

# The Lancelot

Farewell Seniors

Volume 6, Issue 4



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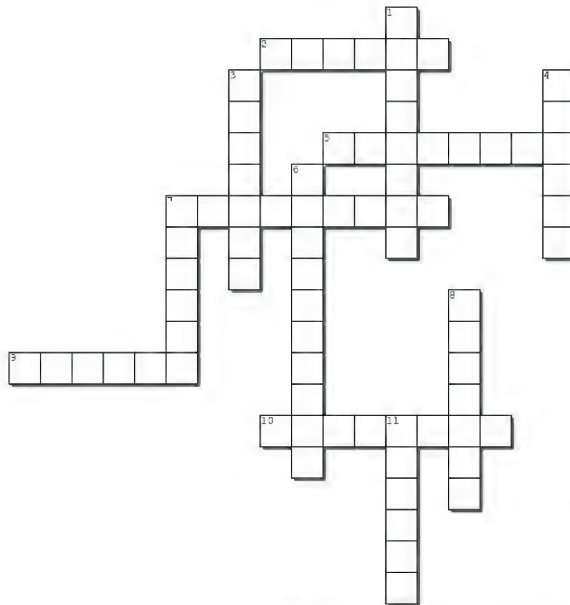
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# Welcome Summer!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Welcome Summer

Complete the crossword puzzle below



Created using the Crossword Maker on TheTeachersCorner.net

### Across

2. A student with four or more unexcused absences in a month is considered this
5. What country did Sophia Turpin recently travel to for an Irish step dance competition
7. What is the name of the local escape room?
9. An app to help find college roommates
10. What country did Senora Morales spend a semester in during high school?

### Down

1. What book did all freshmen read this year?
3. New outdoor track coach
4. What police officer visits Camp Dash each summer?
6. What college is Emilia Podeszwa playing softball at next year?
7. Which student won the 1600 for outdoor track this year.
8. Besides English, Yana Abramova is fluent in which language?
11. What town does Ms. Batty work in during the summer?

### SENIOR ADVICE

"It doesn't matter how many friends you have, its all about the quality of them."

PHINA KLUSEK

### SENIOR ADVICE

"Play a sport and do as many things as possible and do your school work."

EDEN ALEXANDER

### SENIOR ADVICE

"Only take AP classes that interest you or relate to your future career. Don't go through stress that won't benefit you later on."

JACKIE TRAN

## Unscramble These Summer Words

WMIMISGN \_\_\_\_\_

ERASSNNURMC \_\_\_\_\_

HEBCA \_\_\_\_\_

NOTVCAAI \_\_\_\_\_

OOLP \_\_\_\_\_

WOLET \_\_\_\_\_

~~The Lancelot~~



Check out *The Lancelot* online!  
 Find recent sports scores, local weather, photo galleries, and much more.  
 Want to write for the paper, contact Mrs. Hartell in room 215.  
[www.whsthelancelot.com](http://www.whsthelancelot.com)

# CONGRATULATIONS

Class of

# 2024





**Yana Abramova** will be majoring in Linguistics and will be attending school in Germany.

**Yasmine Ahearn** will be attending Three Rivers Community College.

**Eden Alexander** will be attending Bryant University and majoring in finance.

**Sidney Alexandre** will be attending Southern Connecticut State University and majoring in Business Administration

**Logan Anderson** will be taking a gap year and then attending Three Rivers Community College to major in psychology.

**Lea Arnold** will be attending Sacred Heart University and majoring in Biology on the pre-dental path.

**Ian Balfour** will be attending Worcester Polytechnic Institute and majoring in mechanical engineering.

**Gracie Bartelli** will be attending Louisiana State University and majoring in Business Management.

**Nora Bartkowski** is going to Champlain College.

**Jacob Beardsley** will be attending Florida Institute of Technology and majoring in aviation management with flight.

**Cooper Bellos** will be attending Three Rivers Community College and studying filmmaking.

**Tristan Beltran** will attending trade school to be an electrician.

**Jaden Benitez** will be attending Quinnipiac and majoring in computer science.

**Jake Benvenuti** will be

attending the University of Rhode Island and majoring in marketing.

**Cole Berry** will be attending Three Rivers Community College for two years, and then plans to transfer to a university to study art or computer science.

**Karas Boluch** will be attending the University of Vermont and majoring in sociology.

**Jonathan Booth** will be joining his family business N.W Booth LLC doing undercarriage sales and repair.

**Thomas Bourez** will be attending Three Rivers Community College for nuclear technologies then transferring to Millstone.

**Luke Bozarth** hopes to become a news broadcaster, radio host, or TV personality and will be attending UConn Avery Point's transitional program.

**Cameron Brown** will be attending Florida International University and majoring in marine biology.

**Phoebe Brown** will be attending Three Rivers.

**Anabel Bueno** will be attending Three Rivers Community College and is undecided on what her future holds, but she is taking it one day at a time.

