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# WOLVERINE PRESS

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## NEWS & FEATURES

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# Woodside Basketball Tryouts

By Say'quon Deas

Grab your water bottle, stretch, and put in your music, because today I have come to tell you about Woodside High School Boy's Basketball Tryouts. I was a participant at the basketball tryouts on November 8, 2021, so I will be providing all of the details about the basketball tryouts and the drills we did.

When I heard that there were basketball tryouts for Woodside. I was pretty excited because I love basketball, but I can't lie, I was also a little nervous because I was in my own thinking about "what if I didn't make the team".

The day of the basketball tryouts was a good day because the only thing on my mind were the tryouts. The last school bell finally rang I rushed to the gymnasium and got dressed. There were about 40 other students there with the same goal I had which was to make the basketball team. The coach called everyone to the circle and he said "I know it's a lot of people here trying out, and I wish everyone could make it but it can't happen that way so I'm only keeping 12 people". I instantly knew then that I was going to have to stand out so that I could make this team.

During the first ten minutes of the tryout, we stretched and whatever we did was good because I was really loose and ready to hoop. The first drill was a competitive one on one drill and I was making a lot of my shots and played good defense. I won that drill, which gave me so much confidence for the next drill we did which was a three on three on three.

This is when you have three teams with three players on each team, and if you score you go to the other end of the court and try to score against the other team, but if you don't, the team that didn't let you score on them gets the ball and they go on the other end and try to score.

The whole tryout we competed against each other so the coach can see how everyone plays and so he can see who has the skillset to compete on the varsity level. Minutes after the tryouts ended, the coach called everyone in the circle again and he said "I want to thank everyone who came and tried out for my team, I wish I could pick everyone but I can't. When I point at you go to the baseline"; he was taking forever to point at me so I was getting nervous and I was thinking that I wasn't going to make the team. I was counting people and he got to 11, and then he finally pointed at me. I got so excited my goal was accomplished!

In conclusion, the basketball tryouts were mainly focused on who could do what and how good they could do it on the court, and work with their teammates. It also was to see who could play basketball the level needed to be successful and make the right basketball play every time on the court. Overall, I think this year's team is going to be very successful, so stay tuned, and be sure to support your Woodside Wolverines!

# Loud in the Dead of Silence: A Look Into Woodside's GSA

By Zaacc Jeckins

Identity was and is no longer undeniable as either a concept or disbelief, but rather a truth; the LGBT+ community exists amongst our society as one of the many factions that make up our diverse planet, and have always existed, whether we accept it or not. It's a light, though shone through a mere peephole, is ever as radiant as a June sun rise. And, here at Woodside Highschool, they've channeled that small beam into a blaze, simply called Gay/Straight Alliance, or GSA for short.

In order to understand the necessity and importance of GSA here at Woodside, we

conducted interviews with not only a member of the GSA, but also the very sponsor of GSA

himself, Mr. Robert Edwards. He will provide not only a background of GSA, but his own personal belief into why it is beneficial to the students of Woodside Highschool.

Here are the list of questions asked, along with the responses from Mr. Edwards.

Q1. Did you form the GSA?

R1. "No, I took it over. Ms. Adams, the Instructional Technology Coach, was an English teacher and the GSA sponsor last year. But, since she moved into Tech support, she hadn't been able to take responsibility, therefore not able to cover sponsorship. So, when I came to be a teacher, I thought to myself, apart from 'oh my god, I'm going to be with high school students again', is 'I need to find students and make them aware that they're safe and give them somewhere to be'.

## **Loud in the Dead of Silence: A Look Into Woodside's GSA Continued**

So, I got ear that there was a GSA, I talked to Ms. Adams, she said 'Well, I'm looking for a co-sponsor!' And, I said, 'Hey, pick me'. So, here I am."

Q2. Why do you personally believe that the GSA is important?

R2. "I personally know that, while I was serving in the military, I had a lot of LGBT friends, and they didn't always have the support that they needed; especially when we were deployed. And, I wanted to make sure that this new work environment definitely had that kind of support. It's also important to me from a personal perspective, because I've got a lot of queer family and friends. And, high schoolers are figuring themselves out, and a lot are still trying to determine their own identity."

