby. In the past, most big concerts were held out of town, so it will be very convenient

having a nice venue so [close]," said Junior Brooke Pardon. "Once the proposed hotel and conference center is built, residents and businesses will use the facilities. Once the arena is established, many area residents will enjoy going to concerts and seeing professional, indoor sports," said Pat O'Bannon.

Additionally, the site will include an emphasis on green space such as trails, parks, and environmental sustainability. The county has already heralded the arena to be the "greenest arena venue in North America." The arena will both

be constructed to the standard of the Living Building Challenge and Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design standards (LEED), which means that the arena will be a net positive in energy and water, and produce zero waste. The area will feature several aspects to promote environmental sustainability, including solar panels, maintenance to watersheds in the area, increased access to locally grown agriculture, and an emphasis on walkability. For the residents living in the GreenCity housing, it will just be a quick walk to get to the grocery store, to work, or to play, helping alleviate the need for cars. "[GreenCity] will serve as a model and a new standard for development in Henrico. Resource protection and quality of life are of great concern as Henrico grows. This development will add value to our entire community," said Environmental Sciences teacher Jeff Meador.

While certain details still need to be hashed out, many of these questions will be answered when GreenCity LLC presents its Plan of Development to the Henrico County Planning Commission. Currently, the arena is planned to be completed in 2025, and the full development to be completed in 2033.

## NEW MAVERICKS MERCHANDISE

PHOTO: TEAMLOCKER



Navy Admiral Stretch Ear Loop Mask. ON SALE \$9.38

PHOTO: TEAMLOCKER



Navy Champion Double Dry Eco Fleece Hoodie. \$43.95

PHOTO: TEAMLOCKER



White Augusta Tri-Blend Long Sleeve Crew. \$30.75

You can find these Maverick spirit wear items along with many others, including hats, pullovers, and crewnecks at <https://teamlocker.squadlocker.com/#/lockers/freeman-mavericks>. Orders will be fulfilled and delivered to the main office where you may pick them up when you drop off a check or cash for them. You can order or ask questions by emailing [freemanfootball@outlook.com](mailto:freemanfootball@outlook.com).

## Richmond Volunteer Opportunity

PHOTO: HANDS ON RVA



**HandsOn**  
GREATER RICHMOND

A service of the Community Foundation

**Claire Morris**  
Photographer

For those looking to be more active in the community (or those who just need volunteer hours), Richmond has plenty of opportunities. With so many options available, the prospect of searching for a volunteer position might seem daunting. However, there are resources to help narrow the search. HandsOn Greater Richmond is a great place to start when looking for organizations and non-profits. The website creates a list of nearby opportunities based on age and interests. For high school students, opportunities range from building houses for families in need to reading to children.

One opportunity presented by the website is volunteering with Habitat for Humanity. Habitat for Humanity is a national nonprofit with a strong presence in Richmond. They focus on building safe and affordable housing for low income families. The Richmond chapter was created in 1986 and has since built over 300 homes. They have multiple operations going on this year, with three homes under construction in May. To be part of the construction crew, volunteers must be at least 16 years old. Shifts are from 8:00am to 3:00pm on Saturdays. Experience is not required as there

is an orientation at the beginning of each shift. All of the tools and equipment are provided, so volunteers only need to bring themselves, closed-toe shoes, and a lunch. Volunteers are welcome to sign up on their website: [www.richmondhabitat.org](http://www.richmondhabitat.org).

Another local organization is Sails Angles. They provide boating and river experiences for at-risk youth and people with disabilities. They partner with the US Navy and the University of Richmond as well as other local churches and camps. They also have groups that patrol the James River for trash collection. Since the program began in 2013, it has collected over 18 tons of debris. River debris collection takes all day, but the only things that volunteers need to bring are water and a lunch. Volunteers can be any age, but those under 17 must be accompanied by an adult. To sign up, visit their website: [www.sailsangles.com](http://www.sailsangles.com), or call their number: (804) 334-8877.

For those who don't fancy the great outdoors, or those who love to read, Love of Learning (LOL) is another Richmond-based opportunity for community service. Love of Learning is a local nonprofit whose goal is to help children from low income families learn to read. They do this through book drives and reading programs. The LOL Book Club is a program that

relies on donations to send families age-appropriate books once a month. Volunteers can host drives and collect books for donation. Volunteers can also participate in the Read-Aloud program where they read books to children living in shelters and affordable housing. In order to become a part of this program, volunteers must undergo training and commit to at least two meetings a month for six months. Volunteers must also be at least 16 years old to participate. To volunteer for either program visit their website: [loveoflearningrva.org](http://loveoflearningrva.org).

Overall, Richmond has lots of

*"We support passionate people making a meaningful change in the community"*  
-HandsOn RVA

opportunities for those who want to volunteer. Outdoor organizations such as Habitat for Humanity and Sails Angels take advantage of the warm spring weather and get you active. If that isn't your cup of tea, there are sedentary air conditioned programs like Love of Learning. Still not striking your fancy? Remember to check out Hands On Greater Richmond for more ideas on their website: [www.handsonrva.org](http://www.handsonrva.org).

## Secret Sandwich Society Review

Located at 501 Grace Street, Secret Sandwich Society is a hidden gem of Richmond. The cute, modern restaurant offers an array of sandwiches, salads, burgers, and brunch items. Only a quick 15-minute drive from Freeman, the Secret Sandwich Society is the perfect place for a quick bite to eat or a lunch date. But shhhhh.... it's a secret.

### REVIEW

SANDWICHES



BRUNCH



PRICE



AMBIANCE



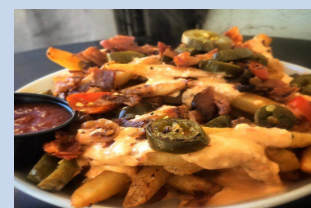
COVID SAFETY



"Washington Sandwich": ham, white cheddar, apple, rosemary mayo, and greens on a toasted baguette. Side of kettle cooked chips. \$11.50



"Breakfast Burger & Society Fries": All beef patty, Gruyere cheese, sunny egg, rosemary mayo, crispy onions on a toasted potato roll with Society fries. \$13.00.



"Pimento Cheese Fries" Society fries topped with melted homemade pimento cheese with loaded jalapeno and crumbled bacon. Gluten Free. \$9.00.

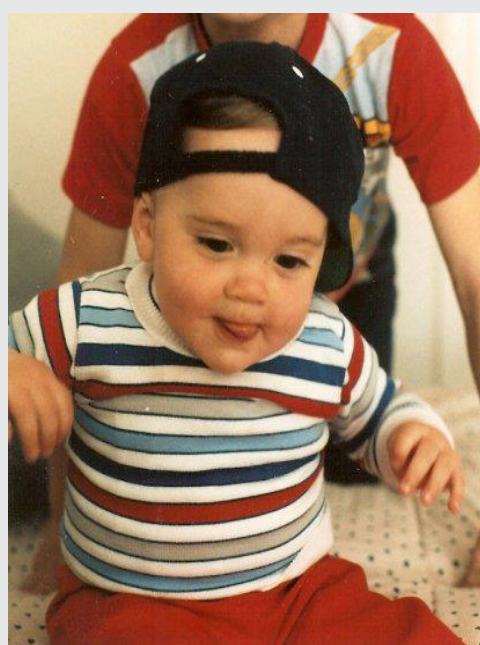
# Guess the Teacher by Their Baby Picture



Baby A



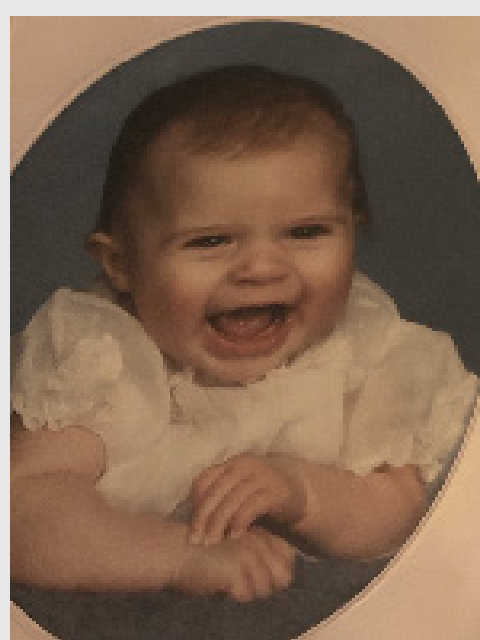
Baby B



Baby C



Baby D



Baby E



Baby F



Baby G



Baby H

### Name Bank

Mrs. Beard  
Mr. Lovering

Mrs. Hunnicutt  
Ms. Vest

Mr. Pruett  
Mrs. Walthall

Mr. Lewis  
Mrs. Curry

Baby A: Mr. Lovering Baby B: Mrs. Beard Baby C: Mr. Pruett Baby D: Mrs. Hunnicutt Baby E: Mrs. Hunnicutt Baby F: Ms. Vest Baby G: Mr. Pruett Baby H: Mrs. Curry

# Students of Today, Teachers for Tomorrow

## Emma Ridolphi Photographer

As Gen Z moves toward adulthood, some may wonder who will take on the role of teaching future generations. This question is answered by a group of Freeman students with aspirations of teaching.