**Analys Bueno** will be attending Three Rivers Community College and hopes to transfer to Western Connecticut State University to major in Theater Management.

**Emerson Bunnell** is enlisted in the United States Air Force.

**Tighe Burridge** will be attending Three Rivers

Community College.

**Nathan Campbell** will be attending Three Rivers Community College and majoring in mechanical engineering.

**Jordi Cassar** will be attending Eastern Connecticut State University.

**Kaden Casteel** will be attending the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

**Eli Champion** will be attending Middlesex College to major in music production and become a music teacher.

**Nataly Chan** will be attending Northeastern University.

**Catherine Chen** will be attending Boston College.

**Elliot Childs** will be attending Southern Connecticut State University with an undecided major, and he is hoping to walk onto the track team.

**Allison Cioci** will be attending esthetics school.

**Frank Cirioni** will be attending Three River Community College and majoring in human services.

**Alexa Collins** will be attending Princeton University and majoring in Engineering and Architecture.

**Thomas Corbi** will be attending Three Rivers in the fall.

**Victoria Danz** will be taking a gap year.

**Allison Dazy** will continue to work at Carelot Children's Center.

**Xavier DelGrosso** is joining the plumbing and pipe fitters union.

**Paul Deon** will be attending Mitchell College.

**Francesca DeSantis** will be attending Wheaton College and

majoring in Creative Writing and Literature.

**Louis Dhervilly** will be attending Northeastern University.

**Marializ Diaz** will be attending Trinity College and majoring in economics.

**Jase DiBuono** will be attending University of Tampa.

**Kal Dioquino** will be attending Maine College of Art and Design and is undecided on a major.

**Clare Donnelly** will be attending The State University of New York.

**John Donnelly** will be attending Three Rivers Community College.

**Kennedy Dunican-Benoit** will be attending Three Rivers in the fall.

**Aiden DuPont** will be going to University of Rhode Island and studying engineering.

**Mohammad Farmani** will attend Three Rivers with the hopes of becoming a musician.

**Jamie Gannon** will be attending the University of Connecticut and majoring in mathematics.

**Cole Gaynor** will be attending Emmanuel College.

**Isabella Geer** will be attending Lasell University, majoring in fashion design and production, and joining the dance team.

**Aubrielle Girard** is looking into cosmotology school for the fall.

**Dan Girard** is going to RPI and studying engineering.

**Javier Gonzalez** will be attending Coastal Carolina, majoring in nutrition and personal training.

**Kolby Gray** will be attending

the University of New Haven to study environmental science.

**Darren Guppy** will be enrolling in the UConn Avery Point transitional program.

**Sarah Hage** will be attending UConn.

**Alistair Haglund** will be attending the University of Austin.

**Aeracura Harney** will be attending the Florida Institute of Technology in the fall.

**Dominick Hedge** will attending Eastern Connecticut State University and will be majoring in criminology and playing Division III lacrosse.

**Hunter Heikkinen** will be working at General Dynamics Electric Boat as a Draftsman in Arrangements.

**Megan Herrera** will be attending Three Rivers in the fall.

**Fern Hill** will be attending Three Rivers in the fall.

**Kecelia Hill** will be attending the University of Connecticut and majoring in biology.

**Amarys Jimenez** will be attending the University of Rhode Island, majoring in entrepreneurship and playing division I soccer.

**Alivia Johnson** will be enrolling in the UConn Avery Point transitional program.

**Emily Johnson** will be attending University of Hartford, majoring in biology, and entering the Pre-Veterinary Program.

**Skyler Jones** plans on getting a job before continuing school, but eventually hopes to attend the American Musical and Dramatic Academy to pursue

acting.

**Simon KC** will be attending University of Connecticut.

**Farrah Kelly-Driss** will be attending Southern Connecticut State University and majoring in International Business.

**Kayla Kelly** will be attending Three Rivers Community College and studying nursing.

**Cole Kempke** will be attending Oklahoma State University and majoring in engineering.

**Kla Key** will attending CT State Middlesex to study finance.

**Roberto Kiefer** will be attending Black Hawk College, studying history, and playing baseball.

**Brianne Kilcomons** will be attending Clemson University and studying business.

**Michael Kirchhoff** will be a firefighter.

**Josaphina Klusek** will be attending University of Rhode Island and studying Early Childhood Education.

**Sean Kramer** will be attending Fairfield University.

**Tenzin Kyijong** will be attending UConn in the fall.

**Lillian Labrie** will be attending High Point University and studying business.

**Madison Laforte** will be attending Messiah University to play Division III lacrosse and to study Health & Physical Education Teaching and Coaching.

**Jeremiah Laguerre** will be working in real estate.

**Nick Lambert** will be attending Southern CT State University in the fall.

**Emerson Lane** will be attending Johnson and Wales

University to play Division III volleyball and major in Sports Management.

