

The River Hill Current

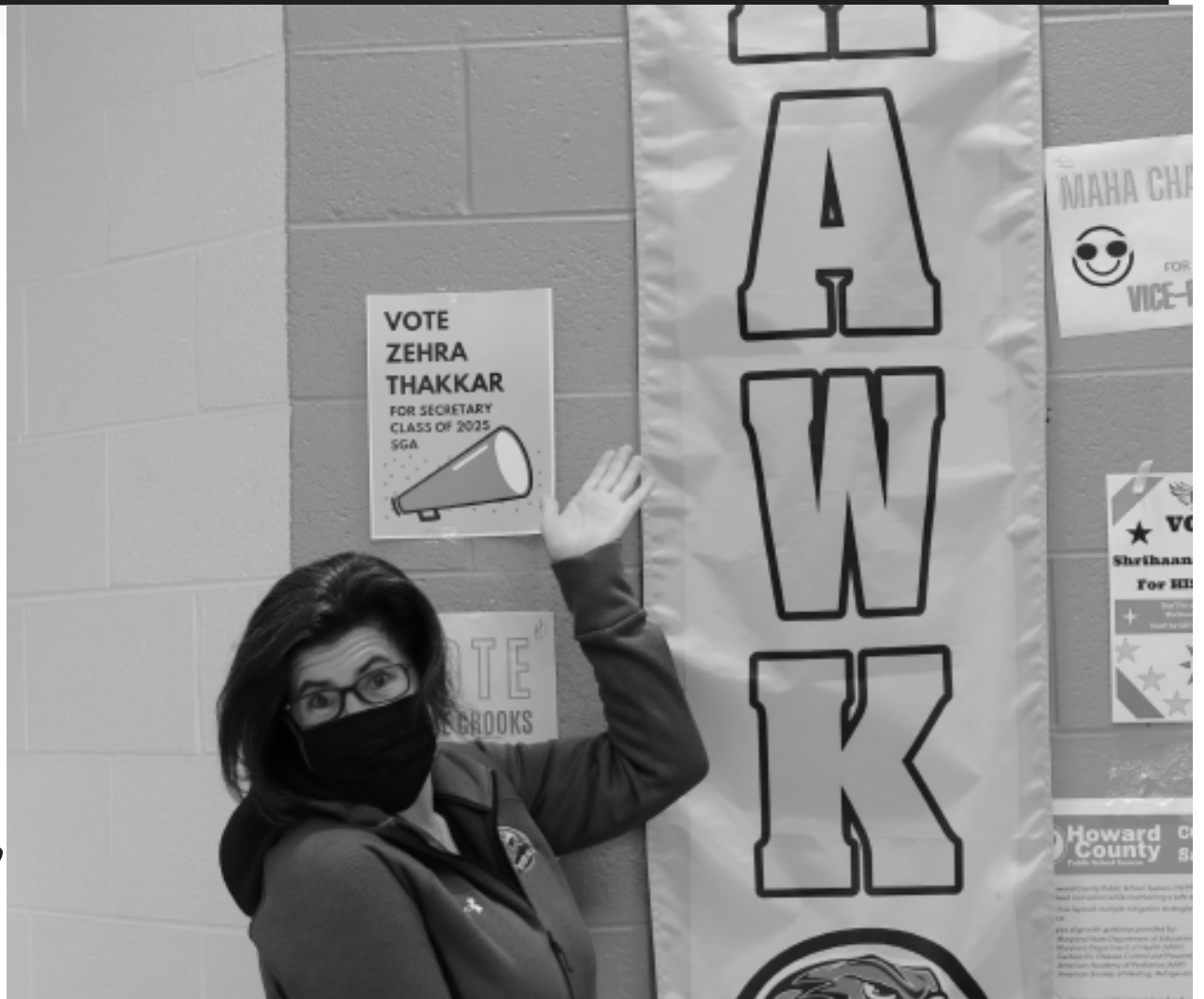


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River Hill Welcomes New Prin- cipal, Mrs. Lidgard!

*By: Korey Moore,
Co-Editor in
Chief*



Photographed By: Allie Billups
Featuring Ms. Lidgard

In the midst of the profound chaos that has immensely altered the lives of all River Hill students, a promising new principal has arrived. Ms. Mikaela Lidgard bears a major vision for her tenure as the new River Hill principal, a dream oriented around three critical objectives: to invent a new transparent and receptive identity for the River Hill staff, to significantly improve the mental health of students, and to promote balance in the lives of River Hill students.

Ms. Lidgard is the fifth principal in River Hill's history, taking over from her predecessor, Mrs. Kathryn McKinley, who had been principal for the last five years. In her brief time at the school, she has come to be beloved among faculty members and students alike. "Ms. Lidgard is so great. She greets us outside of the school with a smile and asks how our day is going," sophomore Shae Fraser and freshman Cade Ardolini indicated.

Ms. Lidgard began her career as an educator at Aberdeen Middle School in Harford County, where she taught English. After two years, she worked in alternative education programs across the state, specifically at the Young Parent Support Center in Essex, and the Baltimore Detention

Center in Baltimore. Following a 9-year period of distinguished service within the aforementioned programs, she returned to the Howard County Public School System, first as a special education English teacher at Cradlerock Middle School (now Lake Elkhorn Middle School), then as a special education instructional team leader at Patapsco Middle School, later as an Assistant Principal at Hammond High School, and finally as Principal of Burleigh Manor Middle School, before she arrived at the Hill. "I've moved buildings a lot since I've started in Howard County," Ms. Lidgard explained in regards to her dynamic career as an educator.

Two months have elapsed since the beginning of her first academic year at River Hill, and she has approached administration fearlessly and optimistically. She seeks to know each River Hill student individually, that their unique needs and passions may be fulfilled. She has expressed her massive, almost unparalleled desire to cultivate a solid balance across the various elements of the lives of River Hill students. Ms. Lidgard is enthusiastic about these students, saying, "Our student body is really engaged and involved and has just fantastic ideas about what we need as a school and what the world needs."

Ms. Lidgard's objective is to

foster greater synergy between the faculty and students, as well as the broader River Hill community. She believes the community's health is pivotal to the success of both of the aforementioned groups, the effectiveness of the faculty in teaching and the students in learning. Acknowledging all of this, Ms. Lidgard has pledged to close the gap that exists between both groups, promoting the flexibility of the faculty in terms of their ability to conform to the needs of individual students. She asserts that "of the fundamental beliefs of education, I believe that we have to listen to students, we have to learn from them, and we have to lead with them, and if we are not doing that, then we've forgotten our true mission, which is to work with young people."

There seem to be many positive reviews from the student body. "I've heard good things about her--I've heard she is active around the school," said junior Carly Gruneberg. Freshman Benjamin Dover echoed these comments, saying, "She is very involved and supportive and talks to everyone."

River Hill bears a promising future with Ms. Lidgard at its helm; the tradition of excellence that it has enjoyed since its opening in 1996 will continue with great strength and momentum.

2021 Senior Crab Feast

*By: Sicily Houk,
Co-Editor in Chief*

The 2021-2022 school year at River Hill has kicked off with a bang. After almost a year and a half of virtual learning, things are finally starting to get back to normal. Along with being back in the building, old traditions and celebrations are being brought back to River Hill. The first being the Senior Crab Feast, which took place on September 14th. Our new principal and administrators wanted to start off the new year with a fun and exciting event for the senior class of 2022.

The Class of 2022 SGA advisors Mrs.

Hennesie and Ms. Geiger went all out for this event. The bus loop was decorated with tables, and lights were strung all around the area.

Everyone seemed to be enjoying themselves and the delicious food. Senior Merina Billey exclaimed, "There were a ton of good options and good food, and I thought it was really fun to be with my friends!"

It seemed that many of the seniors shared this excitement of being able to spend time with friends; in an interview, senior Isabella Evers said, "The crabs were delicious and it was so fun to hang out with my friends."

This Crab Feast was most definitely a big success with the River Hill seniors. Senior Imirie Billey remarked, "The Crab Feast was a great way to start off senior year." This event clearly is setting great standards for this 2021-2022 school year for the seniors thus far.

While some seniors did not even know about this event due to last year's Senior Crab Feast being cancelled because of COVID, others have been excited for this day to arrive. Senior Aastha Ranga remarked, "I thought it was really fun, and I waited four years to be able to do it. I am glad I went."