Seniors Lacy Fisher, Amanda Gagen, and Rachel Garland are members of the Teachers for Tomorrow class, taught by Heather McMunn. Despite the class's inactivity during COVID-19, students have continued working and pursuing their interest in teaching.

Rachel Garland said that she wants to become a teacher because she "really enjoys working with kids," adding that "I did a summer camp with Pre-K kids and ever since then, I have wanted to be a teacher."

Rachel would prefer to teach at the elementary level because "everyday I'd be able to teach a little of each subject," she said. "I think to be a teacher, you definitely need to be enthusiastic and energetic in order to keep the kids' attention ... another trait you have to have is a lot of patience."

While in her internship at Teachers of Tomorrow, Rachel has "been able to go into an elementary school classroom and get the real experience." She said, "This has definitely been an opportunity to

strengthen my skills as a teacher. An example would be if a student is having a hard time with an activity and starts to get upset, I have learned how to properly deal with that." Despite Rachel's evolving skillset, there are abilities that she wants to improve, admitting "I know I have a hard time with confidence and enthusiasm when teaching a subject to students. When there are 20+ kids looking at you, it's a lot of pressure ... As I continue my internship I am aware of this struggle and try to improve myself everyday," she said.

Rachel said that she "sees a few of my friends becoming teachers. A lot of them have great potential to become teachers", but that "a lot of them are on the fence on whether or not that's what they want as a career."

Amanda Gagen said she plans to become a professor because she "enjoys the idea of working with young professionals."

Teaching is an "appealing career path" to her because "it would be beyond amazing to be able to inspire and impact students lives as they [teachers] have [done] for me." Amanda described ideal teaching traits like "patience, empathy, and creativity" as "essential," saying that "teaching certainly isn't an easy job, and I admire my teachers

for how well they do it." Amanda described her growth in Teachers of Tomorrow, saying that "through my internship, I certainly became a creative problem-solver."

She also described one of her less perfected skills, saying that "if I were to pursue teaching, I would need to become better at managing challenging behaviors." Amanda's role models at Freeman have been teachers like Ms. Divina, Mr. Abril, and Mrs. Pike. She described these teachers as "having profound impacts on her life through a combination of content in their classes, their personalities, and their faith in her."

Lacy Fisher described Teachers for Tomorrow as "not being like any other class at DSF," and an "amazing way to start the day." Lacy also detailed the curriculum of the program, saying that "we learn how to make and teach lesson plans that actual teachers have

to make on a daily basis," and that the experience has "truly opened my eyes to the things teachers have to deal with and overcome."

Lacy noted some of the skills she's fleshed out while in Teachers for Tomorrow, explaining how the class has "helped her creativity a lot," because "most people wouldn't think that you have to be creative to become a teacher, but making lesson plans that will keep students intrigued gets hard," she said.

Similarly, Lacy cited Mrs. McMunn as an inspiration to her, describing her as "amazing." She elaborated further, saying "She [Mrs. McMunn] is understanding and works hard to keep the class fun and hands-on." Lacy said the class "never sits and listens to a lecture," but that "we are always doing projects that she plans for us."

Mrs. McMunn handles arrangements with the internship schools for her students, but Lacy said she "still does an amazing job, not only with T4T [Teachers for Tomorrow], but with all her other classes."



Students attend Mrs. McMunn's Teachers for Tomorrow class.

# Freeman Teachers Who Went to Freeman

## Jack Kelleher News Editor

In what may be a surprise to some students, many of Freeman's teachers are actually alumni. social studies teachers for the job, eventually accepting the job, and she has been here ever since.

### Lara Curry

One of the teachers who went to Freeman High School is history teacher Lara Curry. Part of the Class of 2003, she went through college at Mary Washington planning to do something in the field of history, as it was her "favorite subject while here at Freeman." Besides student teaching, teaching at Freeman was her first job.

After applying to teach at Henrico County, she was informed that a history teacher at Freeman had decided not to return. So she met with and was interviewed by then-Freeman principal Mrs. Ann Poates and other

### Andrew Moore

Another Freeman alum who is teaching here at Freeman is baseball coach and Latin teacher Andrew Moore. Part of the Class of 2003 along with Mrs. Curry, he started teaching in Hanover County at a couple different schools for three years before coming to Freeman. He applied in fall 2009 to be Freeman's baseball coach, where he started in the spring of 2010. He became a teacher at Freeman shortly thereafter in the 2010-2011 school year. Mr. Moore said that after he decided to continue teaching, "my goal then became to try to come



PHOTO: THE HISTORIAN

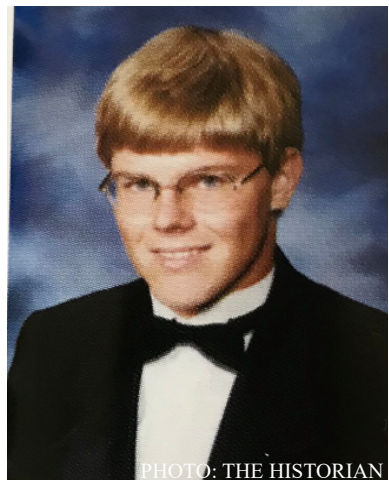


PHOTO: THE HISTORIAN



PHOTO: THE HISTORIAN

Senior portraits of Mrs. Curry, Mr. Moore, and Mr. Densley.

*“My goal then became to try to come back home to Freeman”*

- Andrew Moore

back home to Freeman if it was going to be possible."

Because his father was also a Freeman alumni, he already had a special connection to the school and the community. He views teaching as a way to "make a difference in people's lives" and because of that, he wanted to teach at Freeman.

### Ryan Densley

Ryan Densley is another teacher who attended Freeman and is now a teacher. Younger than the other two Freeman alums, Mr. Densley's student experience was more similar to the one students have now. For example, "Mr. Peck, Mrs. Curry, and Mr. Larkins were three of my favorite teachers and they are all still here."

Originally a history teacher, Ryan Densley now teaches math classes here at Freeman. He taught for two years at Gildersleeve Middle School in New-

port News before coming to Freeman. Mr. Densley said "[I] did dream of one day coming back as a [teacher]," but COVID-19 made his path to get here a little different. Instead of planning to come teach at Freeman this year, Mr. Densley came in as a long term substitute for math teacher Mrs. Conway.

One sentiment echoed among the teachers is how Freeman compared to their time as students. For example, Mr. Densley and Mr. Moore both said how similar Freeman is now to their time here, albeit with some added details such

as murals and artwork in the halls. Mrs. Curry did note a change in perspective

*“I did dream of one day coming back as a teacher”*

- Ryan Densley

tive between now and her time as a high schooler. Instead of a "naive 18 year old" perspective of Freeman as the 'perfect school,' she sees it more realistically, as a "great place...that I love teaching [at]... but you also see the flaws that need to be fixed," said Mrs. Curry.