**Lara Lanuza** will be taking a gap semester then figuring out what to pursue, probably esthetician school.

**Quinn LeBelle** will be attending Quinnipiac University and studying Health Science.

**Alyson Lewis** will be attending Johnson and Wales University and studying Culinary Arts.

**Chase Linski** will be attending Eastern.

**Michelle Liu** will be attending Northeastern University and majoring in chemical engineering.

**Jace Martin** will be working at EB.

**Melanie Martin** will be attending the University of Bridgeport, studying nursing, and playing Division II softball.

**Joe Mayer** will be attending Three Rivers with plans to transfer in two years to University of Hartford to study music.

**Harley Mish** will be attending prep school in South Carolina.

**Jonathan Mitchell** will be attending Bentley University.

**Lauren Montanari** will be attending the University of Connecticut and majoring in nursing.

**Juan Morel** will be attending Rhode Island College, majoring in criminal justice and playing basketball.

**Connor Motzko** will be attending Berklee College of Music and majoring in music production and engineering.

**Jax Murray** will be working as a personal trainer.

**Aidan Neal** will be attending the University of Connecticut to major in Political Science and minor in Crime and Justice.

**Griffin Neal** will be attending the University of Saint Joseph to play Division III soccer and major in Sports Management.

**Cienna Nummy** will be attending Southern Connecticut State University and majoring in Art Education.

**Emily Orga** will be attending Johnson and Wales and majoring in Fashion Merchandising and Retailing.

**Giovanni Ortiz** will be attending Three Rivers in the fall.

**Madeline Parent** will be attending College of Charleston to major in anthropology and art history.

**Jaden Peck** will be attending UMass Amherst and studying chemical engineering.

**Samuel Pennington** will be attending Rochester Institute of Technology to major in Game Design and Development.

**Emilia Podeszwa** will be attending Binghamton University and playing Division I softball.

**Kendall Potts** will be attending CT State Community College and working towards a transfer degree to study art at a different university.

**Devon Powers** will be working as a painter.

**Colton Price** will be working. **Ysabella Radecki** is enrolled in the Army National Guard for the fall and in the spring, will be attending Eastern Connecticut State University to major in health sciences.

**Molly Reilly** will be attending the University of Tampa, majoring in Early Childhood Education, and minoring in psychology.

**Rebecca Roarke** will be attending Suffolk University, majoring in political science, and minoring in history.

**Carlie Robinson** will be attending Three Rivers Community College and majoring in criminal justice.

**Amaris Rosado** is going to Three Rivers to study computer science and engineering.

**Zachary Ruest** plans on working as a plumber.

**Jamison Rush** will be attending the University of Hartford and majoring in computer science and engineering.

**Saeeda Samed** will be attending Howard University and majoring in Criminology.

**Lizzie Saucier** will be attending Marist College to major in psychology and elementary education.

**Julian Secchiaroli** is undecided on his future.

**Thalia Senkewicz** will be attending the University of Tampa and majoring in management.

**Coby Sestrom** will be attending Three Rivers Community College.

**Suhana Sharma** will be attending Cornell University and majoring in cognitive science, minoring in philosophy.

**Samantha Silva** will be attending Providence College and majoring in management.

**Maple Siu** will be attending Dartmouth College and

majoring in government and minoring environmental science.

**Cate Smathers** will be attending the University of North Carolina Wilmington and majoring in psychology.

**Emma Smathers** will be attending the University of North Carolina Wilmington and majoring in nursing.

**Oliver Smith** will be attending Wesleyan University and is undecided on a major.

**Payton Smith** will be attending Harvard University and majoring in biology.

**Zachary Smith** will be attending Three Rivers Community College studying nursing.

**Quinn Speller** will be attending Franklin Pierce University and majoring in sports management.

**Liam Stahl** will be attending Three Rivers in the fall.

**Peter Stchur** is attending the University of Hartford and majoring in civil engineering and architecture.

**Grace Stilphen** will be attending the University of Connecticut, Avery Point.

**Porter Swenson-Cardwell** will be attending the College of Charleston and majoring in finance.

**Nanyelis Tellado** will be attending cosmetology school.

**Camryn Thibodeau** will be attending Three Rivers Community College and studying psychology.

**Rhys Tickner** will be attending Ithaca College, majoring in chemistry and playing Division III track and field.

**Ava Tinnerello** will be attending the Fashion Institute of Technology and majoring in Fashion Business Management.

**Jacqueline Tran** will be attending the University of Hartford, majoring in biochemistry, and playing Division III golf.

**Caleb Turner** will be attending Wentworth Institute of Technology.

**Sophia Turpin** will be attending Mitchell College and majoring in Early Childhood Education.

**Luciana Valencia** will be taking a gap year.

**Emma Way** will be attending Eastern Connecticut State University and majoring in Elementary Education.

**Eva Weir** will be attending Eastern Connecticut State University.

**Noah Westkott** will be attending the Coast Guard Academy, majoring in civil engineering and playing division III football.