Overall it can be said that the 2021 Senior Crab Feast was an astonishing success. Rolling back into the school year can be tiring and stressful, but it is events like these that make the students excited to be back in school. All

the seniors that attended were thankful to get the opportunity. As we keep pushing through the school year, one can hope that this will continue to be a fantastic year.



Photographed by: Sicily Houk
Featuring River Hill Seniors

Welcome to River Hill!

*By: Katie Bena,
Staff Writer*

River Hill welcomes two new members to the administration for the 2021-2022 school year. Mr. Penn, the new assistant principal, and Mr. Creighton, the new athletic director, who are excited to join the River Hill community.

Mr. Penn originally didn't see himself becoming an educator and instead was planning to become a lawyer. However, life intervened and he started teaching at a middle school in Baltimore City. He ended up really enjoying his job and creating connections with the students and the community.

Mr. Penn quickly realized that education was what he wanted to continue. He taught in Baltimore City for ten years before he transferred to Howard County, where he became a teacher at Wilde Lake High School, where he also coached baseball and football, which gave him another opportunity to create relationships with students.

Here at River Hill, student voice and student community are two things that Mr. Penn would like to emphasize. Allowing students to give input and share their ideas about the different things that the school needs, are essential to him. Mr. Penn expressed that he would like, "River Hill High School to be the staple of the River Hill community, where people and the students feel this is a place they want to be because it offers so much inclusiveness, diversity, equity, and a center of learning about different people's cultures." In addition to this, he also wants to find ways to capitalize on clubs and organizations at school by getting more involvement in these programs.

Something that Mr. Penn would also like to advocate is to let "students know that there are an abundance of choices out there, and it is not just this one avenue that they have to go down." He feels accomplished when he sees students walk across the stage for graduation. He loves hearing the success stories of his past students, the different paths they have gone down, and how

his class has impacted them. When not working, Mr. Penn enjoys cooking, traveling, shopping, playing sports, and learning about different cultures. He would like the students at River Hill to know that his door is always open and is here to help guide and support students.

Mr. Creighton comes from Howard High School where he was the boys lacrosse coach since 2011. Outside of school, Creighton values spending time with his family, wife, and three daughters. Family is and has been extremely important to him even since he was young.

Growing up, he always enjoyed playing sports and being involved in athletics. He had the opportunity to have amazing mentors in both high school and college. This influenced him to take this job opportunity here at River Hill. Mr. Creighton explained that "I wanted to take a bigger leadership role and be a part of something a little bit bigger, being an athletic director." He wants all students to have positive experiences when thinking back to high school and

athletics like he had. "I had an awesome experience, and that's why I went down this career path." When thinking back to his accomplishments at Howard, Creighton says one of his greatest accomplishments was, "being a part of changing the culture of the strength and conditioning and lacrosse program at Howard High School over the past 11 years, and ultimately winning a state championship."

For Creighton it wasn't necessarily the end result, but the work that they put in to change things around and make work ethic the most important value in the program. Here at River Hill, Creighton has been working with the fall athletics captains on a student-athlete leadership council to discuss the steps to face challenges that come up during the season.

Mr. Creighton encourages all students to get involved in and join extracurricular activities. When looking forward to the future, he is excited to watch the athletes compete, grow, and have their hard work show on the court and field.

A Step Closer to the “Dream School” for Female Students

By: Chloe McGeehan, Staff Writer

New Legislation passed by the Maryland Legislature on July 1, 2021 requires all public schools, including River Hill High, to provide, at no charge to students, menstrual hygiene products through dispensers in women's restrooms. For the past three years, Delegate Reznik has advocated for the Public Schools - Provision of Menstrual Hygiene Products - Requirement which will gradually take effect; at least two women's restrooms at River Hill will receive dispensers by October 1, 2022, and all women's restrooms by August 1, 2025. River Hill Principal Mickaela Lidgard comments on the progressive legislation, stating, “I do support the legislation and a big part of the reason I support the legislation is having worked at schools both in Howard County but also outside of Howard County and in non-traditional educational systems where... a number of students, young people who were experiencing poverty... were unable to always consistently afford hygiene products and for that reason absences might increase during their menstruation period which is a barrier to educational success.”

While some might remark on the well-known affluence within the River Hill community, Principal Lidgard contends, “I think that there can be moments of struggle for anyone, right? That folks can go through hard times and the job market isn't always particularly stable so there's always individual family circumstances that can lead to tough times. But the other piece, honestly, is regardless of your income level or your ability to afford menstrual products as women we know we all sometimes get caught a little off guard, it is not always as predictable or consistent as you

would think, and so I even think about the educational minutes lost when you're in class, you go to the bathroom, you realize you need a product, you have to go to the nurse, get the product, go back to the bathroom, then get back to class. How much easier if you cut out that step of having to go across the building to the nurse's room?”

To that, Riya Seth, President of the National Organization for Women club at River Hill, would say a lot easier. In testimony to the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee in Support of the Public Schools Provision of Menstrual Hygiene Products, Seth shared that, “Personally, I've forgotten sanitary products at home, which has resulted in anxiety and has distracted me from participating in school. As I shared the details of this bill with my peers, many shared stories similar to mine. They also voiced their stories about the impact of period related stigma: many felt embarrassed to ask others for menstrual products. By providing access to period products in bathrooms, we can begin to destigmatize the basic bodily functions of menstruation”. Virginia passed a similar bill months earlier on January 21, 2020, requiring public schools to include free menstrual products in their bathrooms as a matter of dignity for female students. It seems more and more states are beginning to understand that without easily accessible period products, they are adding to the false narrative that female bodily processes are a hindrance, something worthy of a trip to the nurse's office during class and the emotional stress associated with lacking a necessity.

So, it is no surprise that the resounding responses from River Hill students, both male and female, surrounding the new legislation were excitement, celebra-

tion, and pride. Deirdre Curtin, a female student athlete at River Hill, exclaims, “That's good. That's great. I would really appreciate [having period products available in our bathrooms].” Another female River Hill student adds, “I think that's smart, especially if it's your first time getting it.” However, River Hill's Allyson Dea shares “I feel like it shouldn't take that long to get something as simple as that.” Fellow female students agree with Dea's sentiment, one highlighting, “Girls have still needed those products but we haven't had them,” and they still won't until October of 2022, or at least that is the deadline for installation in at least two bathrooms. Principal Lidgard offers “I haven't received anything from Howard county public schools quite yet about the implementation of these, but I think that is something I can reach out and advocate for on behalf of our fe-

male students.” In the meantime, she advises all female students to utilize the health room as a resource.

River Hill's Nurse Mrs. Lancashire wants all female students to know that, “I am not able to offer tampons according to health services, but I have pads...I have plenty. I order them every year and I have thousands of them.” As for the new legislation, Nurse Lancashire is in support; however, she maintains, “I'm hesitant that it's not going to be distributed evenly...If one person takes them all, that's not fair, so the monitoring of it is going to be a problem in a high school.”

So keep that in mind River Hill ladies! Let's do our part in creating a school environment we are proud to be a part of by respecting the long-awaited resources soon to arrive so that period means the halting of a sentence and NOT the halting of our education.



Maryland Legislature

Homecoming Week: Under the Flood lights

By: *Kathryn Roth,*
Staff Writer

River Hill hosts its 2021 Homecoming outside in the stadium, Saturday the 25th to celebrate the new school year and finally be able to have social events and be one as a school again.

Starting with the hawk strong theme, students and teachers showed their school spirit by dressing up for the week while walking through our class color-decorated hallways. Juniors and seniors tied for the top of the hill, which are spirit points each grade gets for participating in our school. This year's homecoming dance was very successful as we

sold just under 1,000 tickets and earned around \$20,000 that went towards the dance itself and to things like the pep rally, class T-shirts, and more. After our win against Mt. Hebron (14-6) on Friday, everyone was ready for Saturday night. The dance took place outside on the football field where many students partied it out and had a great time being all dressed up with their friends.

Mrs. Geiger, the senior sponsor, interacts with all ages and is one of the most spirited individuals at this school. As an overall view, she said, "We had a record-high number of attendees at the dance, hallway decorating was creative and kind-spirited, lots of students participated in top of the hill competitions throughout the week, and staff reported a higher level of engagement than in past years."

SGA is a big contributor to homecoming week itself and made it a primary goal to have the event be student-centered. "SGA tried to make it as easy as possible for everyone to feel a sense of belonging," Mrs. Geiger contin-

ued, "things like the breakfasts and HawkFlock made sure every sporting event got on the homecoming event calendar, all to engage as many students as possible and build back a stronger community."