# Which Fictional Teacher Are You?

- My favorite color is...
  - black
  - yellow
  - red
- My favorite subject is...
  - math
  - science
  - music
- On the first day of school I would...
  - establish rules
  - take a field trip
  - watch a movie
- I can't start class without...
  - a lesson plan
  - keys to the bus
  - my guitar
- On the weekends I like to...
  - take time for myself
  - scout out new places to show my students
  - practice music in my room
- If I wasn't a teacher I would...
  - do something for the good of society
  - drive a school bus
  - be a musician



PHOTO: HERO-FANDOM.COM



PHOTO: HERO-FANDOM.COM

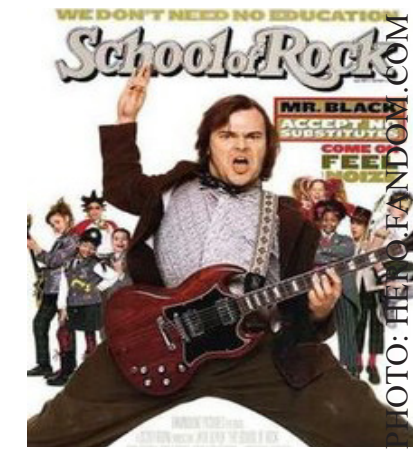


PHOTO: HERO-FANDOM.COM

Mostly a: Professor Snape (Harry Potter Series) Mostly b: Miss Frizzle (The Magic Schoolbus) Mostly c: Dewey Fim (School of Rock)

# DSF's Star-Setter

**Maddie Carpenter**  
Features Editor

This season, junior Evie Gouldin is a new addition to the varsity girls volleyball team, and she has already made a large impact.

Evie began her volleyball career in eighth grade when she made Freeman's junior varsity (JV) volleyball team. "I started [volleyball] because my friend Meredith, who is also on the team, encouraged me to randomly try out so we could play together," said Evie. "I had barely ever touched a volleyball, but I tried out in eighth grade and somehow made the team."

Evie played on the JV team for her eighth grade, freshman, and sophomore years. On JV, Evie played as a libero, a back-row defensive specialist, until about halfway through the season last year, when "[her] coach randomly switched [her] to setter, which [she] ended up liking a lot more," according to Evie's mom, Shelley Gouldin.

As the starting setter on varsity this year, it is Evie's responsibility to get every second touch and set the ball up in the perfect place for the hitters to get kills. "Setters are often compared to the quarterback in football," said Evie's teammate Meredith Murphy. "She's a part of almost every play."

One aspect of Evie's game that has changed dramatically this year is her confidence. "Now that [Evie] has found her position as a setter, she has gained confidence, especially since eighth grade," said Mrs. Gouldin. "She is still hard on herself to always do better, but she is much more comfortable in the rotations and serving."

Girls volleyball coach Drew Lovering said that Evie has been "an excellent surprise to this season's team." He accredits much of the team's success to Evie's positive attitude and coachability. "She does not have as much experience as other setters around



PHOTO: ERIKA GLASS

**Evie waits for the play to start.**

the county or even in the school, but her willingness to learn and hard work is what makes her stand out," said Coach Lovering. "[She] is willing to make the hard play and take the blame when things don't go the way we plan."

Despite her minimal experience as a setter, Evie has impressive statistics. A member of a 14-person team, Evie not only leads in assists, but also has the 5th most aces (unreturnable serves), and has the 5th most digs (good passes from the other teams' hits).

Not only does Evie love being on the volleyball team because of the gameplay, but she also greatly values the friendships she has made over the years as a result of playing for Freeman. Most of the girls on the team this year are people that Evie has played within past years, so she has been able to make friendships with people

that she would not have met if she was not on the team. "My favorite part about being on the Freeman girls volleyball team is our really great team dynamic," said Evie. "It is just a really positive and uplifting environment, and everyone is friends with each other."

Currently, Evie does not plan to play volleyball in college but is very excited about continuing in Freeman's volleyball program next year. "This season was really fun and successful for me and the team," said Evie. "I think next year will be even better."

*"It is just a really positive and uplifting environment."*

- Evie Gouldin

## Sophomore Lily Davis Racing on the River

**Daisy Fuller**  
A&E Editor

Learning the art of teamwork is essential, especially when you could literally sink without it. Sophomore Lily Davis is no stranger to this concept, as she is a rower for River City Crew (RCC), a local organization. "I started rowing two and a half years ago after I had first heard about [rowing] from my friend," said Lily. Rowing is Lily's main athletic interest, and she rows for two seasons each year.

"[Lily's] strongest quality is her optimism. She strives to improve and raise the bar for everyone else in the boat," said junior Rachel Gordon, a fellow rower and Freeman Maverick. The two girls, along with the rest of their team, spend lots of time together on and off the water.

"[Rowing] is heavily reliant on teamwork," said Lily, "you build bonds with people. Some of my best friends are on the team."

Aside from workouts and training on land, Lily said "Practice usually lasts an hour and a half. We're out on the water [rowing] for usually an hour, then we take the boats in." Along with many other teams, Lily's team has had to adjust to the regulations and precautions put in place because of COVID. "Right now, I am rowing a boat just myself, because

*"Some of my best friends are on the team."*

- Lily Davis

of coronavirus, but [before] I rowed with three other people," said Lily. Pre-coronavirus, Lily would often row with groups of three or seven other RCC rowers.

In addition to changes with practices, Lily's team has



PHOTO: LILY DAVIS

**Lily rows with her teammates.**

also not been able to compete in competitions this season. "[Rowing] competitions are called regattas," said Lily "we compete with multiple other teams in a race-like fashion." Lily and her team often have to travel hours away for regattas, but this season they have stayed at home training for when they can once again compete.

"Lily has been an important member of RCC since she started rowing with us," said Tom O'Rourke, Lily's crew coach at RCC. Coach O'Rourke commends Lily's hard work and discipline when it comes to rowing. "Lily has worked hard to improve as a rower, getting faster, and by doing so, has pushed other team members to become better rowers."

"[Lily] gives her all at every practice," said Rachel "She has been an asset by always looking on the positive side and encouraging others to do their best as well." Although Lily loves rowing, she believes there are many difficult aspects of the sport. "It requires a lot of endurance and building up your stamina," said Lily, "and it is

a lot of time commitment." When Lily and her team are not training in the water, they are most likely running or weightlifting.

*"Lily has been an important member of RCC since she started rowing with us."*

- Tom O'Rourke

For inspiration, Lily looks up to a variety of college-level rowers and teams. Lily said, "I would say I look up to [rowers] from Boston College, Boston University, Michigan, Clemson, and UVA." Lily is very open to the idea of rowing in college but is keeping her options open. "I would say the whole sport is not really talked about," Lily explained, "but it is a lot different than what I thought." Lily said she would "definitely recommend" rowing to any Freeman students who may be interested in trying a new sport.

## Mrs. Striker's Chickens

History teacher Katie Striker and her family take care of pet chickens. Below are some questions and answers about her unique pets.

**How long have you had chickens, and how many do you have?**

"We have had chickens for just about two years. We currently have four hens. They are Plymouth Barred Rock breed, and each member of my family named a bird. We have Esther (mine), Mrs. Bawky Squawky (my 7-year old's), Spinderella (my husband's), and Hey Hey (my 9-year old's). We just got two more chicks that we will add to the flock once they are old enough to be outside full time. The new chicks are Black Sexlinks. Both breeds are known for being cold, hardy, and being prolific egg layers. We don't heat the coop in the winter because that is a huge fire danger, so I wanted to make sure they could take whatever cold snaps we get."

**What made you decide that you want chickens as pets?**

"A good friend of mine has lots of chickens, and they are pretty easy to care for. We check their food, water, and collect eggs daily. We clean out the entire coop once a month and run as needed. We feed them our food scraps, and sometimes I give them treats like watermelon or a head of lettuce in the summer when it's really hot. To be honest, they are the easiest animals we own! We also liked the idea of having our own fresh eggs and having fewer ticks in the yard since chickens eat them."

**What is your favorite thing about having chickens?**

"They actually have a lot of personality. It's really interesting to watch them when we let them free range out of their run. You start to learn how they communicate with each other and what their different noises mean. For example, we can tell when one of them has been separated from the others and is looking for the rest and when they want out of the run."