**Marie Wohlforth** will be taking a gap year.

**Hishaam Yousafzai** will be attending UCONN and studying pharmaceuticals.

**Jay Zimmermann** will be attending West Point Military Academy.

**Zoe Zito** will be attending the University of New Hampshire.

**Isabel Zweir** will be taking classes at Three Rivers Community College and Manchester Community College.



Photos by Jaclyn Bono

# GUIDE: FINDING A ROOMMATE 101

As the school year comes to an end, the 2024 Waterford seniors are getting ready to graduate and move on.

In college, dorms are a lifestyle that many students have to adapt to, especially during your freshman year.

Students have to share a space, a bathroom, and other necessities with multiple people. It can be a challenging thing to navigate for anybody.

A study done by the Student Health Services of Georgetown University, said, "One third of college students have problems with roommates and the same number report having relationship difficulties within a year. Roommate and relationship difficulties impact academics in 17% of students."

Waterford High School alumni Mia Petrini had to adjust to the change like any other college freshmen: **"Make sure if you are going into roommate selection and have to fill out a questionnaire, BE HONEST. My roommate during the first semester wasn't super honest when filling it out and we realized that very soon when living together."**

## TIPS & TRICKS

Firstly, use social media to connect with other accepted students. Apps such as Instagram or Zeemee are great tools students can use to connect with others. Majority of the time, other college students will create an Instagram page for incoming freshmen, which can be used for introductions and to make friendships.

You can make a post about yourself that includes: who you are, where you're from, interests, hobbies, and preferences. People will message you directly if they sense a match. You can also browse through other students' posts and reach out to people who may have the same major as you.

Senior Sidney Alexandre, who will be attending Southern Connecticut State University says, **"Since I'm majoring in Business Administration, using Instagram was really helpful when I was looking for my roommate because when I saw that she was majoring in Business Administration too I reached out to her, and we got along pretty well."**

Additionally, make the effort to spend time with your potential roommate. Organize a time and place you can go out. If you can't meet up in person, arrange to have a few calls whenever you have the time. The purpose is to get closer and see if your personalities or habits work together or clash.

## SUGGESTIONS

When making the effort to get closer with your potential roommate, make sure to ask lots of questions. You want to know as many things as possible about your roommate sooner rather than later so you need to ask questions related to their lifestyle and personality. To be specific, you can ask about their cleanliness, their work schedule, social battery, allergies, or even preferences on their home decor.

**"I think a roommate should have similar habits as yourself, so if you are a 'clean room' person you would want to make sure your roommate is also a 'clean room' person,"** says senior Alexa Collins.

In addition, asking friends or family for contacts is worth a shot! If you have any friends or family that have gone to the college you are attending or know people who are attending the college, there is always a possibility that they can connect you with other people who are also looking for roommates.

Furthermore, navigating life after high school is a challenge everyone has to take on. College comes with a lot more than just education, it comes with a lot of responsibilities and freedom.

By Saeeda Samed

# Summer Fun

## Ysabella Radecki



Going to the beach every day all summer might get boring. There are a lot of other fun, local activities you can do with friends, family or by yourself.

If you like strawberries, then these events are for you! June 1st-2nd, there is a New London County Strawberry Festival in New London. This is a free event to get into and has everything strawberries. There are vendors that sell art, jewelry, clothing and a lot of other things. This is a family friendly event, with live music, food, and games.

Olde Mystic Village has multiple tiny shops, food places and so much more. Some of those shops include ice cream, a movie theater, a duck pond, and places that you could sit. This is the perfect place to catch up with friends while spending money or just browsing.

TreeTrails Adventure Park is in Mystic. This adventure park is a ropes course with two kids trails and five adult trails, ranging from beginning to expert. The prices

are \$59 for anyone over the age of 12, and \$51 for kids 11 and under. These prices include the safety equipment and 2 hours of climbing.

Mystified: Escape Rooms is an amazing place to go with friends! If you are looking for something that will be fun but also will have you thinking, this is the place for you. All three rooms start at \$29 and take about 60 minutes. The most popular room is "Keeper of the Light." This room is an entry level room, the escape rate is 70% and can hold up to 10 max people. The owner is offering tickets to WHS students with a student id for \$10.

If you are interested in amusement parks and waterparks, Lake Compounce is the place for you! They have different types of passes for the whole year, but if you want a single day pass it's \$34.99. This pass includes a one day pass into the park and Crocodile Cove Water Park. The park has 50+ thrilling rides, attractions, and entertainment options.

Whether you like tanning, people watching, swimming or throwing a football, Waterford Beach is for you. Waterford residents can get a pass for the whole summer, which gets you in for free. The beach is beautiful, has a lot of space and it doesn't feel like you're on top of someone. "Waterford Beach is very open and has the best lifeguard staff around. It's a great place to meet

up with friends and awkwardly see your teachers." said Emma Way.

Not an outside type person and want to relax? There's a lot of movies coming out this summer: Twister, It Ends With Us, Blade, Cars 4, Beetlejuice, and many more. Not only is there a lot of action films coming out but there's also, thriller, comedy, romance and drama, something for everyone. You can go watch these movies at Regal Waterford.