"So, giving them a safe place and space to do that is really important for a lot of reasons. Particularly in this area."

Q3. Do you believe that other schools can benefit from a GSA?

R3. "Definitely. I say that because there are queer people everywhere; queer as an umbrella term for LGBTQ+. They get a lot of flack from a lot of people all the time. And, there's pressure, suicide, bullying, and all kinds of interpersonal conflicts happening anyway. When you magnify it with all the issues that queer people face with; not being respected at home, not being understood, generally all the micro aggressions that come with being in a hetero and cis normative society."

"Magnify with all that stuff and it turns into a really crucial and significant group of people that need somewhere to be themselves."

## **Loud in the Dead of Silence: A Look Into Woodside's GSA Continued**

That concludes the questions and responses regarding Mr. Edwards; simple, but digestible and understandable to the audience of his motivation to support young minorities in their time of learning and growing into adults. You can tell that there is concern and care for the well-being of all his students, especially the more socially vulnerable. Next, we have a few questions and responses with a student/member of the GSA, Everyn Weil (he/they), who will give a more relatable connection with our predominantly student audience.

Q1. How did you learn about the GSA?

R1. "This year, I had learned that this was actually happening at our school from a friend, who is a student of Mr. Edwards. But, also just being in this community for quite a while, I have heard many things about GSA in other areas as well."

Q2. Would you say that the GSA has negatively or positively influenced you?

R2. "Definitely, because I know that I can share my life struggles, and talk to people who may also have that being happening in their life. So, it's nice to kind of have that connection. Like, really get to talk to people about something that you know isn't normalized."

Q3. Would you recommend the GSA to any other students, queer or non queer?

R3. "Definitely. Especially for queer students, so that way they really have a place where they can feel safe. But, also for non queer students, so that they can understand us a little bit more, because I know a lot of people tend to have a lot confusion with LGBT+ things."

## **Loud in the Dead of Silence: A Look Into Woodside's GSA Continued**

Q4. What was life before and after joining GSA?

R4. "Before, I had to keep everything to myself, and I couldn't really share some things with people I know, not even with some of my queer friends. I didn't always feel like everywhere was a safe place, and it was hard to really talk to friends about certain things, especially if they don't relate. But, now here, I have a place to share that and talk to people. And, I can educate people, and that's definitely something I love doing. Like I said, not everybody understands, and I love teaching people in general about something that means a lot to me personally."

"The GSA has a big impact on me."

It just goes to show that the beauty of GSA cannot always be articulated into words, but rather need to be seen with one's eyes to truly capture the essence of self-acceptance, love, passion, and freedom to be who were born as. Thank you both, Mr. Edwards and Everyn Weil, for taking the time to be interviewed and share with our school what GSA means to you. And, I hope that after reading this, you'll find a meaning behind this little light of ours, too.

# Your Questions About Archery, Answered!

By Kaitlyn Gardner

Ever since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the archery team has been affected. The state tournament in March 2019, which had to be cancelled due to the pandemic, would have been the last time the archery team competed. Since then, members have been fighting to get the sport back in session, with many questions needing to be answered.

Although some Zoom meetings have been held already, no date has been set in stone for the archery season to occur this year. In previous years, practice has started as early as mid to late October. Interest meetings were held in November of this year, yet in person practices have not yet occurred. People who are a part of the team and who are interested in joining the team have been curious about when practices will take place this year. Coach Wissman has explained the timeframe by stating, "There is not a definite date yet. I am trying to find a place and time to meet to practice. The gym at Woodside is used until after 5pm every day in the winter. Fitzgerald (formerly Dozier) is holding practice but there is not a way for us to get there using transportation." However, after this interview took place, it was announced that archery would occur on Thursdays starting in January, which was exciting to the members involved.