**What is the most challenging part of having chickens?**

"They really aren't hard at all. The only part is remembering not to let the dogs outside when the chickens are free ranging, and keeping an ear out when they are free ranging. We had a fox attack last summer, and once, we let the dog out while they were out. No chicken was seriously harmed beyond missing feathers and being a bit... ruffled so to speak. I guess the only thing that has been somewhat challenging is that we had a sick hen last fall, and trying to figure that out and give her medicine was a little tricky. Everything turned out just fine though!"



PHOTO: KATIE STRIKER

**Mrs. Striker's chicken roams around the yard.**



PHOTO: LILY DAVIS

**Lily rows with her teammates.**

# Reimagining Education: Teaching From Home

**Kristina Kang**  
Design Editor

With many teachers and students returning to school in-person and vaccinations on the way, a hint of “normal” pre-COVID life is coming back—faculty and students interacting with one another and teachers leading in-person discussions are just a few of the “normal” things some Mavericks are beginning to experience again. But what about the teachers who stayed home?

When the county decided that teachers and students could go back to school, teachers who were high risk or had high-risk family members had to decide whether or not to apply to teach from home. “This whole year has been a year of decisions,” said Spanish teacher Mrs. Beard. Having a high-risk family member and younger children, she went through an extensive process. “We talked with the doctor a lot, we talked to the pediatrician...to try and make informed decisions, and it was a very heavy decision.”

Mrs. Bleecher, a new French teacher at Freeman, decided to stay online due to a previous injury. “The thought of doing the virtual and all of the COVID protocols was kind of overwhelming,” she said. “Already, it’s just taking me longer to do my job now.”

Teaching in the virtual environment has made it difficult for teachers to connect with students. For Mrs. Beard, who is a “big feeler”,

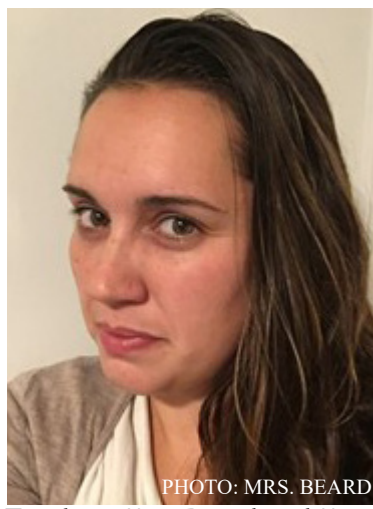


PHOTO: MRS. BEARD

Teachers Mrs. Beard and Mrs. Bleecher pose from their homes

the virtual environment has made it harder to gauge how students are feeling. “[Normally], I’m looking for nonverbal cues for people who are lost or overwhelmed,” she said. However, without being able to see students face to face in the “inviting and safe environment”

*“This whole year has been a year of decisions”*

- Mrs. Beard

she likes to create with her classroom, she feels there is an “uncomfortable level of loss of control.”

Similarly, Mrs. Bleecher also feels that it’s harder to connect to students who don’t always show up or students who have a hard time completing their assignments. “What can I do to help these kids? Because at the end of the day that’s what we’re here for,” she said. “It’s upsetting to me



PHOTO: MRS. BLEECHER

to think there’s something more that I could do to help someone.”

In terms of the classroom, both teachers have had to fully adjust their teaching styles. A pre-COVID class in Mrs. Beard’s classroom included writing on the board, discussions, group work, and presentations. “I’m a nerd with my clipboard and I move around my classroom being all nosy and [asking], ‘what are you doing, what are you talking about?’”, said Mrs. Beard. However, during the virtual year, it’s difficult to make her class as “student-led and community-focused” as it typically is. “It just takes so much longer to teach the grammar, and [that] is what I have to teach,” she said. “There are other things in the curriculum but you can’t write about ecotourism if you don’t know the future tense.”

Similarly, Mrs. Bleecher would normally have more interactive games where students

aren’t just sitting. However, issues with technology and the lack of face-to-face communication make group work difficult.

In response to these challenges, Mrs. Bleecher said, “I’m trying to think about the social and emotional learning piece and just all [of] the collective trauma that we’re all going through.”

Mrs. Bleecher’s understanding has reached sophomore Takiyah Banks. “She realizes how hard virtual is for some people,” she said. As a result, Takiyah feels like she is given enough time to complete work, gets a thorough understanding of the material, and that her voice is heard. “If we want to try something in class, then she works it out so that we can,” said Takiyah. Similarly, senior Claire Rankin believes that both Mrs. Bleecher’s knowledge of French and her ability to connect to students “academically and personally” helps make students feel valued.

Mrs. Bleecher said with the virtual environment, she has made her teaching more project-based,

*“She works it out so that we can.”*

- Takiyah Banks

as she wants to give students to learn in a creative way. Recently, in her French I class where students explored the family unit, she had students make a fictional family tree. “It could be movie characters and they didn’t have to

be related, but they had to pretend like they were related,” she said.

When it comes to Mrs. Beard’s response to challenges, it is “not necessarily a tech response, [but] a response from the heart,” said Mrs. Beard. She looks for students having trouble and tries to accommodate that person as much as possible in an effort to create relationships, she said. In general, Mrs. Beard said, “I try to talk about how hard things are with you guys just to be real.”

Avery Edmondson, a sophomore in Mrs. Beard’s Spanish IV class, believes that Mrs. Beard is successful even when teaching from home because she is “understanding [and] truly so compassionate about teaching and helping her students.” From technology issues to emotional issues, Mrs. Beard handles the situation well, explained Avery. “She always makes sure everyone is up to speed and allows for activities that work for both groups,” said Avery.

While the pandemic has made teaching and learning a bit more difficult for some people, Mrs. Bleecher hopes that schools can take away something positive from this experience. She hopes schools can use this as a “springboard [for] rethinking and reimagining education” and see “what it means to really like to learn and how is this going to enrich [our] lives.”

## On the Road to Normalcy

**Riley Speidell**  
Centerspread Editor

Is normalcy on the horizon? After over a year of the COVID-19 pandemic, there are three main vaccines that have passed the testing stages and are available to the public: Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson and Johnson. Of these, Pfizer is the only vaccine currently available to people under the age of 18. A few Freeman High School students have received a portion of this vaccine.

Junior Ian Donellan has received the first dose of the Pfizer vaccine. Going into his vaccination appointment, Ian was feeling a little anxious. “I was nervous and didn’t really know what to expect,” said Ian. “It’s never fun going to an unfamiliar place, especially to get a shot.”

Despite his uneasiness regarding the location, Ian was not concerned about the possible side effects of the vaccine. “I was aware of the possibilities, but the positives of being vaccinated outweighed those for me,” he said. Ian has not experienced any major changes in his daily life due to his, “already pretty COVID-friendly lifestyle.”

Ian’s father received the vaccine the same day as Ian. “We actually got to sit at the table together and get them back to back,” said Ian. Like his peers, Ian is anxious to return to a more normal lifestyle.

Junior Sydney Greiner received the first and second doses of the

Pfizer vaccine from her pediatrician. Although Sydney is usually nervous about going to the doctor to get shots, she was “ecstatic to go to the doctor this time around,” she said.

Through the news and other forms of media, Sydney had heard about potential side effects that came after getting the COVID-19 vaccine. “I wasn’t too concerned for my first dose, but I am a bit more worried about the second dose,” Sydney said after her first dose of the vaccine.

Leaving the doctor’s office after her first shot, Sydney felt, “more uplifted, like things will maybe go back to normal soon.” Other than a slight soreness and fatigue, Sydney said that she did not experience any side effects. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for the second dose of the vaccine. “The second dose hit a little harder than the first; I was aching, tired, and ran a fever for a few hours afterwards,” Sydney said.

Although only a few of Sydney’s friends have gotten vaccinated, her mother “is fully vaccinated already because she got the [Johnson and Johnson] shot.”

Aside from getting back to daily life, Sydney is most excited to go to concerts. “Once everyone is vaccinated, I can’t wait to go back to concerts. Now we’re one step closer,” said Sydney.

Junior Sabrina Layton has also received both doses of the Pfizer vaccine from her doctors’ office. “I was ready to get the vaccine and am just excited to get back

to normal things,” said Sabrina.