Junior Maddie Antevil had a great time this year stating, "It was better than I expected. I feel like we should have homecoming outside every year. It was far roomier and much more enjoyable." Also, she brought up the fact that homecoming being outside gave everyone a chance to bring outside visitors and to overall be more inclusive. This year there were a lot of people who left the dance early. Maddie imputed, "I understand that everyone had their plans and it was just as expected that everyone left a little early to go off and have fun with their friends. Honestly, homecoming is just an excuse to dress up and hang out."

Due to homecoming being canceled last year, Maddie's last homecoming was during her freshman year. Comparing freshman year to this year she said, "The themes were way better last year (except for bugs life) but the outside

homecoming was much more fun."

Freshman Carly Hart talked about her experiences at her first homecoming. She stated, "Homecoming was what I expected it to be. My favorite part was just being able to dance with my friends." Since it was her first homecoming, she couldn't compare the difference between inside versus outside but she did mention, "I think the outside setting gave people more room to move around, talk, and dance." On the other hand, Carly did not enjoy the spirit week prior to homecoming. "The spirit week wasn't the best because the themes were kinda hard to do so no one dressed up for them," Carly explained.

This past week has been a time for school spirit and a short break from the stresses of school. Students and teachers will enjoy the memories that they have made because this year's homecoming is a night to remember and this year sure had the flood lights shining on them.

School Clubs Start Up Again

By: *Claire Burnett,*
Features Editor

With the school year starting up again, so are school clubs and activities. Clubs provide students with the opportunity to explore their interests, help a cause, and make friends.

River Hill has over 60 clubs and honors societies, including Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), Angel's Network, National Honor Society, Speech & Debate, Science Olympiad, and Future Doctors of America, all of which are stirring up lots of interest this school year. Sophomore Parker Finch noted that "This year I plan to join the Wrestling Club, Students Partner with Veterans, and Chess Club."

Entering high school means that freshmen are able to join school clubs for the first time. Freshman Christopher Jung commented that he is planning to join FBLA because "most of [his] friends are doing it and it sounds interesting."

Freshman Sunny Wu is very

ambitious, planning to join Angel's Network, Make-A-Wish, and Baking for Benefit. She feels strongly about being able to help people, which is her main reason for joining each club. She also added that she is interested in Baking for Benefit because "not only can I bake and do some fun stuff, I'm helping others at the same time."

This year clubs will be fully in-person, allowing for more club events to happen and greater student participation. Last year, due to COVID-19 restrictions, clubs were only allowed to meet virtually through Google Meet. Many clubs overcame the virtual barrier by hosting events such as interview workshops in FBLA and canned food drives in Baking for Benefit, which were contactless.

Although clubs during COVID times were manageable, they were not all able to be enjoyed to their full potential. There is hope among club sponsors, club officers, and students that being in-person this school year will allow for clubs to expand their possibilities for meet-

ing and events, as well as make the club a more enjoyable experience for everyone involved. For example, the Chess Club plans to have monthly tournaments, compete in state and county-wide tournaments, and have many meetings.

Ms. Sharbaugh, the sponsor of Chess Club, remarked that because of the asynchronous work time brought about by last year's virtual school schedule, she "played chess with one of my students each day he was in school during the period's 'asynchronous time'". She described how he was able to teach her a lot about chess skills and strategy.

As a result of this, she gladly accepted the offer "when our RHHS Chess Club Leaders approached me about sponsoring their club this year and I felt that being the sponsor was meant to be".

Other clubs, like Angel's Network, are already planning for club events, but are keeping certain COVID protocols in mind, such as wearing masks and not handling

food. Sophomore Aysegul Yildiz, the Historian of Angel's Network, mentioned that "this year is definitely going to be more interactive; Of course we're still trying to keep it COVID safe."

Last year, Angel's Network hosted many events, such as their annual talent show (virtually) and winter survival kits, which contain necessities for people in need during the winter months. This year, they hope to host more events that can take place in-person and be overall more interactive for their members.

Aysegul described how their "Thanksgiving event normally was packing sandwiches" but this year, members will be able to take part in the event without handling food, such as decorating the bags or creating cards.

Clubs resuming are a guarantee during this back to school season, but this year is extra special due to the conditions of last year's clubs, and the new possibilities that have opened up for clubs this year are very exciting.



Photographed By: Emily Fuentes
Featuring the River Hill Seniors

Genshin Impact's Anniversary

By: Elizabeth McMullan, Staff Writer

The players of Genshin Impact all came together to discuss the disappointing anniversary rewards that Mihoyo, the company that created the game, gave out less than a month ago. It included gems, small extra items, as well as a seven day event that gave the people another extra item a day, such as Hero's wit and intertwined fates after a lot of backlash.

Mihoyo recently gave players a reward for their continuous support; however, the community had much to say when they found out that the reward would be less than ideal. Freshman Jizelle Williams had said, "As a mobile player it's cool that we get stuff and a five

Go Pink or Go Home

By: Sunny Jain, Staff Writer

October is an eventful month. Among other celebrations such as Halloween, the Hindu festival Diwali and many more, it's also Breast Cancer Awareness Month. One of our original clubs at River Hill, Angel's Network, has been dedicated to humanitarian work since 2008, and on October 28th they held their annual Breast Cancer Awareness fundraising event.

Established in 1989, The Breast Cancer Research Foundation (BCRF) declared they had one "mission...: to rid the world of breast cancer." They are the "largest private funder of breast cancer research—and the largest private funder of metastatic research—in the U.S."

The event consisted of 2 separate activities—tie-dyeing T-shirts and ribbon cutting. The T-shirts from the tie-dyeing activity will be sold to students, which is what raises the donation money. Each student got to tie-dye their own T-shirt—they twisted them into a pattern, tied them with rubber bands, soaked them

star character. I feel like we should have gotten more primogems. I got less than a ten pull, which I wish we got more of."

A large portion of the player base commented on the matter, believing that there should be more. Despite the criticism, Mihoyo did not release a statement to address the problem. Unfortunately, this led to a large review bomb and even people harassing the English voice actors for the characters. Most of the messages regarding the improvements were unhelpful and useless. More often than not, people asked for some unreasonable request or purely complained. Multiple voice actors were messaged and harassed through platforms under the guise of "criticism", despite the fact that they didn't have any connection to the company other than reading lines for different characters. Sophomore Jenny Zhang didn't agree with those who had harassed the actors, saying,



in water and then sprayed them with the pink dye.

The logo selected to be printed onto the T-shirts was designed by junior Priyanshi Patel. Although Priyanshi is not a member of Angel's Network, she is a member of NAHS (National Art Honors Society). She said that "NAHS was offering service hours... but I mostly did it last year too so I kinda wanted to do it again because I had a lot of fun." She courteously credited her sister who was helping her come up with ideas, and they came up with the slogan "Go Pink or Go Home" together.

When asked how she felt about her design being chosen, Priyanshi modestly said, "I felt really good, but I was shocked because everyone else's were so good!" She's a supporter of providing cancer care, and positively stated, "I'm glad that my design can help with fundraising."

In the past, only around 30 T-shirts have been sold at an approximation of \$12 per shirt. This year, the margin for money raised increased significantly due to the increase in participation. This year, Angel's Network sold a whopping 74 T-shirts at \$12 per

"It is concerning how people would go to the voice actors and complain to the voice actors, who have nothing to do with the anniversary. I feel like the Western Fandom is too extreme, as a whole. It's sad that the voice actors had to go through this."

On one hand, it was unreasonable for the company to give the long-time fans a small reward for their continuous support. However, it was also largely disappointing that the community reacted the way they did, especially when it was clear that there would be more than just an in-game reward. Even though it was announced at least a month in advance to the anniversary, many overlooked the fact that there would be a concert with around two to three hours in length of songs related to Genshin, which would be hosted at multiple venues with different artists as well as a large variety of instruments ranging from a violin and piano

to a koto, a traditional Japanese instrument. Sophomore Mira Kaparti liked the concert and rewards, "They were very good quality"

The best solution would be for Mihoyo to tell the players that there would be more of a reward coming. Sophomore Percy H. agreed, "I don't really care that much because they still were adding stuff to it, they could have released a more public statement to calm people down more." The players that avoided the situation believed that if they wanted to avoid an incident like this again, the creators would need to come out with some news regarding possible rewards or do nothing at all for the playerbase."