Foxwoods outlets are a place for people who love to spend money and get clothes. The outlet has candy, clothing, and shoe stores. There is a store for everyone, and it's a fun day to hangout with friends, family or by yourself. Once you're done, get a bite to eat and one of the restaurants in Foxwoods or a place nearby!

There is a lot to do this summer, inside and outside!



# Advice From College Freshmen

Elizabeth Saucier



Tina Danesh

Tina Danesh just finished her freshman year at the University of New Hampshire. She is a Human Development and Family Studies major with a concentration in Child Development, which puts her on path toward elementary education.



Jeff Chin

Jeff Chin spent this past year at the University of Connecticut where he began his studies in Biomedical Engineering. Along with taking part in the Greek life offered at UCONN, Chin has participated in Intramural Basketball and Soccer.



Bella Kimball

Bella Kimball is studying animal science and on a pre-veterinary track at the University of Vermont. She is also a member of the girls club gymnastics team and part of the pre-veterinary club.

## Advice From College Freshmen GC

Tina Danesh

I thought that having to walk everywhere was going to be the worst but it is so nice to spend that time outside.

Bella Kimball

Something I thought would happen is that I would be super isolated and depressed the first semester—that didn't happen at all. I surrounded myself with such good people, and even though those friendships have shifted and new people have been introduced, it's been so nice having a good support group around you.

What is something you thought would happen but didn't?

Bella Kimball

something I didn't think was gonna happen is not being able to get into the classes I wanted, course registration for freshman is so tough and normally you have to make at least two backup schedules and ask for overrides your classes because your classes will be filled up within seconds.

Something you didn't think was gonna happen but did?

Jeff Chin

Plan out your room with roommate, it's your new home for a while

Any tips for move-in?

Bella Kimball

DO NOT WATCH "this is what you need for first semester of college" VIDEOS!!! I brought so much unnecessary stuff that people said they needed and I've never used it. I would say definitely stick to the absolute essentials

Things you should or shouldn't buy?

Tina Danesh

You should buy a first aid kit and wrinkle spray, it works the best

Jeff Chin

Definitely buy fans, air purifiers, decorations for rooms, and a rug to make your room feel more like home. Don't buy a microwave unless you seriously think you will use it a lot because it'll make your room smell and other people will use it

Any other tips?

Jeff Chin

You're in school to learn but also get out there and try new things, meet new people, and have new experiences so take advantage of that

Bella Kimball

I have genuinely lived ten lives during this year. Just realize this growth and experience will help you tenfold. It is such an amazing opportunity, and it will be okay! It will be hard in the beginning, but it gets so much better. It's gonna be so worth it, and you'll realize all the stress you had for months leading up will be washed away within a month. Make sure to also have fun! Go to the occasional party and event, but also be sure to focus on school and the relationships around you. You can do it!!

# Dorm Room Decorations

By: Emerson Lane

Seniors are beginning to plan for **college dorm life**. A crucial step to this process is picking a roommate and figuring out where to live on campus.

Whether staying local or attending college hours away from home, here are tips and tricks from the previous freshmen class attending universities:

Don't hesitate to reach out to students who currently attend the university you are planning on going to. Hearing it first from a student who has been in the same situation you will be in is beneficial.

Although most schools provide packing lists and suggestions on decorations that will fit in your dorm room, students know what's best and what you will actually need. If you are having difficulty finding people to reach out to, look up videos on YouTube and TikTok. Many college freshmen have spent time making reviews and vlogs of the best and worst items for your freshman year dorms.

You WILL need **cleaning supplies** to avoid illnesses and germs

gathering in your dorms. You also will need to be realistic with the space you live in, the biggest tip from social media influencers is do not clutter your space. Make sure to buy things that will not take up unnecessary space. Lamps and big charger ports that can go on desks or small areas in your room are

smaller bases and thin posts that take up minimal spaces on desks and side tables.

## COLOR COLOR COLOR.

Picking a color scheme is the foundation of your freshman year dorm. Once you have found your roommate, if you have one, come up with an agreement on a color scheme because **coordination** is key. Having decorations that follow different color schemes can make your dorm seem messy and all over the place. Picking three key colors can put together your room in a sophisticated way.



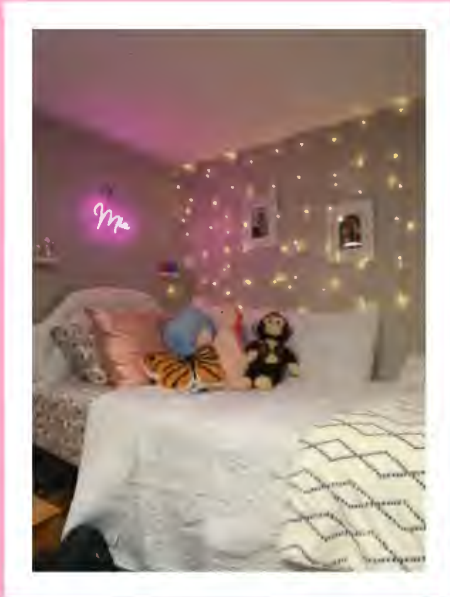
Boston University interviewed a celebrity designer

unnecessary when there are much more space conscientious options.