As far as side effects, Sabrina was not worried for her first dose. Similar to Sydney’s experience, Sabrina said she, “was a little tired and my arm was a little sore, but other than that I was fine.”

After receiving the second dose, Sabrina’s side effects were more intense. “I was really tired and aching. I also experienced a lot of nausea and a headache with a fever,” said Sabrina.

Once her vaccine is fully effective, Sabrina is looking forward to spending time with her friends in a more normal setting. “I’ll actually be able to hang out with [my friends] without masks and not distanced. Up until now, we’ve been outside and spread out,” Sabrina said.

Sabrina coaches gymnastics at Above the Bar, and working with young kids in a pandemic has been very different for her. “It

*“I’m really excited to eat dinner with my grandparents again.”*

- Sabrina Layton

will be nice to go to work and not worry about catching [COVID-19] while I’m there,” Sabrina said.

She is also looking forward to spending more time with her family. “Both my parents and grandparents are fully vaccinated and my other three siblings have gotten their second doses as well,” Sabrina



PHOTO: IAN DONELLAN  
Ian Donellan displaying his vaccine card

said. “I’m really excited to eat dinner with my grandparents again.”

Senior Margaux Shimick has received both doses of the Pfizer vaccine and was feeling the same excitement as many others when she got her vaccine. “Getting the shot made me hopeful that life will go back to normal soon... and I won’t have any more COVID scares,” Margaux said.

She is also hopeful for a more normal year next year as it will be her first year as a high school graduate. “I am hopeful that by college next year most people will have gotten [vaccinated] so I can have a normal college experience,” said Margaux.

Students who have received the vaccine are looking forward to spending more in-person time with the people they have been missing over the past year.

### Teacher’s Perspective:

#### The Virtual to Hybrid Learning Transition

with Mrs. Rabon

#### 1. What was your classroom like before COVID?

“It was 30+ students in a class and were packed together like sardines. My class was always very social and collaborative.”

#### 2. What was your class like virtually?

“My setup was in my dining room, with a make-shift desk overlooking my backyard. At first, I tried to engage students, but that was frustrating, as I did not know them and they did not know me. It made for a long day. Thankfully, seniors I’ve known from years past provided engagement.”

#### 3. What is your class like with the hybrid system?

“It is great to be back in the classroom and finally put a face to the name with in-person students. I still maintain the same format, expectations, and engagement as I did before...I feel both in-person and virtual students are receiving the same quality education.”

## Junior Studies Abroad in Costa Rica

**April Miller**  
News Editor

Eli Schulman didn’t expect to be traveling to Costa Rica 11 months into a global pandemic. But on February 15, Eli, a junior in the Leadership Center, boarded a 7-hour flight to Costa Rica, where he would be living as a member of a high school study-abroad program for a month.

The Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE), is a study-abroad program for high school and college students in which students across the country have the opportunity to “immerse themselves in other cultures and have a great time doing it,” said Eli. He heard about the CIEE from a family friend who also participated, and decided to research it more on his own. “I actually only heard about [the program] the day before the application was due,” said Eli. “I just

did the entire application in a day.”

The Monteverde CIEE program allowed Eli to continue his education while being involved in local culture. This included working on a farm and going on various excursions. “We milked the cows, picked coffee beans, cleared weeds, and planted saplings,” said Eli, describing his volunteer service in Costa Rica. However, the trip wasn’t all work-weekend excursions that included “ziplining and waterfall hiking” were the “highlights of [the] trip.”

“[An] aspect of the program that I enjoyed,” said Eli’s mom, Millie Becker, “was the COVID protocols. I wasn’t nervous at all about him going [to Costa Rica] because it seemed so safe.” Due to the pandemic, the CIEE has implemented multiple safety requirements, including, “quarantines, tests, and a COVID bubble,” said Mrs. Becker.

“We took a test when we arrived,” said Eli, “and then we were in a semi-quarantine for about a week,

where we had to wear our masks and social distance.” After the quarantine, however, the Monteverde participants were in a “COVID bubble” and only had to follow COVID guidelines on excursions where they would interact with people outside of the bubble. “It was very well done,” said Eli. “I felt very safe.”

Aside from the COVID protocols, there was another adjustment Eli had to make: wake-up times. “We were on Costa Rica time, so I had to get up an hour earlier,” he said. “It made meal times pretty weird as well.” However, the time difference did not affect his schoolwork. “Even while I was in Costa Rica, I was still turning in my assignments and getting stuff done,” said Eli.

“If he hadn’t told me he was [traveling to Costa Rica], I wouldn’t have known,” said Mr. Peck, Eli’s Ethics teacher. “He turned in all of his work on time and attended every class with his camera on.” Apart from the two days he was traveling, Eli missed

“almost nothing” said Mr. Peck. “He did a great job managing it all.”

Eli Schulman had an “amazing time” in Costa Rica. He got to experience the local culture, help out on the farm, and participate in various outings while still attending school. “It was one of the best experiences of my life,” said

Eli. “I wish I could go back.”

*“It was one of the best experiences of my life.”*

- Eli Schulman



PHOTO: MILLIE BECKER

Eli helping on a local farm in Costa Rica





## Freeman Cheerleading During COVID-19

PHOTO: EMILY WALTHALL

**Emily Waters**  
Sports Editor

From a global pandemic to a mascot change, there have been many differences in day-to-day life at Freeman this year. Cheerleading, both sideline and competition, has been no exception since tryouts began in the first week of February.

“It was still so fun to be able to cheer for the team but everything felt so different without all of the fans and student section. I missed the energy from the crowd,” said competition and sideline captain Sydney Stokes. “Friday nights didn’t feel the same without the full stadium,” she said.

*“Friday nights didn’t feel the same without the full stadium.”*

- Sydney Stokes

“This year is so different than any other year,” said Coach Emily Walthall. A big change to the



PHOTO: EMILY WALTHALL

The sideline cheer team poses for a group picture.

sport has “been in stunting, as there are so many restrictions,” she said.

“We weren’t allowed to do baskets or pyramids,” said junior Kelly Mollenauer. “We really had to get creative with stunts to put in the routine, since we were limited on what we could do but still wanted to earn difficulty points on the score sheet [at competition].”

The switch to ‘Mavericks,’ according to Coach Walthall, has not been as challenging for the cheer team as she expected. “Truthfully, I thought the mascot transition was going to be more difficult than it has been,” she said.

“There are just a few cheers that we’ll leave behind because Mavericks doesn’t fit in the wording,” Coach Walthall said. Because Freeman students got to vote on the new mascot, Coach Walthall said that “Mavericks have a lot of support” and added that “all-in-all, it has been a great process.”

“The coaches, the Varsity girls, and all of my fellow teammates were so incredible and helpful,” said JV cheerleader Addison Yocum.

“With all the hard work and learning this season took, tons of support came with it,” said Coach Walthall. “[I’m] so proud of the

grit and determination the whole team [has] shown ... because of the hurdles and shortened seasons, I feel like our team has bonded more this year than ever.”

Many of the team members shared this sentiment. “I think having so much time off made

*“I think having so much time off made us appreciate the time we have to compete and practice together.”*

- Charlotte Hare

us appreciate the time we have to compete and practice together,” said junior Charlotte Hare.

Lacy Fisher, senior captain on both competition and sideline, said “the girls are the absolute best part about being on the team.”

Looking toward the future, “as far as we know, our next season will be back to normal,” Coach Walthall said. “We’re so thankful to have had a season, but are definitely looking forward to returning to normalcy.”

The team will, however, look a little bit different in one way next year. “We have five seniors on our sideline team and three on our competition team,” Coach Walthall said. “They are all leaders and have helped to shape and grow our program into what it is today.”

“I think I’ll miss their natural leadership the most,” said junior Charlotte Hare. “That is a lot of talent and strength to replace, but hopefully we will all just take what we learned from them the past couple of years and be able to teach the younger groups coming in.”

## The New Look of Spring Sports

**Hank Thompson**  
Features Editor

Spring is typically characterized by its warm weather, bright flowers, Spring Break, and up until last year, spring sports. Spring sports have returned as somewhat of a breath of fresh air, however, they are not without some new changes and modifications.