Archery has not had any in-person meetings since the 2019-2020 school year. A handful of Zoom meetings have been held, hosted by the team coach, Coach Wissman. Of course, archery is not an activity that can be completed over a computer screen. This leaves members wondering where practices will be held that will cooperate with COVID-19 restrictions.

# Your Questions About Archery, Answered! Continued

Suggestions of Newport News Park and Ella Fitzgerald Middle School have been made, although team members have been unsure. When asked about the location of practices, Coach Wissman responded, "I have looked into practicing at Fitzgerald, Newport News Park, our gym, even Greenwood. Coach Macklin has asked around to see if there are elementary schools close to us we could use. Most likely we would practice in our gym at 7pm on Thursdays starting after break. But that has not been confirmed." Once again, after this interview took place, the timeframe of practices was confirmed. Practices have indeed begun to happen from 7pm-8pm in the Woodside gym.

Another aspect of the sport that has been yet to be addressed is transportation to and from practice-- specifically, will there be any? Because of difficulty reserving buses, and on top of that the bus strike, participants are wondering if they will have to provide their own transportation. If a location other than Woodside is chosen for certain practices, transportation may pose an issue. Coach Wissman was asked about the possibilities for this, to which she described, "With reduced transportation options, any option we decide on will require students to have their own ride to and from practice, wherever and whenever we practice."

The big question teammates have asked recently is simply whether or not archery will be considered a sport this year. Unfortunately, it has been speculated that archery this year may be a club rather than a sport this school year. This is due to two factors, one being the amount of people who have expressed interest and another being the possible lack of district and state competitions. If either of these pose a threat to the sport, archery should be able to continue as a club until logistics are sorted out for the 2022-2023 school year.

# Your Questions About Archery, Answered! Continued

Coach Wissman has explained the state of archery by addressing the state of archery tournaments, saying, “I have not received word on the district tournament. Last year, there was a virtual state tournament. We were not able to participate due COVID restrictions in our district. Based on previous years, there will be a state tournament, we just don’t know if it will be virtual or in person.” This one large factor leaves the status of archery up in the air. It is still unsure if the team will have enough members by the time of the proposed archery tournament occurring in late January.

Finally, members of the team were asked how they felt about the uncertainty of the upcoming season, as well as the lack of archery in the past couple of years. Dontae Evans, a Woodside graduate who had his last archery season taken from him by COVID-19 explained, “It was a shame to cut the season so short. I missed the sport and my friends.” Similarly, Estella Crandell, a longtime member of the archery team, reflected upon the COVID-caused interruption of the sport by saying, “I wish we could’ve gone to states. COVID-19 hit right before the competition so we never got to go.” Coach Wissman added, “I missed practicing last year. Archery is a wonderful outlet for anxiety and frustration. It focuses the mind and body and requires concentration. But it is also loads of fun! When we were last able to practice, students would compete against me, target balloons, and do push-ups. Zoom meetings were not the same. It was nice to see and talk to students when I couldn’t see them in school.” All members of the team were shocked by the sudden absence of the sport they had become so accustomed to practicing twice a week. Everyone interested is hoping for a decent season this year, even if it only be as a club status.

# **Your Questions About Archery, Answered! Continued**

Although there are still some aspects of archery that need further deciding, Coach Wissman's answers have provided anyone interested with more solid information of what is being decided upon. People interested were notified when more decisions had been made, which, in agreement with Coach Wissman's answers, occurred shortly after winter break. The continuation of Woodside's archery team should be solidified with time and cooperation.

# The Best Way to Spend Christmas!

By Zorie Cockrell

Christmas! One of the best times of the year. It's the time where you bake cookies, make gingerbread houses, and play in the snow. Christmas is always one of the happiest times of the year and it's also a time where you get to go to awesome traditional events. One of those events is the Annual Christmas Light Show held at Newport News Parks.

The Christmas Light Show is for anyone and everyone. Lots of people have gone already and really enjoyed themselves. If you do find yourself going, some I have interviewed said you will have a blast. The light show is a good way to start the wintery month, it'll get you into the Christmas spirit right away. If you're still doubting it, here is what fellow Wolverine's had to say about the experience.