For most dorm rooms you are given a ceiling light and an additional one near the doorway. School lights will wash out the room and give it a gloomy feel. Bringing a standing lamp or a bright mirror with led lights surrounding can add **new lighting** to the room without taking up an immense amount of space. Find

Cortney Novogratz, who said, "I'm really all about color and making things really happy and bright." Taking your colors to bring your dorm room to a second home for you and giving you the sense of comfort can really set your room apart from others.

To find room decoration examples, Pinterest has great mock setups for your future dorm. Taking the



designed for dorm rooms that will not leave marks; which is a requirement for most housing situations. Looking up the color of your choice and then dorm decorations can lead you to numerous assortments of decor.

While you want to figure out how to make your dorm room cute, you also need to be practical. Taking all of your favorite belongings from home and adding more as you continue shopping for the next school year, you will need plenty of **storage** space to keep the clutter away. It is typical for dorm beds to be raised leaving space for small dressers and shoe racks. This allows extra room for clothes and a way to keep shoes out of the way..

A popular storage element is two bedside tables with lamps that include a **charging port** on top. This storage can be useful for everyday items you need out of the way and covers that extra lighting that is essential to your new dorm room.

One thing that is essential for every dorm room is a **mattress topper**. When adjusting to the dramatic change of a new room, having a bed that can give you the same comfort as your previous bed at home is essential. The twin size mattress topper is the perfect option to add your own level of comfort to your XL twin size bed. Amazon and other local bed stores can be a great place to find your perfect mattress topper.

As a girl, some of your favorite things may be getting dressed up or having a nice outfit. Finding a perfect **full body mirror** that can fit into your dorm and still give a simple aesthetic look can be helpful to tie together the room. Looking at

Amazon, Target, and Ikea can give you great ideas for simple full body mirrors, whether you like a gold, silver, or wooden trim there are endless options.

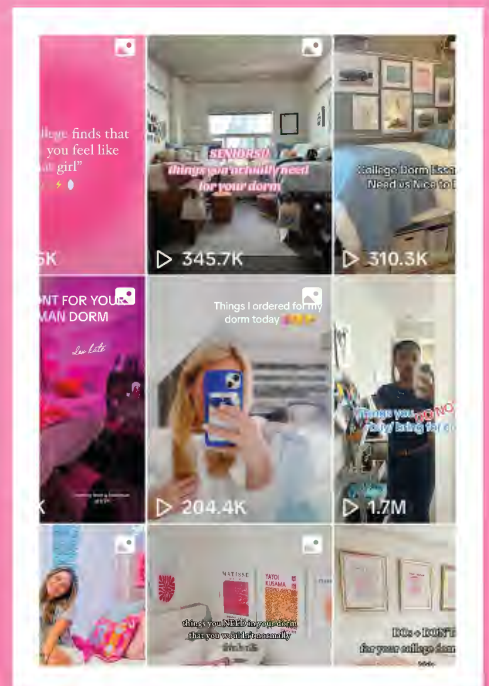
Aubree Lewis, a WHS Alum, who attended Penn State for her Freshman year had difficulties with her roommate her first year. She learned from it, “Remember that what’s yours is YOURS. You have no obligation to share or let people borrow, especially if it isn’t reciprocated”. While dorm room decorating can be exciting, make sure items that are shared and communal for both you and your roommate are split evenly.

The whole process can be overwhelming after finally deciding which college you would like to attend. For more advice look through Youtube and **Tiktok** videos to get more ideas and tips about what is essential for your freshman year and what you can do to make this transition to your next chapter in life as smooth as possible.

time to search up “dorm ideas” on **Pinterest** can bring you to endless possibilities and ideas. Photos will include dressers, lamps, bedding, and wall decorations. Seeing an entire room put together can help you gather ideas of what colors work best with one another and are the right fit for you. The new tool on Pinterest; photo searching, can help you find specific products and bring you to the corresponding website to purchase items for your dorm room.

While some dorm rooms are filled with luxuries like drywall compared to cinder block “prison cells.” WHS Graduate Mia Petrini, attending Sacred Heart University, dormed in a room with the boring cinder block room look. She immediately purchased wallpaper to cover the bland walls and had her own homey feel to her dorm room.

Decorating your walls or **adding photos from your home town** might be the pieces to tie together a room to make it comforting for you over the next year you have to live in it. Amazon has plenty of prints and hanging decorations





# Absenteeism Amo

students. A truant student is defined as a student who has had 4 unexcused absences from school in one month (30 consecutive calendar days) or 10 unexcused absences in one school year.

impact on a student’s ability to read at grade level, perform academically, and graduate on time. Good attendance among children can help them improve in school and create good habits for the workplace in the future.