Athletes experience changes as soon as they arrive to practice. Following their temperature check, players are read a list of COVID-19 symptoms questions, expected to answer “no” to all. To many, a nuisance, yet to Bill Seegar, assistant lacrosse coach, he has found some positives in this perceived “hassle.” “It encourages players to arrive early and allows us to start practice with everybody present,” said Seegar.

During practice itself, players and coaches are expected to remain distanced and masked. “The masks definitely make it harder for us to coach players and

project our voices during games, so a big focus this year is making sure players learn to make independent decisions on the field and become more cerebral,” said Seegar. “It can be hard to breathe in the masks, but I would rather wear a mask than lose my season,” said junior Barry Jones, who plays varsity soccer.

*“It can be hard to breathe in the masks, but I’d rather wear a mask than lose my season.”*

- Barry Jones

Most share this sentiment. After his first Freeman lacrosse practice in over a year, junior varsity lacrosse player Dell Vidunas said, “It feels great to finally be back out here with the boys.” “We’ve approached [this season] with the mindset that this is not an opportunity we can take for granted, because we all know what it is like to have a season

taken from you,” he explained.

In addition to the check-ins and masks, social distancing is a central aspect of sports this year, as contract tracing has the potential to make entire position groups, and even teams, ineligible to play. Junior girls varsity lacrosse player, Emma Jacoby, explained, “We don’t get near the JV team to avoid wiping out both teams in case of a covid outbreak.”

“It [social distancing] really hasn’t impacted the way we put together drills,” said Seegar. “The issue is more so getting the guys to space out when waiting in line”

Senior varsity baseball player, Travis Montgomery, said, “We’re usually pretty physical in the dugout, giving high-fives and celebrating, so I can see the distancing aspect affecting our spirit.” However, this season comes with some silver lining. The baseball team finally had a chance to illuminate their brand new scoreboard, put up last spring, for the first time.

For the softball team, they will finally have the opportunity to christen their field, which has sat unused for over two years. Senior softball player, Maggie Lithincum said, “I think the new field will definitely raise spirits on the team since us seniors haven’t played a home game on that field since we were freshmen.”

Another difference most will notice this season is the altered schedule, both in game reduction and opponent limitation. For example, the lacrosse team, typically traveling as far as Charlottesville for games, is now confined to play local in-county teams. “While playing only local teams will certainly be easier, I don’t think it will prepare us for the teams we will face in the tournament,” said Vidunas.

Regardless of the new look of spring sports at DSF, many stu-

*“While playing only local teams will certainly be easier, I don’t think it will prepare us for the teams we will play in the tournament.”*

- Dell Vidunas

dents are glad to finally be able to play the sport they love, after a long hiatus.

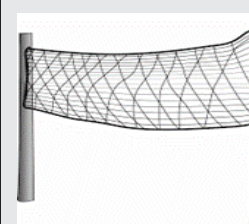


PHOTO: BILL MCCLURE

Junior Dell Vidunas plays in a lacrosse game during the 2019 season.

## Fall Sports Recap

### Boys Volleyball



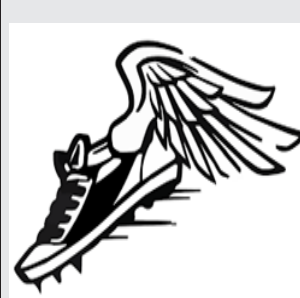
“The season started out rough but we came together and worked hard to improve our record as the season progressed” -Austin Fisher

### Girls Volleyball

“This was the best season I’ve ever played in my 4 years of being on the team. Although it was shortened, we played our hardest, and our team was the closest we have ever been.” - Brooke Farrey



### Cross Country Girls



“Our season was great and we really bonded as a team as a whole this season.” -Madelyn Miller

### Boys

“I really like how we all help each other out and push one another when we need it” -Walker Beck

### Football

“It was a short season, but we were able to play and didn’t take anything for granted. It was awesome to get somewhat of a senior season.” -Andrew Bland



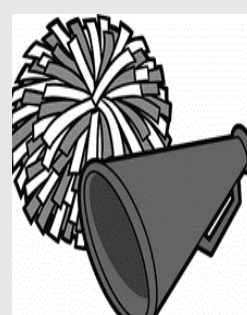
### Field Hockey



“The field hockey season this year showed much improvement from our first game to our last and we grew as a team, our record doesn’t reflect our strengths in the game.” -Kala McGehee

### Competition Cheer

“This season was amazing despite all the hardships we faced! The coaches and all the girls worked extremely hard to make the outcomes of our competitions the best they could be! Next season is going to be even better!” - Lacy Fisher



### Golf



“Despite a couple of frustrating losses to Godwin and Deep Run, I feel like the season has been a great success.” - Travis Moore



PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

# In 5...4...3...2...1...iCarly Reboot

**Katherine Hynes**  
Community Editor

Prepare for a blast from the past and a recollection of childhood memories because this December, ViacomCBS announced that the Nickelodeon series iCarly will be revived on Paramount+, the company's rebranded streaming service. Although there is not an exact release date yet, the show is set to premiere in 2021 and the cast members are already on set.

The show's lead, Miranda Cosgrove, along with costars Jerry Trainor and Nathan Kress, are set to reprise their roles as Carly Shay, Spencer Shay, and Freddie Benson, respectively. No other actors of previous characters have stated that they will be returning. Only Jennette McCurdy, who played Sam Puckett, has said she will likely not return for the show's reboot. McCurdy has retired from acting and is transitioning into writing and directing.

Sophomore Megan McBride "can't wait to watch the reboot with [her] family and compare it to the original." "I'm most excited for T-Bo, or Mrs. Benson, to return because they always spiced up the original show," said Megan.

The original series followed the life of Carly Shay, a teenage girl who creates her own web show

called iCarly with her best friends Sam and Freddie, in the apartment loft that she and her older brother Spencer live in. Over the course of the series, the gang goes on adventures together as they work through the ups and downs of friendship, growing up, and producing a viral web show.

In the final episode "iGoodbye," Carly decided to move to Italy with her father, Colonel Shay, and end her webcast. While it is unknown where the show will pick up after all these years, it has been confirmed that the show will follow the characters in their adult lives. Senior Cat Pinotti said that she is "excited to see all the characters grown-up and see how their lives turned out."

According to ViacomCBS' official description, the 2021 iCarly reboot will serve as "a new chapter for the most successful kids' sitcom of all time." The description continues, "Original cast members Miranda Cosgrove, Nathan Kress, and Jerry Trainor join new friends for a look at these characters' present-day lives, adventures and comedic mishaps." Paramount+ also announced on Twitter that "the 13-episode season follows Carly Shay and her friends as they navigate work, love, and family in their twenties."

According to Paramount+, there will also be two new characters. One being Jaidyn Triplett, who will be playing Millicent, "Freddie's snarky and social media-savvy stepdaughter." Yes, Freddie has

a stepdaughter. Laci Mosely will also be joining as Harper, "Carly's roommate and best friend." Cat Pinotti also predicts that there will be "tons of crazy guest stars."

If you're looking to catch up on the original series before the reboot comes out, the first two seasons are available on Netflix and all six seasons are available on Paramount+. A premium subscription to Paramount+ costs \$10.00 a month and includes programs from CBS, MTV, Nickelodeon, and more.

"The original was really funny, so it will be hard to beat," junior Lucas Hite said. "The characters really made the show great. My favorite character from the original was Gibby, so I really hope he returns."

"It will be interesting to see which way they decide to take the show. I wonder if it will be similar to the original or a completely new [series]," said Megan.

While much is still unknown, the reboot of the hit show iCarly is soon to come, hopefully with lots of random dancing.



PHOTO: MIRANDA COSGROVE INSTAGRAM

Miranda Cosgrove on set

# Freeman Debuts the "Marching Mavericks"

**Ella Hurlbert**  
Copy Editor

Freeman's popular marching band began rehearsals with the full band on Mar. 9, after being forced to push their season into spring due to COVID-19 lockdowns. The Marching Mavericks practice every Tuesday and Thursday morning from 7:15 to 8:15 anywhere from the football field to the big gym. Health and safety requirements make rehearsals interesting, but most band students are glad to be back.