In the end, players got a larger reward than was originally expected. The online concert was a huge success. Many people decided to watch and participate despite it being overshadowed by the drama.

Photographed By: Grace Jiang
Featuring Praneel Jakkampudi,
Jacob Cohen, Andie Seanez and
Nathan Lui

shirt and raised an impressive \$920. All profits are being donated to the Breast Cancer Research Foundation (BCRF).

Simultaneously, students who were in the media center were provided with cardboard cutouts of the cancer ribbon to use as stencils for the paper ribbons. Volunteers drew and cut around 100 ribbons on pink poster paper, which they then taped at the entrance of every classroom in the building.

Students shared solely positive opinions when asked for their thoughts on the event. Junior Sheila Li happily said that it was "fun, and I'm glad that the money is for a good cause." Similarly, junior Gabbi Campisi said that the event was "fun, and makes a good impact and I know that the money will be sent to a fundraiser."

During previous Breast Cancer Awareness events held by Angel's Network, they've had anywhere from 90-100 students participate, with the club consisting of around 120 members in total. However this year, the turnout was much larger. Around 130 students attended the event, with the club currently boasting over

200 members. The club's Vice President, junior ViChi Tran, even said that "we were a little bit more limited on materials because we weren't expecting such a big turnout." She continued to say that the event in general was a success since "most people were really patient with us" since they understood that it was difficult to manage such a large body of students.

The club's sponsor, Dr. Johnson, who stepped up to the intense responsibility of managing Angel's Network 4 years ago, stated that the club "was an off-street of Oprah Winfrey's Angel's Network that started in 1998... and the adaptation here and probably at many other schools throughout the country was created to carry on that legacy of helping others and giving back." He participated by helping students host and organize the fundraising event, and is also selling the T-shirts during lunch.

Angel's Network will continue their awareness campaign throughout the year, including encouraging all third period classes to sign their pink ribbons and hang them outside the classroom.

Effects Of Covid on the Band Program

By: Riley Gonzales, Staff Writer

In the past year, the River Hill Band program has faced challenges during online and in-person learning due to the circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic. Leading into this school year, the program has faced new complications in having to wear masks and to social distance. Having rehearsals online for much of the past year didn't allow for the band to make music as a group like they had prior to the pandemic. However, now that schools have returned to in-person instruction, the band program is facing other difficulties.

"With everything we do, I have the health of my students in the back of my mind," said Mr. Blackman, River Hill's band director. "We always follow the county regulations regarding PPE, and that presents some challenges."

PPE refers to personal protective equipment, the musician's masks and bell covers that band members are required to use while playing an instrument. Though these

measures are in place to protect River Hill's musicians, they can make it difficult when rehearsing.

"I've been late several times putting my flute in my mask because it takes a long time," commented a flutist who wished to remain anonymous. "It takes a bit of time to get it in, and then I might miss the beginning of a song."

This marching band season has been different for band students due to cautionary measures the program has adopted due to COVID-19. Due to the PPE, band members are unable to execute certain elements of a marching band performance, such as being able to snap instruments into playing position before beginning a song and bringing them down quickly at the end. Yet things began to look different even before the football season began.

"We had to move our summer band camp rehearsals out of the band room and into the cafeteria so that I could spread my students out and keep them safe. There were 115 of them, and to put them all in the band room like I have in the past, I just didn't feel like I was keeping

them safe that way," Mr. Blackman explained. This has continued into rehearsals, with students staying spaced out around the band room during class time.

Despite the drawbacks, the pandemic has resulted in some positive outcomes for the members of the River Hill band program. The band was ultimately brought closer together as River Hill returned to in-person school, but even before then, there were new experiences to be had during the early months of online learning.

Rather than playing together as a band as they would have in-person, students were given the opportunity to learn new components of music on their own.

"It was all kind of individual while also learning how to compose our own music, and conducting, so we all got to learn something that we wouldn't normally have learned during regular band," stated the same flutist. "For me it was personally fun... but other parts weren't as interesting as if we were together as a band at school."

River Hill's musicians are glad to be

back in-person, and the pandemic has worked to build stronger bonds among the students despite keeping them apart for so long.

"I feel like the band is closer this year, coming back together after that year," said Amber Cummings, a senior in the River Hill band program referring to the 2020-21 school year. "I'm a lot closer to all the band kids because we really missed everyone."

River Hill's band program has not let the pandemic stop them from making music, and it seems that COVID-19 will not have a lasting negative impact on the band.

"If we get to the point where the school system decides we can play instruments without bell covers and masks then I fully expect the band program to go back to what it was before," said Mr. Blackman.

The band program is emerging from the pandemic with new experiences and a greater sense of unity. As schools are transitioning back into in-person learning, River Hill's music community will gladly step up to face any challenges COVID-19 creates



Photographed By: Avery Bacon
Featuring the River Hill Band

The Custodial Staff Has our Back!

By: Salma Zaghari, Staff Writer

Custodial workers are the secret lifeline to why River Hill looks as good as it does. The essence of our school relies on them. The reason for this? Not only are our test scores impressive, our looks are as well. Our environmental appearance and our students' learning spaces are the cleanest they've ever been. We've gone from sitting in dark and messy rooms at home to a clean and bright building. With the school being as clean as it is, custodians are the ones who are behind the magic every single day.

According to our principal, Mikela Lidgard, our school's custodial staff numbers have

plummeted since last year. The custodial staff helps organize and clean over 100 classrooms every day and the cafeteria after every lunch period. They are an integral part of our staff and make major contributions that affect students daily. But more often than not, the stereotypes most people see are students disrespecting or fooling around when it comes to their job title; throwing trash across the cafe, and playing with food—this is nothing new to them. An anonymous member of our custodial staff recounted, "I take pride in my work...the students respect me." They also continued to say that they never feel stressed because "people support me...I have a great team."

River Hill High School's custodians really do love what they do, but they also love who they are with. They aren't just there to clean, they are there to care. When asking a custodian at our school if they have ever experienced disrespect, they spoke with a smile, "I have been here

for 20 years, and I've been in the county for 20 years. I know a lot of people and I feel that I have an emotional connection with them. It's like home...past students have come back and brought us donuts."

Due to Covid, most students at River Hill can agree that online learning was strenuous. Students were stressed, their surroundings were not always silent, and more importantly their rooms at home were sometimes cluttered and unorganized. Through the help of the custodians, studying in a clean environment has once again become the norm.

An article from ucas.com also stated, "Mess and clutter can have a negative effect on learning ability. Disorganised and messy spaces can create feelings of stress and anxiety." It makes us realise how much of an impact our surroundings have on our ability to learn. Freshman Zara affirmed that "online learning was hard enough, but my room being in

a cluttered space was even more annoying. The custodians at our schools helped a lot, and in terms of cleanliness it was always a 10 out of 10."

River Hill thanks its custodian staff's contributions to maintaining the school's environment. Students and staff have reported feeling better-adjusted in the post-virtual community. Junior Aelia Thakkar stated, "The custodians really committed to adhering to Covid cleanliness guidelines, which has made coming back to school in person a much better experience overall."

River Hill's school pride is extremely important, and because of our overwhelmingly positive custodial staff it has all been made possible. Students and staff can all agree that our school's cleanliness has impacted us greatly and the custodian's helpfulness and relationships with students has made school life a lot easier. The learning environment for many students has changed positively and will hopefully continue.

In-Person v. Online Schools Effect on Mental Health

By: *Babiha Kaur, Staff Writer*

After a year and a half of virtual learning, the 2021-2022 school year at River Hill High School has fully opened up to all students for five days a week. Students at River Hill have similar opinions on how their mental health has been affected by previous online school, and how it has changed now that they are back in the building, attending school normally. Being back in person has had a tremendous effect on many students' mental health.

"It was honestly kind of sad, not going to lie, because there really was no socializing with anyone," admitted Kashvi Tiwari, a sophomore at River Hill High School who attended hybrid learning last year for a

quarter of her freshman year of high school. She did not like online school because she felt less productive; however, things have changed for her now.

"I've learned more about my teachers and learned more in general as opposed to, you know, having to sit through google meet and watch a PowerPoint," Tiwari confessed after experiencing in-person school this year. She is able to socialize much more, which helps her learn and motivates her to do her daily schoolwork.