Waterford High School has a total of 704 students, and an average of 49 students (7%) are absent each day.

Research conducted at a national level indicates that consistent absence from school, regardless of the age or academic level, undermines both the academic progress and social development essential for success in education.

By: Regan Bernardo

Absenteeism has always been an issue in schools. Absenteeism is the failure to report or stay present in school as scheduled, regardless of the reason. According to The US Department of Education, about 1 in 5 high school students are chronically absent. More than 20% of students in high school are chronically absent.

Chronic absence rates increased from 12 percent (702,531 students) in 2018–19 to a high of 30% (1,799,734) in 2021–22. In 2022–23, there was a decrease to a chronic absenteeism rate of 25% (1,486,302 students).

CT law requires school districts and schools to have specific policies and procedures regarding truant

November and December have the most absences, with 8% of students being absent, and an average of 56 students missing school each day. February had the same number of absent students.

In August, the first month of the school year, there were only 1% of students absent from school. Since that first month of the school year, the numbers have only increased, with the exception of a few months.

If a student is chronically absent from school, it has an

Assistant Principal Mrs. Batty agrees that frequent absenteeism disrupts both academic progress and the development of critical social skills. She says, “Regular attendance at school is essential for maintaining a positive learning environment. Students who feel connected to their school community tend to do better academically.



# ng Students in WHS

Relationships are key! These can't form when someone is chronically absent."

Children from low-income backgrounds tend to experience chronic absenteeism more frequently due to various obstacles, such as limited access to healthcare, unstable housing situations, and unreliable transportation. Consequently, these children often face academic setbacks as their families typically lack the means to compensate for the missed educational opportunities.

Spanish teacher Ms. Champ says that absenteeism in students affects teachers, like herself, as well: "It means I have to spend time catching up. It's difficult to have lessons for more than one class because students always miss a part of it." Students are at many different levels, which makes class games impossible because some students have

no idea what is happening in class.

Mrs. Baumgartner, a health teacher, often worries about her students when they miss school. While catching up students to the work they missed is difficult, it is still manageable. "In my class, I allow class time to complete work, so when a student is absent they will need to complete it on their own time. When a student is absent for a long time or has multiple absences, they miss content and important information for the class as well as a buildup of work in all their classes." She stated.

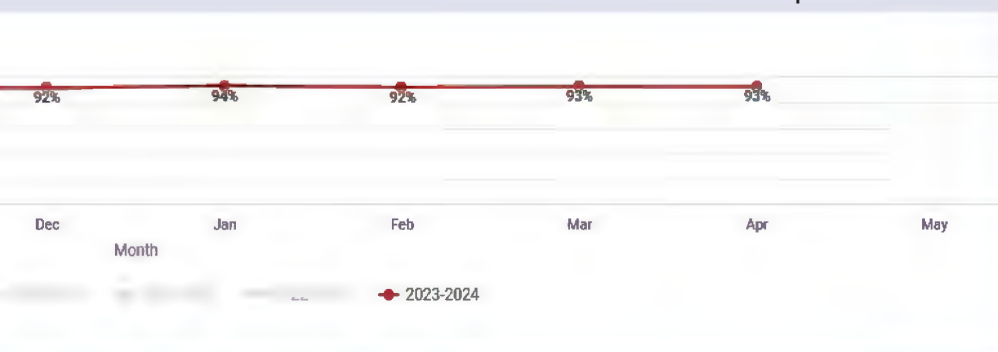
Zoe Dell, sophomore, says that being absent affects her classwork by giving her more pressure and stress, as she's not only behind everyone, but she also has more important problems to address as well. She said she does find it difficult to catch up on her work



when she's absent because "it's not just one class I miss if I'm absent for a day, it's all, so I have multiple stressors happening at once."

Another sophomore stated that being absent also affects their schoolwork. They say that if you miss the curriculum, you will not be able to understand it as well as if you were in school. They also stated that "it is harder to catch up on work depending on how many days you missed, but it's still difficult. The more class you miss, the more work you're going to have to catch up on."

The more school that a student may miss, the more work that they are putting on themselves to catch up on. Nobody wants that stress so students should try their best to stay in school and complete their work.



# DIVERSITY IN LITERATURE

by Lexie Hullivan

Whether you take AP English 12 with Mr. Lytle, Sports Literature with Mr. Silverstri, or English 9 Advanced with Mrs. Peluso, you are bound to open a book at some point, willingly or reluctantly. However, not all students get the opportunity in English class to read authors who have similar cultural backgrounds as themselves.

Data was collected across eleven WHS English classes, spanning all four grades and both honors and non-honors classes.

Freshman students read *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck and *Unbroken* by Laura Hillenbrand in all English 9 three classes, whereas *Flowers for Algernon* by Daniel Keyes and *Night* by Eli Wiesel were read in two classes. In freshman year, students are exposed to a female voice, that of Laura Hillenbrand's, but once again, all four novels come from voices of the same white racial background, and even Hillenbrand's focus is on a dead, white male.