"I was really excited to go back to marching band," said junior Tommy Wasilik, who plays the tuba. "It's not quite the same as it used to be, but what we are doing is well worth it."

"We're not marching," said senior and head drum major Abby Kupstas. "We're just walking onto the field together and ... playing the music because marching would mean we break social distancing."

Junior Joseph Chambers, who plays baritone saxophone, shared similar stories of social distancing difficulties. "At first, we were trying to go with six feet, and that kind of worked," he said. "But if we want to work on music in sections or with the full band, it's difficult to do ... on the field or in the big gym."

In addition to social distancing, protocol has to be adopted to keep students safe while playing their instruments. "[We have to] put covers over our bells- the openings of our instruments- so that COVID doesn't come out the other end," said Joseph. "[We] also wear masks while we play- masks in which we have cut holes."



PHOTO: DSF BAND INSTAGRAM

slip our mouthpieces through and play while wearing a mask," said Tommy. "The flaps on the mask often get caught in your mouth, making it hard to play."

"It feels unnecessary," said sophomore trombone player Griffin Belding. "I personally feel that there is no safety benefit to a mask with a hole in it ... we might as well just take them off."

In addition to challenging COVID-19 protocol, "The biggest problem is not having band camp," said Abby Kupstas. "The fact that we're doing marching band in March instead of near the summer means we don't have that two-week period of time where everybody learns the show, meets everybody, and learns how to march ... it's more difficult to teach people things."

However, in spite of all the difficulties, the Marching Mavericks are still having a good time. "I missed all of [my friends]," said Abby. "It was nice to start seeing them more regularly."

"In a normal year, you spend

countless hours with these people and become very close with all of them," said Tommy Wasilik. "I enjoy playing music with [this] group of people. Every instrument has their own part and it all comes together to make a beautiful, fun piece of music."

*"I enjoy playing music with this group of people."*  
- Tommy Wasilik

Griffin agrees that the unified music of the Marching Mavericks is one of the best things about the experience. "Everything looks and sounds phenomenal when you march with everybody," he said. "It feels more unified than anything else I've done with music."

The DSF Marching Mavericks will be performing at junior varsity (JV) football games on Thursday nights. Games are streamed live on Freeman's YouTube channel.

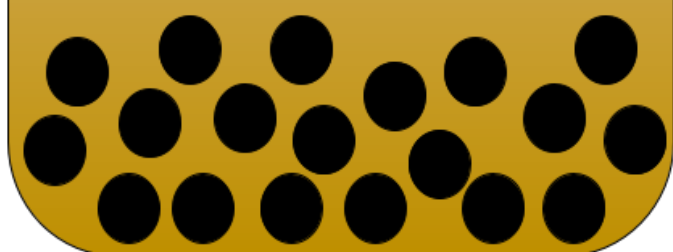
## Kung-Fu Tea

RVA location: 946 W Grace Street, Richmond, VA 23220

"My sister and I love going to Kung Fu Tea and walking around VCU with friends. I get honey milk tea with boba, it's very sweet!" - junior Alyssa Gagen

### Kung-Fu Tea Seasonal Specials:

- Purple Yam Latte
- Mango Cream
- Strawberry Cream



# After Hours' Concerts Reopening

**Brooke Ward**  
Centerspread Editor

As the warm weather approaches, Richmond venues full of music and dancing are opening up again, offering events that will surely give the exhausted students of the Richmond area something to look forward to. One of these venues is After Hours Concerts, formerly known as Innsbrook After Hours, and is scheduled to reopen on Friday, May 14 after being shut-down due to COVID-19.

Innsbrook After Hours was an outdoor concert venue located in the business and residential community of Innsbrook in Glen Allen. It was well-known for its outdoor performances by famous country singers such as Brett Young, Kane Brown, and Billy Currington. Innsbrook, however, is not limited to country music; bands such as Mamma Mia's hit pop group ABBA have also performed at the venue.

"After Hours is the perfect place to go to listen to music with your friends," said senior Gina Vinson. "It's also great for meeting new people!"

When the music wasn't playing, there were plenty of other attractions to keep patrons busy at the venue. Along with a large field for dancing, socializing, and listening to performers and a stage for the performers, Innsbrook After Hours also had food, drinks, and game booths to

keep its audience entertained.

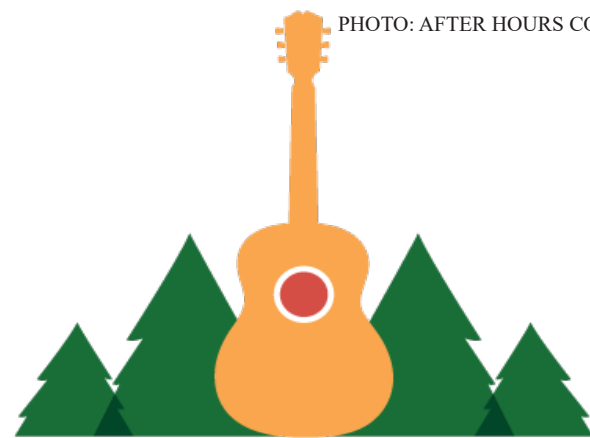
"The corn dogs were my favorite because they're so big," said Gina, "but the food was really expensive, so I would try to eat before." Despite the pricey food and drink, however, the lemonade booth was a notable favorite of many concert-goers.

"Innsbrook After Hours attracted people of all ages: teenagers, young adults, and parents who all want to enjoy live music," said sophomore Betty-Grace Thompson. The large audiences often at concerts, however, can damage the experience. "I prefer socializing at concerts because sometimes it's hard to get a good spot to listen to [the] music," said Betty-Grace.

Innsbrook After Hours was well-known for its local placement in Glen Allen. However, on March 29th Innsbrook After Hours announced a move from their home in Innsbrook to a new location in Doswell Virginia. Along with the new location will come a new name, After Hours Concerts. After Hours Concerts premiere show is scheduled for May 14th showing Jamey Johnson. "I'm disappointed they moved because it is now much further from my house," said Gina.

After Hours Concerts' opening will give Richmonders a sense of normalcy again as they rally together after the closing caused by the pandemic. "I'm so excited to go to concerts with my friends again," said junior Chloe Ellen, "I haven't seen an in-person concert since the beginning of [last] March."

PHOTO: AFTER HOURS CONCERTS



**AFTER HOURS**  
CONCERTS  
AT THE MEADOW EVENT PARK

After Hours Concerts' new logo

## More Than a Video Game: The Freeman Esports Team

Kieran Wall  
Editor-in-Chief

# LEAGUE OF LEGENDS

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Video games are no longer just a common leisure activity. Recent years have seen competitive gaming evolve into a 1.1 billion dollar industry according to Statista, with total viewership expected to exceed that of basketball by 2022. Riding this wave of gaming as it takes the world by storm is Freeman's new eSports team.

The eSports team at Freeman grew out of the now-defunct video game club (VGC), launched by a physics teacher and avid gamer himself, Jeremy Booher. "For a few years, all [we] did was meet after school to play Smash Bros," said Mr. Booher, reminiscing on the days of the video game club. However, "when the seniors that started the club graduated, VGC pretty much died out," said Booher.

As the prevalence of competitive gaming continued to rise, Mr. Booher joined with Mr. Orr and a group of interested students earlier this year to revive the Video Game Club as the eSports team, with the goal of fielding student teams to compete in local tournaments. The team has quickly become one of the largest extracurricular groups at Freeman, with close to 40 members. Members of the team are subdivided into different squads, each focusing on a particular video game. The Freeman eSports team actively competes in three different games: Rocket League, Madden, and League of Legends. Rocket League is essentially fast-paced car soccer, Madden

is the premier American football video game, and League of Legends is a popular multiplayer combat and tower defense game. As in any sport, practice is critical to the success of the eSports team in competition. "We basically just play the game together," said junior Chase Henricks on the struc-

*“Against teams in Ohio, Norway, and even Japan.”*

- Jackson Beale

ture of practices. "There are ways we can set up scrimmages against other schools, but we haven't gotten there yet." Chase plays Rocket League for the team, a game that requires both quick reflexes and technical skill honed through practice. "There are so many mechanics in the game you can practice and improve on," said Chase.