A teacher here at Woodside, Mrs. Germann-Mc Clain, had attended the event with her wife. I asked her a few questions and she had all positive things to say. "Initially, I wondered if I was going to need sunglasses! The lights are so bright and colorful, they definitely stood out against the nighttime. I also loved how there was a large variety of displays as well, so I felt like each part of the drive had something new and exciting to look at."

Sounds like she had a really good time. Many other people share her opinion including myself. I had attended the show myself, and it didn't fail to amaze. The lights were bright, everything moved smoothly, and the workers were great. My family loved it too, so much that they wanted to see it a second time! If you're thinking about starting the month off right with great Christmas spirit, I have to say, the light show is a great way to start.

If you want more information, be sure to visit the website [nnva.gov](http://nnva.gov)! The Celebration in Lights event runs from November 25th 2021-January 1 2022 from 5:30-10:30PM. Prices range \$12-\$15 dollars per car, and they even offer special pricing for larger vehicles such as buses! If you like what you see, tell a friend about it and go together! Maybe even tell a family member. You're both bound to have a great time.

# Does Key Club Make Keys?

By Bernadette Pimentel

Meet Key Club, the most popular club at Woodside High School! Now you may be wondering: “Does Key Club make keys?”, and the answer is no, they do not. Key Club is a student-led, high school organization where members make the world a better place through completing service in their community.

After Key Club went through numerous struggles during the pandemic and online school due to some mishaps and failed communications, the sponsors, officers, and members worked hard to revive their activities. From lunch tables advertising the club to their members simply encouraging other students and friends to join, the club was successful in gaining a whopping total of 40+ members.

In order to get a better understanding of the club, I interviewed Key Club’s Vice President, Stella Ly. When asked about what her definition of the club was, she described it as “a place of growth and a place to learn from others”. She also emphasized the unity and passion of the club by describing it as a “big family that helps others out when needed”. I also asked her what the club meant to her, to which she responded with, “Key club has helped me develop what I want to do in the future, as well as help bring out the person who was hidden behind shyness.” It is evident that this club is an overall great experience that provides community and new experiences to those who feel as if they cannot get out of their comfort zone.

Though we have only been in school for three months, the club has already held many and attended a couple events. In October, the members volunteered at a church for a Trunk-or-Treat event, in which they decorated trunks, handed out candy, and took charge in running kids games.

## Does Key Club Make Keys? Continued

The first event in November was the Karwanis Kar Show. Kiwanis held their very first car show at the Larry King Law's Langley Speedway, and key club members volunteered to run a kids table which had candy, games, fake tattoos, and coloring sheets. The second event in November was a Thanksgiving Turkey Drive in which the members donated 8 turkeys to families in need. Lastly, the very first event of December was "Letters to the elderly" in which the students wrote letters for the holidays and sent them to elderly homes.

On top of servicing the community, the club has started ongoing projects to benefit our students and school. The club is currently working together with New Horizons to build transportable benches for the courtyard and hallway in front of the auditorium after being informed about the large influx of students who have no choice other than to sit on the floor/ground. They are also selling winter candy-grams to fundraise for Special Olympics, Polar Plunge, along with providing free gift wrapping services for faculty and staff.

Key club not only serves as an opportunity for students to gain volunteer hours, but it also allows students to lead big events and learn how to network. The members learn responsibility, commitment, and communication skills all while having fun and hanging out with their old and new friends.

Both the officers and members of Key Club are extremely welcoming and excited to talk about the club and what they do. It is very apparent that the students enjoy what they do, especially because of the amount of encouragement they provide to people who are interested in joining. And who knows maybe they'll volunteer to make keys one day!

# Skating Rink Therapy

By Noah Scott

Today I will be talking about the Peninsula Family Skating Center, and how everyone goes there with their friends. People go and skate for hours and have so many conversations. I've been going to the skating rink for a very long time, and have been seeing a lot of the same people get better each year. I'm not that good when it comes to skating because I haven't been going as often as other people, but I'm a lot better than I used to be.