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, Howard County Public Schools were forced to shut their doors on March 20, 2021. Beginning a month later, students attended school online, learning via computers and through an online platform called Google Meet for three quarters of the 2020-2021 school year. At the beginning of March 2021, Howard County schools opened up to some students who preferred to attend school in person for a hybrid-style learning for the remainder of the school year.

Although the pandemic is

still present in the world, Howard County high schools have opened fully for the 2021-2022 school year. Now, all students are attending school in person. Mask mandates have been put in place; River Hill staff and students alike are required to wear masks. Returning to the school building, even after the suspension of in-person academic activities for a year and a half, has produced a massive impact on high school students regarding mental health, social aspects, and education.

Most students agree that a full in-person school year is much better than hybrid or distance learning because education and sociability are drastically different. Seeing other teenagers is helping students mentally. In the big scheme of things, many people agree that attending full weeks of normal, in-person school is a much better opportunity than doing so online.

"It was very empty and very quiet, not like this at all," stated Erika Tofigh, a sophomore at River Hill who went back to school in person last year. She realized how different her school experience was. "Overall, it's

better socially, and I'm having a more fun time." Tofigh said. Although she feels like online learning was easier, she agrees that in-person school is much more advantageous.

Similarly, Kristina Routh, a senior, stated, "I get to see my friends, I'm not feeling as isolated, and I get my activities, which I didn't realize how much of a stress reliever they were until now." Routh was a junior last year when she attended hybrid school, and she is noticing major differences between her experiences last year versus this year.

Being back in person is allowing high school students to learn like they're used to. In person school has helped most of them understand what a true high school experience is like, and how important it is to attend school and be social. River Hill students didn't realize how crucial being in school actually is, and online school helped them understand the importance of social interaction, education, and learning, which is why most students agree that in-person school is much more beneficial than other types of learning.

What's New with the Seniors?

By: *Lauren Shin and Molly Gawthrop, Staff Writers*

After three years of high school, one of which was fully virtual, seniors are buried in homework and college applications. How are they rewarding themselves for all their efforts?

Every year, the SGA organizes special events to celebrate seniors and their final year of high school. From senior nights to graduation ceremonies, seniors are given the time to enjoy themselves and take their minds off of schoolwork. This year, they hope to make the senior events as exciting as they can be. Since the past few years were anything but typical, students feel it is time for seniors to get the recognition they earned.

Seniors are overwhelmed with the amount of work they are faced with, especially for the college application process.

Senior Olivia Conelius discusses how "the transition back to normal school was really hard because of the stress," and that the pressure of in-person school and relearning study habits is very overwhelming.

Increased stress levels make senior nights all the more important, giving students a much-needed break from a hectic schedule.

As a senior on the SGA executive board, Vivian Yao tries to "meet everyone's interests, and to make senior year as fun as it can be since it's the last year to be teenagers."

The senior Crab Fest, the first official senior event, seems to have started the year on a good note. Vivian adds "It was nice that it even happened, because we weren't sure [that it would happen] with COVID and everything, and it was a good way to hang out with people we haven't seen in a really long time."

The SGA's efforts are definitely paying off, as the seniors are more excited when looking forward to the rest of their events.

Olivia mentions that "the senior activities are meeting my expectations, especially with COVID still around. I think we're getting to do a lot of the normal stuff and that's great."

Making accommodations

for COVID and respecting the boundaries of social distancing means that the SGA has to get creative with senior nights. Seniors feel that they are still getting an exciting send-off.

Seeing that these celebrations are not only bringing the seniors together, but also improving their mental health and enthusiasm, the SGA board hopes to think of more exciting ways to make the seniors' last year special.

"It would be hard, but

I really hope to have a senior trip where everyone in the grade can go somewhere because we've been doing things in smaller groups. It would give people a chance to meet new people and enjoy themselves more," Vivian shares.

With all of the senior events showing highly successful outcomes, we can't wait to see what other celebrations await in the future for seniors!



Photographed By; Sicily Houk
Senior Crab Feast

Students Feelings about In-Person School During a Pandemic

By: Claire Fagan, Staff Writer

With River Hill returning in-person learning this semester, the chance of being infected with COVID-19 is constantly on students' minds. The shift from hybrid and online learning to attending school with more than a thousand students in the building is a big step towards normalcy, but also raises new concerns.

Sophomore Shirley Zhang worries about the risks of coronavirus and its potential impact on her family's health. "It's always in the back of your mind, especially with everyone wearing masks," she admitted. "I feel I can't really stop anything about it, even with being worried."

COVID-19 has been a pressing issue for over 18 months, and now that in-person learning has resumed, schools

have reacted. All Maryland schools currently require masks indoors, and teachers within the Howard County school system must be vaccinated or undergo weekly testing. These measures go beyond recommendations by the CDC and will hopefully provide extra protection.

Despite these actions, multiple cases of coronavirus have been reported within River Hill High School, and some students remain fearful.

Sophomore Bennett Vitek remarked, "In [the cafeteria] they just kind of throw caution to the wind because there's nothing they can do." Within the cafeteria, masks are not worn while lunch is eaten, people are talking, and tables are as crowded as they were pre-pandemic.

In classes, students are worried both about COVID-19 and its impact on their learning. Vianne Stanford, a junior, mentioned that some people in her class "pretend to wear masks and then take them off, some people don't cover their noses... it's distracting. I notice, and then I can't focus. I'm not paying attention to the lesson." Vianne revealed she is not worried about getting COVID-19 because she is vaccinated, but she is aware and concerned when other people are unmasked.

Despite anxieties related to COVID-19, being back in school has definite upsides. Every student went through online learning last year, and some now argue that the benefits of in-person school outweigh the risks. Vianne accepted that returning to in-person school was "a good idea. I believe it was necessary. It's safe enough where I'm not worried about getting infected constantly."

According to junior Jenny Gao, school is "a lot easier and clearer when you actually interact with your teacher. The learning experience feels a lot more immersive." She added that with teachers and students back in classrooms, students feel more productive and are able to learn more easily than through a computer screen.

Sophomore Jazzy Dong explained, "I feel better about it... than last semester, because most people are vaccinated, so we're all good." She acknowledged that she used to be worried about spreading COVID-19 to her family, but now that she's vaccinated she is grateful to be back in the classroom. Currently, cases in Maryland appear to be declining. Hopefully this trend will continue, allowing school-related anxiety about COVID-19 to decrease while students continue to benefit from in-person learning.

Returning to In-Person School Met with Mixed Emotions

By: Maire Crooks, News Editor

On August 30th, students clad in masks filled the halls of River Hill once again, and teachers, anxious yet excited, awaited their arrival. Now, after about a month of teaching full classrooms face-to-face, teachers are "very very happy," as Ms. Browne, a math teacher here at River Hill, put it. "The kids are taking it seriously," she says, which makes it "so much better than virtual [learning]."

Mr. McCready, a member of



Photographed By: Colette Jean-Baptiste and Cianna Yannone

Featuring River Hill Students

River Hill's Fine Arts department, agrees, adding that "teaching is awesome! I get to make music with my students in every class, and that is a real blessing."

Teachers are excited to see and interact with their former students, an aspect that Ms. Browne really missed during virtual learning. She has "four years of kids in this building" that she did not get to see.

Although some teachers prefer to continue using digital tools such as Canvas modules and PearDeck, others, like Mr. McCready and Ms. Browne, say their teaching style has not changed significantly. Ms. Browne is going back to "paper and pencil" notes, homework and tests, and is looking forward to seeing what her students know without using tools such as "PhotoMath."

As students transition back to a traditional school day, Mr. McCready explains that he is "profoundly more aware of the stress that we all experience in the daily grind of school," and says he is "learning to take time for myself and actively finding ways for my students to take time for themselves." He, like other teachers, is trying to "prevent the stress of schoolwork from taking over [students'] lives 24/7."

Many teachers and students are

ecstatic to be back in the building, but other students are not as enthusiastic. Both Noah Chang (9) and Justin Bishop (9) prefer virtual school. "I could sit anywhere, use the bathroom anytime, and eat whenever I wanted," expressed Noah.

However, despite their preference for distance-learning, students are unanimous that in-person school is better socially. Justin notes that "it was fun just to see some old friends," and going back to school was not as bad as he anticipated.