"The nice thing about this type of team is that most people are playing and practicing in their free time anyway because they enjoy the game," said Mr. Booher, elaborating on practice. Team cohesion and personal skill are put to the test during weekly competitive rounds against other eSports teams around the state and country. "So far, we've been playing one match per game per week," said Mr. Booher.

"There's a different mindset in [competing] than playing for fun, you try to play your best and not goof off," said Chase. Despite the added pressure, "[competing] is a lot more fun," said Chase.

The 2021 season started off rough, with Freeman losing several matches in a row. "We've been playing against a lot of higher-ranked teams," said Chase. However, recent weeks have seen better performances all around. "Our teams are doing really well," said Mr. Booher. "I'm excited to see what 'end-game' looks like in a few weeks."

In addition to local games, Freeman has competed "against teams in Ohio, Norway, and even Japan," said junior Jackson Beale, who plays Madden. Perhaps more important than victories are the community and connections the eSports

team has built. "It's fun to play and compete with other people that have the same interest as you, other people who saw a school eSports team and thought 'that's something I want to do,'" said Chase.

As eSports continues to expand in popularity, the team hopes interest in high school level competition will rise. "It's growing. And it's growing quickly," said Mr. Booher, speaking to the prevalence of high school eSports. "The pro-league scene for eSports has grown significantly," said Chase. "I'm hoping high school eSports will grow big enough that eventually professional organizations will pick up high school players and teams."

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

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## Review: Starbucks's New Iced Brown Sugar Oatmilk Shaken Espresso

Annabelle Glassman  
Editor-in-Chief

I've always been a little scared of TikTok food trends. A rather unfortunate whipped coffee incident last March and the general vomit-esque appearance of the tomato and feta pasta that went viral earlier this year led me to swear off any Tik-Tok affiliated food. This was until the Iced Brown Sugar Oatmilk Shaken Espresso simultaneously appeared on the Starbucks menu and many For You pages. As a self-proclaimed coffee connoisseur, I had to see what all the hype was about. So, I practiced saying the mouthful of an order (which did not save me from mortifyingly stumbling through the actual ordering process), and headed off to the nearest Starbucks. After shelling out \$5.45 for a grande, the drink was mine.

The best description of this drink is the word middle, but in a good way. The Iced Brown Sugar Oatmilk Shaken Espresso is the perfect drink to facilitate the transition from the heavy hot chocolates and peppermint mochas of the winter holidays to the light refreshers of summer.

The sweetness of the drink is not overpowering, but enough to encourage anyone who is wary of the flavor of coffee by itself.

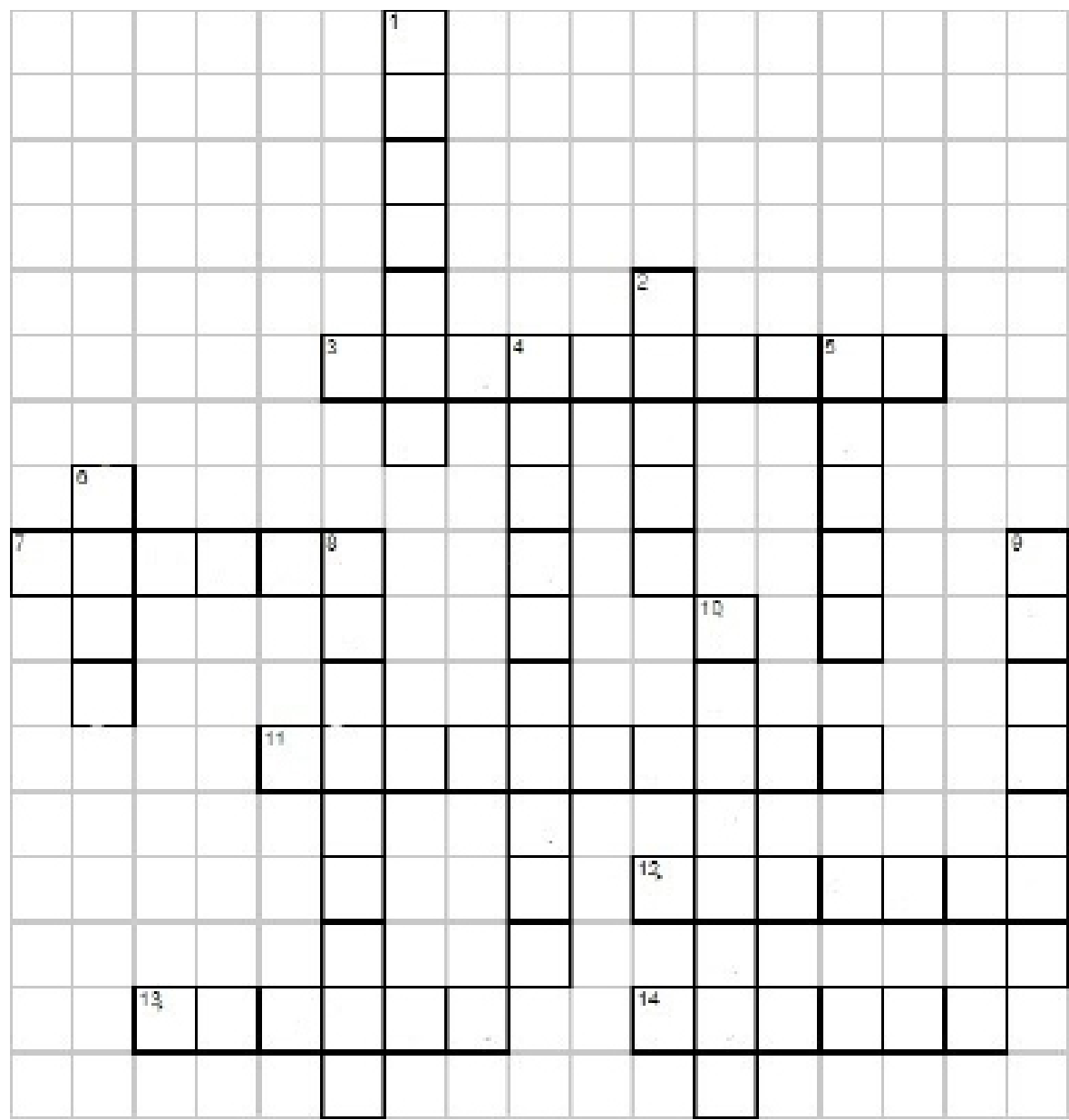
*“The best description of this drink is the word middle, but in a good way.”*

- Annabelle Glassman

There was the slightest hint of cinnamon too, which added an interesting flavor to the drink and a little bit of color on the top.

This drink was my first experience with oat milk. While I didn't appreciate the extra cost that it tacked on to my drink, it was not as strange as I thought it would be. In fact, I barely even noticed the switch from real milk. I'm not going to start using oat milk in my everyday coffee, but I'll consider it next time as a dairy alternative.

Though this drink will not replace my regular order, it was both a good change from my regular and a welcome reminder to leave my comfort zone every now and then. I would definitely recommend it to fuel your commute to school or as a motivational treat next Wellness Wednesday.



### Across:

- 3 - Home of the strange, avocado-colored tiles
- 7- Movie where Tom Cruise plays a character with the same nickname as our mascot
- 11 - Sport the Dallas Mavericks play
- 12 - April showers bring May \_\_\_\_
- 13 - The other AP exam being given in person
- 14 - Name of Mrs. Striker's chicken

# CROSSWORD

### Down:

- 1- Class of 2023 next year
- 2- Country where the Summer Olympics will be held
- 4 - Last day of school: June
- 5 - Nickname of a favorite student restaurant
- 6 - Shared name of the group who battled on April 24
- 8 - Movie that won the 2021 Oscar for Best Picture
- 9 - One of the AP exams being held in-person
- 10 - Recently rerecorded Taylor Swift album



PHOTO: ANNABELLE GLASSMAN

Annabelle's Iced Brown Sugar Oatmilk Shaken Espresso