When people go to the skating rink everyone always feels the vibe when they are skating depending on the music that's playing. The music is sometimes slow, and people ride around the ring at a leisurely pace. They skate and chill and talk a bit with friends and other skaters. But when they play hip hop songs, everyone tries to do all kinds of tricks as they ride! That is one of the best parts of going to the skating rink. That is one of the reasons why I want to talk about this as an activity outside of school that people go to.

This rink is a very peaceful place, and everyone goes there, so you most likely will see a lot of your friends. A lot of friendships are formed there and many people create bonds that have lasted forever, just like me. The skating rink has always been a place filled with culture and people and it's a place that can help many young people to have something to do. The skating rink isn't just a place where you could have fun but, if you get really good, this could even become a profession or at a part-time job. Skating rinks have many open spots for people who wish to work there but, of course, you have to be very good at skating to be prepared for this job!

## Skating Rink Therapy Continued

Another opportunity that the skating rink provides is lessons. The lessons that are given there don't cost too much, only about ten dollars a month. Lessons are every Friday, whenever you can make it. After a couple of weeks of learning how to skate, you would be a pro, not perfect but good after a few months. You should be a professional by then! The price for skate passes at the Peninsula Family Skating Center are different prices on different days. On Saturday and Sunday they sometimes have limited offers that give you a discount. The adult skates are ten dollars, and children skates cost seven dollars.

But in my opinion, the best day to go to the skating rink is Saturday. Everyone goes on that day and it's just so fun! This is a good place for Woodside students because skating can help you get your mind off the many problems you have in school and at home. Many of my friends go through a lot of depressing stuff and I ask them if they want to go to the skating rink, and feel we refreshed, as soon as we enter the building. The way they feel changes right away because they already know how fun and how relaxing it is to just skate and relax. Nothing that works better for your mental health than to just skate.

Even if you are not good at skating it doesn't mean you shouldn't try, and once you get pretty decent at it you are going to feel so good about what you accomplished. My point is the skating rink is full of endless possibilities. It could be a place where you could chill, get a job, have fun, make friends and learn. This isn't just some fun spot for people to skate, it's a spot for people to express themselves and find answers. But you won't know until you check it out yourself, so go!

# How Does the Band Practice?

By Sean Burns

Ever wonder about the Woodside Band, and how they practice? The Woodside band starts their practices for marching band in the summer and continue all the way until the football season is over in November. The pep band also plays for basketball games and in the pep rallies. But how they practice is an important part of the band, because with no practice, they wouldn't be able to give their all for their performances and for Woodside sports teams.

During Marching Band season, they practice outside of the school in the parking lot near the gym. Their practices take place right after school and on some days their practices are very long and tiring. Imagine constantly blowing air or drumming until your wrist is tired! Because of this, the band is better than most high school bands. Practice makes perfect and without practice, the band would make a lot of mistakes. They always have to be prepared to perform certain songs at games without messing up. Every person has to know how to play their instrument and when to play it. One of the band players says "they are completely gassed after practice and immediately drink water".

The way that practice proceeds is that the band instructor stands above everyone with a megaphone. He is very loud so, everyone in the parking lot can hear. The band will then continuously play different songs until they become better each time. If the instructor is not satisfied, he tells them what they did wrong and tells them to play again. The endless and continuous playing is what makes the band the way they are.

## How Does the Band Practice? Continued

The band also needs practices for their concerts as well. When they perform at concerts, the band dresses very formally in order to make a good impression. In concerts, they perform in front of crowds and they have competitions throughout the year to prepare for as well. This is another reason why the way they practice is very important. You wouldn't want your band performing badly at a concert.

While many of the band players say their practices are "tiring", they note that it is worth all the effort. In the end, we can see how the practices affect the band and their performance each time they take the stage or the field. Be sure to support the band in any way you can, and consider joining if you play an instrument!