As far as masks go, many do not mind wearing them. "I don't find any difference compared to when we didn't have to wear masks," mentions Noah. Justin agrees. Mr. McCready elaborates, "It is definitely tiring for us all, but it's always a reminder that we are looking out for each other. I'm happy to take a minor inconvenience for the health of my students, and I am so happy that my students also respect my health and the health of my family." Overall, when going back, the energy was "positive," as Mr. McCready puts it. "Our amazing principal Ms. Lidgard and our whole administration have been... upbeat every day, despite the many challenges of ensuring we all have a safe return."

Teacher/Student Perspectives on Wellness Wednesday

By: *Renaë Elsaesser, Staff Writer*

Many students became accustomed to catching up on work during Wednesday's last year. When students returned to in-person-school in September of 2021, they had to adjust to the regular full week schedule

Since those asynchronous Wednesdays are no longer available, some teachers have implemented Wellness Wednesdays to replace them, ultimately functioning as a means of easing the reversion to an in-person model of learning. These Wellness Wednesdays, weekly sessions provided by certain teachers each Wednesday in the interest of the self-care of students, provide students with time during class to relax, study, or

work on assignments.

Mrs. Appel is one of the teachers who has implemented this novel routine. She explains how many teachers identified what was going to be new and hard about this year. Mrs. Appel claimed that once students returned she "asked students what worked well with distance learning and what was hard about distance learning. And so many people mentioned the asynchronous Wednesdays and how that was going to be hard."

Wednesdays were beneficial for students to catch up on classwork during an extremely unprecedented time. Teachers have taken initiative and discussed how to ease the transition from virtual to in-person learning. Wellness Wednesday is acknowledged as an option.

"I am curious to see how students are experiencing wellness Wednesday and if you all feel like it's something valuable or helpful. But it's something that I feel is very valuable," Mrs. Appel shares.

River Hill science teacher Mrs. Liu likes the idea of Wellness Wednesday but has

yet to implement it in her classroom due to scheduling concerns.

"The problem for me is that I teach 4A and 4B chemistry and so if I do Wellness Wednesday somewhere along the line my three classes will be all out of whack. I would love to do it for my classes but I am having a really hard time trying to get it to line up," stated Mrs. Liu.

From a student's perspective, Mia Choi recognizes how Wellness Wednesday can help decrease stress. As

Co-President of the Active Minds Club, Mia works to destigmatize and promote mental health throughout the school.

Mia believes "that Wellness Wednesdays should be reintroduced to school because the transition to in-person has been tough on many students because of the amount of stress that they are facing on a daily basis. Wellness Wednesdays help students' mental health by giving them designated time to catch up on their workload, thus reducing their stress."



Photographed By: Colette Jean- Baptiste
River Hill Students

Teachers Share their Experiences on Returning to School

By: *Lauren Shin and Sára Solimani, Staff Writers*

After a year of online classes, teachers have conflicting emotions towards the return to a somewhat normal routine.

Governor Larry Hogan announced an executive order on March 17, 2020, for all schools in Maryland to close down until further notice. Most people left their school buildings that day, not knowing it would take over a year to step back in.

Students and teachers are excited to finally be back in

school, to see their peers, and reconnect with one another. English teacher Mrs. Kump is one such teacher. She said, "I love seeing the kids, I love seeing the diverse human beings in our building, I like enjoying kids for the whole person that they are, instead of a dot on the screen."

People have been able to interact with one another after a long time of distancing, which has been beneficial for the well-being of everyone.

"At a high school level, I think the return to school is really good for everyone, especially with the options to be vaccinated. I think it's fantastic. I think it's good for the mental health of students but also for the mental health of the teachers," says Mrs. Allshouse, a Precalculus teacher.

While teachers are glad about being able to meet new students, the transition to in-person classes has been a tremendous change.

Many teachers, like Mrs. Kump, think that the greatest

challenge "is adjusting to the amount of kids. Last year, the school system made our classes much smaller so that we could manage the students and our online responsibilities, so going back to 30 kids in a class was a little bit overwhelming with the amount of responsibilities, paper work, and meeting with students after school in general."

Adjusting to this situation seems to be what's causing this newfound stress.

"I think, both teachers and students, a lot of them forgot how to do school. Like, [they] forgot what [school] was like and forgot what it was like to take paper and pencil tests, and to take notes, and to have instruction everyday, not to have your nap in the middle of the day," says Mrs. Allshouse.

Another big area of concern are the safety precautions being implemented. They are concerned about the larger number of students in each class, enforcing the mask mandate, and making sure the envi-

ronment is secure for the mental and physical health of both the students and themselves.

Mr. Gray, a teacher of the social studies department, voices his concerns that the county's policy "about masks is toothless. It has no real power behind it because apparently not wearing the mask is just a dress code violation. I think it should be a health code violation."

Others have a different perspective regarding this situation.

Mr. Kim, the school orchestra teacher, shares his view, "I think we're doing well. Everyone is wearing a mask, everybody is still cautious, I don't see any issues." He predicts that "as the year goes by, I think the COVID number will improve. I think there will be some improvements and restrictions will be lifted off gradually."

Staff and students will continue to maintain a safe and healthy environment and work together to adjust into this new system.

Grade Level Perspective of Being Back In-Person

By: Sunny Jain and Eden Barnes, Staff Writers

A buzz of excitement can be felt in the air as students at River Hill completely return to school for the first time in a year and a half due to the pandemic.

After coming back from a whirlwind of a year, many students were eager to share their thoughts and experiences. As for the upper-classman, it was definitely a jump from one grade to the next. Junior Anika Nair participated in hybrid during the spring last year. She described her experience as “really hard transitioning because there were so many different aspects that you had to adjust back to” when returning to school.

There seems to be a common theme between students. Many of them are feeling overwhelmed with the workload and responsibilities of normal school, and believe that online school was possibly refreshing. To many, the hybrid option included a pleasing mix of both, which allowed students to experience numerous benefits. Senior Kaitlyn Heizmann stated, “It was

Should Students Take a Gap Year?

By: Nicola Staples, Staff Writer

Even though gap years have become more common over the years, many students are still not aware of this option. While some might believe it is crucial to jump straight into college in order to maintain fresh knowledge, this can actually lead to burn out. Gap years allow students to live in a different country for a year, work a job, explore their surroundings, and meet new people that might become lifelong friends. Taking a gap year can also give students the chance to have a change of scenery, experience a new culture, learn a new language, or discover a hidden passion. Compared to other countries, people in the U.S. are extremely sheltered when it comes to other cultures and different ways of life. People in Europe, for instance, have the opportunity to easily travel to

great being back in person and being able to see people.” The social aspect affected many, and was a motivating factor when choosing whether or not to participate in hybrid-learning.

As for the underclassmen, it seems that they were negatively impacted by the school shutdowns and online learning due to the awkward transition from middle school to high school. When asked about her learning experience regarding online school, sophomore Trisha Singh stated that, “I didn’t think of it more as school” and “I didn’t like it”. Her negative feelings toward online learning were shared with freshman Cameron Lowe who “didn’t enjoy online school at all” and “literally hated virtual school.” Cameron stated that during the school day when she was on the computer she felt like she was “looking at blankness” for several hours.

When asked if she partook in the hybrid option offered earlier this year, Trisha stated that she felt it “wasn’t the right time for me to return to school yet.” When asked to explain further, she stated that there would have been “too much change” even though “online wasn’t the right way for me.” On the other hand, freshman Cameron Lowe who did attend hybrid at Clarksville Middle School thought it was “nice to actually be back in school” but felt it was “pretty confusing.”

Solely positive feelings were shared by the underclassmen when asked of their opinions on returning

other countries, allowing them to see new cultures and people constantly. This is why it is so beneficial for Americans to take time to travel. Being exposed to other cultures will give students a new outlook on life and will make people look at the world differently. Mr. Fisher, a teacher at River Hill High School for sixteen years, said that “there is a big world out there that I know nothing about.” The stigma around gap years is mostly negative, many believing that it is a period of time for students to be lazy and vacation. However, it is almost the opposite of this assumption. During a gap year, students can not only travel abroad, but volunteer, live with relatives in other countries, and enroll in programs like WWOOF (WorldWide Opportunities on Organic Farms). If a year sounds like too much, traveling over the summer or doing a semester abroad is another possibility. Choosing this path takes immense bravery, and will give students crucial tools in life. Living abroad will give students the chance to become independent, self-sufficient, and

back to in-person learning.