# Adele's Comeback

By Sai Sai Wortham

Did you hear Adele's new album, if not you need to! But, let's be real, you probably did because it had 60.7 million streams just the first day on Spotify! "Why should you listen to the album?", you may ask yourself. Adele disappeared for five whole! years. But I can't blame her, because during that time she was dealing with becoming a mother, throat surgery, and her mental health due to her divorce. But after all this time, she is back with her newly released album, '30'. The title of this album makes sense since her last album was "25", but in my opinion, this new album is the most personal. Even though I'm young, and can't relate to most of the things she talked about in the album, I felt her hurt sadness and growth as a woman.

Her comeback was very surprising to me. Especially on her "Vogue: 73 Questions" article, I found out that she had throat surgery. While I was aware she had a son, the news of her throat surgery was very shocking to me, especially knowing as a singer that can be a hindrance to you vocally. So to know that and find out she's coming out with a whole album was amazing! The good thing is she did with patience, silence, and the help of John Mayer, her voice went from husky to "clean and pure".

Let's dive into the album! To start there are twelve beautiful songs on it, with most of them being six-plus minutes. The first song she put out was "Easy On Me", and my favorite line is "When I am drowning in this silence baby let me in"— to me, there are so many different ways to interpret that line. But how I relate to it is when my boyfriend is going through something but he's not talking, and we quit not talking to each other into he lets me in. The music video for "Easy On Me" has 6,550,141 views, which shows that many people also relate to the song like I do.

## Adele's Comeback Continued

As I said, this is her most personal album that she has put out and one of the songs that caught my attention the most was "My Little Love", and after listening, my interpretation of this song is the divorce didn't only take toll on her, but her son as well. In the song it seems like she is blaming herself for him feeling sad because she couldn't emotionally be there for him. But based on this line, "I'm so far gone and you're the only one who can save me" her son can see through her pain and him just being her son and loving her as much as a little kid can makes her life better to live for. In this song you can see how divorce affects the kids, not just the adults, and it's sad because they would never know what their kid is going through because they are suffering too.

Another one of my favorite songs on the album is "Cry Your Heart Out". The whole song is amazing, but the line that attacked my heart the most was "When will I begin to feel like me again? I'm hanging by a thread". It almost made me cry, because losing yourself is the worst feeling ever, and you're just going day by day not enjoying your life. My heart goes out to anyone who is going through something like that, and just know there is help out there for you.

Adele's new album is incredibly popular online and on social media, especially TikTok! And if you haven't listened to it yet, what are you doing with your life? You can find it on YouTube, Spotify, SoundCloud, and Apple Music. Try it out because there's something in there for everybody! Overall, her come back is amazing and I cannot stop listening to the album, I hope she will be doing more music videos from the album, because as of right now, the only one she did was "Easy On Me" and that video was amazing! Visually stunning, it was in black and white for like most of it but at the end it went in color, showing us how Adele was feeling as she came into the light.

# From Unknown Career Chasers to Outstanding Conquerors

By Jakayla Harris

Your heart starts zooming through your clenched chest. Your hands are drenched from the sweat you continuously produce. Your trembling feet guide you into the purple and teal sea. Your mind can't concentrate on anything but tortuous thoughts. Who will want to be friends with me? What won't go as planned today? When will this catastrophe end? Where is my classroom? Why is no one else nervous like me?

Many students have experienced this on their first day of school. A countless number of teachers have also had this nerve racking experience. Though this is the case, our teachers always have to find a way to walk the halls with confidence even when they don't know where their classroom is. I talked with four teachers, Mrs. Germann-Mc Clain, Mr. Smith, Ms. Farrior, and Mrs. King, about their unique experiences being the new teacher and how they feel now.

This school year is Mrs. Germann-Mc Clain's first year teaching at Woodside. She teaches Mythology and Creative Writing to all grade levels. For that reason, she must create a distinct way of teaching for each grade level. Mrs. Germann-Mc Clain said, "I always have to have a good plan in place. That way all of my classes stay separate and I can remember what I'm doing for each class and where they are in their curriculum." From freshman to seniors, this teacher loves her students. "My favorite thing about Woodside is definitely the students. You guys are really good at supporting each other."

# From Unknown Career Chasers to Outstanding Conquerors Continued

Mrs. Germann-Mc Clain didn't forget about her supportive staff either. "I really love the staff that I work with. The other teachers here are really awesome! They always come down to help me and I've needed a lot of help as a first year teacher." Overall Mrs. Germann-Mc Clain is enjoying her first year at Woodside. She has nothing negative to say, only wonderful words about the enthusiastic environment that she has experienced. She is confident that these feelings will only grow as she gains more years as a Wolverine.

Mr. Smith is also a first year teacher at Woodside but has been teaching for seventeen years. He teaches English to both sophomores and juniors. He is enjoying being a Wolverine saying, "This year has been really nice and welcoming. I enjoy the student body here. I also have really good synergy with my students." Mr. Smith says he would only change one thing about Woodside, the location. "If I could change one thing, it would definitely be my traveling distance. I have to wake up at four in the morning to get here on time. So I would change that." For this being his first year at Woodside, Mr. Smith has already made a stellar impact here.

Ms. Farrior has graced Woodside's walls for seven years now. She teaches all four grade levels how to play instrumental melodies on the piano. From freshman to senior, Ms. Farrior loves watching her students grow. "Most of my students get to evolve with me. A lot of my students will start with me as ninth graders and I get to watch them grow up. That's the really sweet thing about teaching music." If you couldn't tell, Ms. Farrior adores her students. I asked her what her favorite thing about Woodside was and she replied with, "The students. In such an eclectic high school, I feel it's a place where everyone has their own group of people to hang out with. I never see anyone that's alone, everyone has a place to fit in here."

## From Unknown Career Chasers to Outstanding Conquerors Continued

Though she takes pride in being a Woodside Wolverine, I had to ask if there was anything she would change about our beloved school. Ms. Farrior answered immediately saying, "Starting school at 7:10! Plus more funding for the arts." Before departing her classroom I asked one final question, what was your first year at Woodside like versus now? Ms. Farrior opened up with an honest response. "My first year was pretty difficult because I was teaching a class that they don't prepare you for in college. There isn't a lot of curriculum established for piano. So I didn't have a clear idea of what I was doing at that time. Compared to where I'm at now, I feel more settled and secure with how my class should be structured and what we should be getting done."

Mrs. King teaches world geography and has been a Woodside Wolverine for about nine years. Being one of her students, I know how Mrs. King runs her classroom. She teaches with confidence and has created a free, fun, and safe learning environment. According to Mrs. King, this wasn't always the case. "My first year at Woodside I was only here on even days and then I subbed. So it was super chaotic on the days that I was subbing and then crazy on even days because I had to keep up with the schedule. It was just nuts! Back then, I was a small fish in a big pond. Whereas now, I walk in the door and people know my name. They know that I'm a person they can go to and come see me for anything." One thing Mrs. King loves about Woodside is the togetherness. She wouldn't change it. "The comradery between the teachers. It's not like that everywhere. We're all one big happy family, don't ever change that!" With the ongoing Covid pandemic, the togetherness of Woodside has changed. Many treasured events had to be cancelled. The news has upset many wolverines, including Mrs. King. "As long as there's Covid there's not going to be a change. I wish we could do prom again, more after school, and just more together things." With Covid going on Mrs. King remains hopeful that the togetherness of Woodside will return.

# **From Unknown Career Chasers to Outstanding Conquerors Continued**

These four teachers have each had their own experience at swimming through the purple and teal sea that is Woodside. I believe all the teachers would agree that their first year was one for the books. They all felt confused, unprepared, and a little crazy. Now they have a clear direction of how to run their classroom. These teachers are beyond grateful for Woodside's staff and students. We have taught them just as they have taught us.

# Did Someone Say "No School"?

By Isabella Monge

Could this possibly be the most relaxed school year ever? The Newport News school board has decided to add in multiple extra days off, multiple extra half-days, and extended breaks. With the new school year during the time of Covid, students have been extremely stressed out. However, with the addition of these extra days off, students are able to have some of that stress relieved.