“I love it and like it so much better” exclaimed Trisha Singh. Sophomore Greta Hansen said that the “teachers are also more organized with their lesson plans.” Everyone is also in agreement on the fact that it is significantly easier to learn in person. Trisha explained that even something as simple as “the teacher writing up on the board and talking and explaining stuff to me” makes a big difference.

Students were also asked if they would want to be presented with an option for hybrid and they had mixed feelings. Some were excited to imagine a hypothetical hybrid option, Anika Nair saying “Yes please...I feel online and hybrid benefitted me most because I was able to pace myself.” She continued to explain how she liked “being able to see my friends in in-person school but online school was a lot easier to manage.”

A general takeaway was students liked the flexibility and availability of classes being held online. It was convenient and overall students were self-motivated.

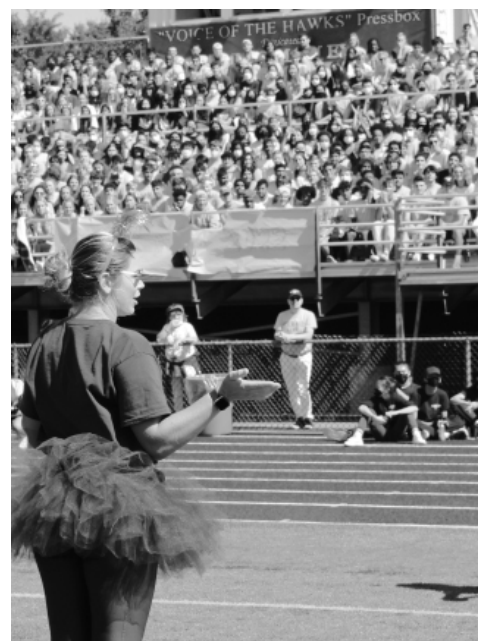
However, many also saw that online was an easy outlet to take advantage of. During the online days, “I didn’t learn much”, but for the in-person days “I could actually see the teacher and ask questions” Heizmann exclaimed. The availability of teachers came into account as a disadvantage of online learning.

confident, all of which will be beneficial when returning to college. Mr. Fisher explained that “colleges want kids who are adventurous, curious, independent, with unique experience, so what better opportunity than to take a year and go do something.” As students begin to make their plans after high school, many overlook taking a gap year because they assume it will set them back in life. While this may be true for some cases, most people will highly benefit from taking a gap year. Sarah Burnett, a graduate of River Hill High School, is just one example of someone taking a gap year. Because of the pandemic and other factors including mental health and cost, she decided it would be best to take a gap year. Sarah explained, “my mental health was probably at the lowest it had ever been in my entire life. I wasn’t ready to pack up my entire life and move 6 hours to the south with no family or support nearby.” This turned out to be the best decision for Sarah, giving her time to seek help and strengthen her support system. Sarah advised, “Put your

Since many struggled with the given online resources during the virtual year, the majority were constantly reaching out to their teachers, leaving the teachers stressed and the students unhappy. There were no immediate answers to questions and a delay in communication.

“I lost all motivation” student Alli Radcliffe blankly stated.

Returning back to school has been difficult for any student regardless of their grade. There have been mixed feelings on online learning, hybrid school and in-person learning, but overall, everyone is trying to get back in the groove and make this transition as smooth as possible.



Photographed By: Emily Fuentes
River Hill Students and Ms. Tyrell

mental health and happiness first—don’t let yourself get burnt out by school, because college will always be there...there is no perfect timeline for how to live your life”. The opportunity to travel is something that is extremely limited, so taking advantage of traveling while young is crucial. Once people have graduated from college, and started careers and families, they may realize that finding a time span of a couple months to travel is extremely difficult to do. Mr. Fisher also advocated that “your college will hold your spot for you” and “everything you want to do will be there when you get back.” Unlike high school, college can be started whenever, offering more flexibility and freedom in one’s life. Who knows what life will be like in 20 years? The opportunity to travel is fleeting, so if students do not take advantage of it now, they may never be able to travel when they are older. In the long run, what will be more memorable than immersing oneself in a completely different culture for a year, meeting new people, learning new languages, and exploring new terrains?

200 Wins: A Major Accomplishment Celebrated by Three River Hill Coaches this Past Year

By: Jason Benedek and Julia Trost



Photographed By: Dan Birzak
Coach Van Deusen (left) and Coach Gruneberg (right)

200 Wins for a high school coach is an incredibly difficult milestone to obtain. River Hill lacrosse coach, Keith Gonsouland, River Hill field hockey coach, Shelly Chamness, and River Hill football coach, Brian Van Deusen, have achieved this impressive feat in the past year. These legendary coaches are no strangers to the long continuing winning culture of River Hill High School.

Following the big win over Reservoir on October 1, River Hill football coach, Brian Van Deusen, has been added to the prolific 200 Win Club. As the time counted down to 0, a massive 200 win banner was presented to him as he was dumped in candy as a surprise from his players. With a huge smile on his face, he received numerous hugs and words of commencement from his players and fellow coaching staff during the post game celebration. Coach Van Deusen's career record as the coach for River Hill is now an astonishing 200-50 over his 22 years of coaching. He is the heart and soul of this program's 8 Region Titles, 11 County Championships, and 4 State Championships.

Quarterback Bergen Remick describes Van Deusen's coaching style as, "strategic," then he adds, "he plays to the strengths of his players and attacks the opposing team's weaknesses."

Van Deusen's impact on the program's success has been just as prominent as his impact on the players individual success. His coaching has brought the players to another level and has allowed them to develop into better football players overall. When asked what Coach Van Deusen has done to make him a better football player, Captain Arjun

Singh replied, "Coach Van has been one of the best coaches I've ever had. He first coached me my junior year in which he helped me develop a football IQ through game scenarios, advanced drills, and through film sessions. The commitment he has to this organization trickles down to his players and that's what makes River Hill football what it is."

Coach Van Deusen will continue to lead River Hill football towards more victories to come. Although he is aware 200 victories is an incredible feat, his main focus just rests on winning the next game. He continues to love coaching at River Hill, building relationships with the players, and of course, winning games.

Coach Gonsouland's 200th win couldn't have come at a more pivotal moment. On June 11, River Hill played Reservoir in the Regional Finals. Ending Reservoir's season with a promising 11-8 lead, Coach Gonsouland took home his 200th career victory. 200 wins was a huge accomplishment for Gonsouland, but he was more proud of his team's achievement rather than his own, winning a Regional Championship.

"I knew [that it could have been my 200th win] but that wasn't the focus. It's not every day that we have an opportunity to win a Regional Title."

Coach Gonsouland credits his long term success to his fellow coaching staff: Coach Tromble, Coach Starks, Coach Doughty, Coach Paynter, Coach Morton, Coach Grey and Coach Bogdanor; and his Athletic directors, Mr. Don Van Deusen (Coach Van Deusen's father), Mr. Loyd, Mr. Lauer, and newly hired Mr. Creighton.

"We've had really strong leadership. I think that's why the coaches have been so successful. We've had lots of support from the athletic leadership and from the administrators who have been here over the years."

Coach Gonsouland specializ-

es in creating bonds and connections with his players. His favorite part of coaching River Hill is "building relationships with the players, and watching them mature from young kids to young men."

Former River Hill Lacrosse player and River Hill graduate Kyle Henry says, "Coach Gonsouland's main goals were to make all of us better players and to work hard to make the lacrosse season the most fun it could be. And for me it was." Kyle credits much of his personal success to Coach Gonsouland.

"Coach Gonsouland worked with me a lot to fix my form in saving shots and clearing the ball and without his fixes I don't think I would be playing college lacrosse right now." Henry is currently a freshman at St. Mary's College where he is a goalie for the lacrosse program.

Although Coach Gonsouland is an amazing coach, he is an even better father. He may not know how many more years he has left in the tank, but he does know for certain what the reason to end his coaching career will be. "When coaching lacrosse interferes with my ability to be a dad, it will be time for me to stop."

Coach Gonsouland's work ethic is like no other. His determination to succeed as a person, teacher, coach, and father motivates the people around him to work harder to achieve great things.

Separated by a mere three months from Coach Gonsouland's 200th win, varsity field hockey Coach Shelly Chamness secured her 200th win on March 21, 2021 after a nail-biting 2-1 victory over Howard in the race to become county champions and remain undefeated. Coaching field hockey for over 20 years, Coach Chamness led her team to county titles in 2008, 2017, and 2020 (played in the spring of 2021) along with a state championship title in 2010. In the midst of a pandemic and an abbreviated game schedule,

Coach Chamness constantly encouraged her players to take advantage of their opportunity to play hockey, appreciating every moment.

When asked about sharing this milestone with Coach Van Deusen and Gonsouland, Coach Chamness explained, "It's awesome to have people that love River Hill and have wanted to stay with their programs and build their programs. I think it says a lot about the school and community and the kids that we coach that coaches want to do it for a long time." She credits the junior varsity coach, Marni Rosenbaum, and her assistant coaches over the years as instrumental to her success.

Center forward Jannah Nassar, a senior captain who has played on the field hockey team for four years, emphasized that "it was overall a very happy experience for Cham and the team as well. Being part of the team that helped her earn her 200th win was very exciting."

After earning the title of county champions in 2021, Coach Chamness and her team have their eyes set on yet another county championship and state playoffs which were cancelled last year due to the pandemic. The River Hill field hockey program is stronger than ever under her leadership, and is only continuing to grow, day by day.

Coaches Van Deusen, Gonsouland, and Chamness may coach different sports, but they share their dedication and passion for winning. Forever connected by their milestone of 200 wins —with many more to come —they positively promote the perpetual winning culture of River Hill.

As Coach Gonsouland described, "It's hard to win games. I think that's what a lot of people don't realize. It's hard to get people to buy in and work together as a team. There's a lot of work that goes into being a coach that people don't see. It's not just showing up to practice and showing up for game day. It is a true commitment."

Boys Lacrosse Fall League Sports

By: Molly Gray, Staff Writer

While other high schools are unfocused during the off season, River Hill boys lacrosse plays in a fall league at Wilde Lake High School every Monday and Wednesday night. Last season, the team won regional championships, making this year a very important season to prove themselves as one of the top teams in the state again. The Fall league is going to prepare them for the regular season. Coach Gonsland says "What we're trying to get out of fall ball is not having to have to utilize plays, it is more

to understand lacrosse, and for the people who play to get a better understanding of how lacrosse is played." The 4-1 Hawks have been playing well so far in the first 3 weeks as they look to keep this success up for the rest of the season. The fall league is a great way for the team to have fun. Senior attacker Kevin Hererra expressed that "we just get to play and have fun, it's more about having fun which builds a lot of team chemistry." The team enjoys fall ball so much because it is a chance for them to play without the pressure. Senior attacker Wes Brunett explains that "fall ball is a really good way for the team to get some experience working together as a team." This will help the team bond for next season.

During the upcoming season the boys plan to focus on their offense. Last season the players had chemistry issues, instead they played individually making it very difficult for the team to get shots up. One of River Hill's main goal scorers, senior Ethan Varani said, "On offence we played a lot of individual attack, instead of team play. This year we need to be passing the ball very quickly in

order to look for the open player." By doing this, he believes the team will be able to run their offense a lot more smoothly, creating more opportunities to score. In order to be prepared for the upcoming season, the team has a lot they can do to keep their skills sharp. This includes going to the conditionings, playing wall ball, and lifting weights. Varani restates, "In order to improve for the regular season I will be lifting, and playing wall ball, this will help me gain the strength to body players which will create more space as well as keeping my stick skills sharp." Many players on the team also play club lacrosse, this is a great way to improve skills, and one of the best ways to keep your skills sharp. Coach Gonsland believes "Our season is going to be dependent on the work we put in

off season, that's why we are playing in the fall." The team went 3-6 last spring, and started off with losses to Glenelg, Centennial, and Marriotts Ridge. After not having the best regular season, they understood what they had to do to step their game up for the playoffs. They ended up going all the way to the state semi finals, beating Atholton, then Reservoir for the regional championships, but ultimately losing to C. M. Wright in the state quarter-finals. All of the players said they wished they had played better last season and that this year they are all willing to put enough work in to have a successful upcoming season. With that being said, the lacrosse team's fall should result in a spectacular spring season.



River Hill Lacrosse Team

NBA Off-Season 2021

By: Joey Pickus, Staff Writer

After a wild postseason concluding with a Milwaukee Bucks championship, various changes have taken place among the teams and players in the NBA. From the draft, to free agency, to trades, this offseason has been very entertaining as fans were able to see many star players in different jerseys.

The consensus number 1 pick leading up to the draft, Cade Cunningham out of Oklahoma State, was able to keep his stock up and was selected first overall by the Detroit Pistons in hopes to turn the franchise around. Following Cunningham was ex-G-League Ignite stud, Jalen Green. Green was selected by Houston who appears to build their team around Kevin Porter Jr, Christian Wood, and Jalen Green. Next, the Cleveland Cavaliers took Evan Mobley. The 4th overall pick was a bit of a surprise as many people thought Gonzaga guard, Jalen Suggs, would be a lock here. However, the versatile wing from Florida State, Scottie Barnes, was selected and Suggs fell

to the Magic at 5. Another surprise occurred as the rebuilding Oklahoma City Thunder took the Australian point guard, Josh Giddey. With Golden State's first of 2 lottery picks they selected Jonathan Kuminga, a wing from the G-League Ignite. With the Magic's second top 10 pick they took the newly acquired big, Moritz Wagner's brother. Franz Wagner is a wing from Michigan who has shown flashes of being a two-way, three-level scorer. Next, the Sacramento Kings took Davion Mitchell from Baylor despite already having De'Aaron Fox, Tyrese Haliburton, and Buddy Hield at the guard position. To wrap up the top 10, the Grizzlies selected the lengthy forward out of Stanford, Ziaire Williams. To wrap up the lottery, 11-14 went as follows; James Bouknight (Hornets), Joshua Primo (Spurs), Chris Duarte (Pacers), and Moses Moody (Warriors).

Kawhi Leonard, Chris Paul, and Kyle Lowry were three of the biggest names in this past off-season's free agency. Clippers superstar wing, Kawhi Leonard, re-signed on a 4-year 176 million dollar contract. One of the greatest point guards to ever play the game, Chris Paul, re-signed with the repeating western conference champions on a 4-year 120 million dollar contract. Of the three superstars to hit free agency, Lowry was the only one to leave their team and sign elsewhere,

picking the Miami Heat to play with Jimmy Butler and Bam Adebayo, instead of staying in Toronto. Re-signing would not have been the best choice because the Raptors are leaning towards rebuilding rather than contending and with Lowry getting older, he should be focusing on playoff success. Some other notable free agency acquisitions included Demar DeRozan to the Bulls, John Collins resigning with the Hawks, Mike Conley resigning with the Jazz, Jarrett Allen resigning with the Cavaliers, and Lonzo Ball signing with the Bulls.

There have been various trades throughout the off-season ranging from bench players being moved for late-round picks and cash consideration to superstars being moved for valuable pieces and high draft picks. Josh Richardson will be a Celtic and Moses Brown will be a Maverick, after a trade between the two teams on July 31st. Derrick Favors was moved to the Thunder, Ricky Rubio to the Cavaliers, Landry Shamet to the Suns, Goran Dragic and Precious Achiuwa were sent to Toronto as part of the Lowry sign and trade, the Pelicans and Grizzlies swapped their centers, Grayson Allen was moved to the Bucks, the Clippers got Eric Bledsoe, and Patrick Beverly was sent to Minnesota. The biggest trade of them all was the future hall of fame point guard, Russell Westbrook, being sent from

D.C. to L.A. for Kyle Kuzma, Kentavious Cadwell-Pope, and Montrezl Harrell. Tyler Price, a senior at River Hill, believes, "The Lakers are the clear winners of the off-season. By grabbing a veteran point guard to pair with two other stars and solid role players they are able to compete with the elite teams in the league." When asked about the biggest loser of the off-season, Tyler proclaims, "The 76ers for sure because they have failed to shop Ben Simmons who obviously does not want to be a 76er". Another senior at River Hill, Matthew Rogers, was asked what his favorite team has done in the off-season and what he would do differently if he was the general manager of that team in which he responded with, "My favorite team, the Chicago Bulls were able to help Zach Lavine by adding Demar DeRozan, Alex Caruso, and Lonzo Ball. These additions are huge because they take a load off Lavine and will be able to elevate his game more. If I was the GM I would have drafted or traded for a young big to fill in for Nikola Vucevic as he is aging".

The action-packed off-season will create one of the most competitive and entertaining seasons to come with some of the league's top talents coming back healthy and in different places. Will these trades, draft picks, and contracts be worth it? We will just have to wait and see.