November 2021 was an exciting time for the students of Newport News Public Schools. On November 9, 2021, the school board decided to officially release the updated calendar, which included a week off for Thanksgiving break and multiple days off of school every month. Word spread fast and everyone was excited for the upcoming break. Due to Covid, the switch from online school to in-person school has certainly not been easy, which may have been the cause of the updated calendar. Also, according to Wavy News, the school board approved of the calendar because it allowed teachers to have more time to plan. Not only has the new school year been tough on students, but teachers have also been struggling with getting back into the swing of things.

According to the new calendar, NNPS students have a total of four extra days off. It is believed that the extra days off are considered "virtual learning days", but in reality they are just normal days off because mandatory Zoom sessions won't be held during these days. The virtual learning days still require teachers to go into work, but the work day is mainly centered around grading, meetings, and curriculum, and it is made to help them have time to plan. Not to mention, there are a lot of half-days that have been added in, two of which include "wellness days" that will occur February 3rd and 4th of 2022.

## Did Someone Say "No School"? Continued

Even though four days might not seem like much, it will really make a difference which we will soon find out. It's easy to get burnt out from work, teachers and students alike. Luckily, Newport News Public Schools decided to take it easy on the students and the staff for the first year back to school from Covid.

This new addition of extra days off of school has already proven to be beneficial to everyone, which is why NNPS should continue to keep their calendar this way. Take a look at the week off for Thanksgiving break for example. That week allowed students to hit the reset button so that they could come back to school and work hard for the three weeks between Thanksgiving break and winter break. Also, many students struggle with mental health because of school, so the added days off allow the students to take time to focus on themselves. "So far I have really enjoyed the extra breaks that our school has given us because I've had the chance to do all of my assignments and still have time for myself on those days," says a fellow senior at Woodside. Meanwhile, this school year hasn't been easy for teachers either, and this year especially, because we have a large amount of new teachers since a lot of teachers quit during Covid. We live in stressful times now, and keeping the updated calendar for years to come is the right thing to do.

To sum it all up, the NNPS school board made the right decision to add in extra days off to the 2021-2022 calendar. Students and teachers are both able to take time to focus on themselves because of the new calendar, and it should stay that way. With time being what they are, keeping the updated calendar for years to come is the right thing to do. To sum it all up, the NNPS school board made the right decision to add in extra days off to the 2021-2022 calendar. Students and teachers are both able to take time to focus on themselves because of the new calendar, and it should stay that way.

# Wolverine Wednesday is the Way!

By Janiyah Shaw

With students still adjusting to in-person school, a lot of them have missing work. Luckily, Woodside has offered us Wolverine Wednesday: a fifty minute period where students are allowed to go to any of their classes to either catch up, or get help from their teachers. The best part is even if students don't have missing work, there are plenty of activities provided for Woodside students!

For those who are looking for an alternative after school club during Wolverine Wednesday, the Teen Outreach Program (T.O.P.) meetings, administered by Dr. Evans and Ms. Dabney, can be a great choice. An announcement a while back promoting the program reads, "Join the Teen Outreach Program to learn life skills, talk about relationships, learn about communication, provide service to the community, and more!!!" For teens that have a hard time building relationships or finding something to do, T.O.P. meetings can help with that.

Right now, the group is still getting to know each other, so joining RIGHT NOW can be extremely beneficial. The group is all about volunteering, so students who are interested in helping others can do that at T.O.P. For those who aren't so interested in the Teen Outreach Program, there are still plenty of other activities that students can go to. It's all about finding the right mid-week club for you!

Regardless, Woodside has given us the opportunity to use Wolverine Wednesday as free time to ask help from teachers and join clubs. Just 50 minutes of students' Wednesday's can help make them feel better academically and physically.

If students still feel like staying in their classes every Wednesday, that's completely okay, they can always use Wolverine Wednesday as a mental break, even if it's just fifty minutes. But at the end of the day, know that Woodside has given us an opportunity other schools may not have, and students should use their time for the best outcomes possible..