Across the board, all junior students read *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald. Two classes read *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger and *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien. All three stories are written by white males, with stories that predominantly feature white characters.

By the school year's end, 40 unique books will be read among these eleven English classes. Eighty-five percent of the books were written by white people and 73% of these books were written by men, with a total of 63% of the authors being both white and male.

Junior Kayleigh Jones, AP English Language student, noted that there were only a handful of books that were written by non-white authors. "I think it's embarrassing," Jones says. "We should rewrite the curriculum and incorporate books from different cultures, sexualities, and races/ethnicities. It's important that people are taught about other cultures in school, so that they are exposed to different ideas or beliefs that may challenge their own to broaden their perspective."

Jones' call for change is not a new opinion, as past students have expressed similar sentiments to their teachers over the years. However, teachers have tried to expand their syllabuses, with books like *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston, a black female author from the Harlem Renaissance being added into the AP English 11 curriculum this year.

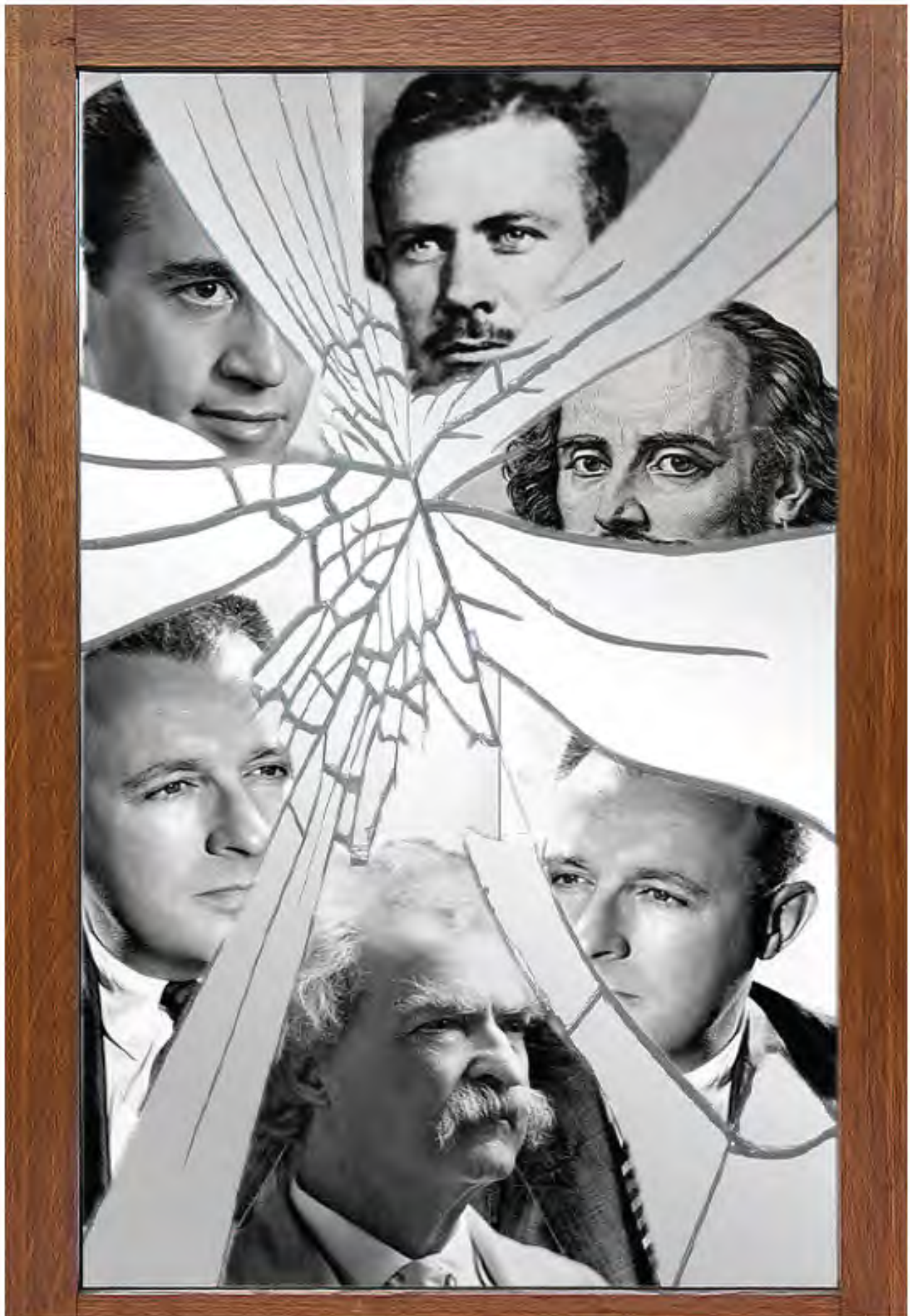
Freshman Keniyah Hill argues, "If the story is good and communicates a strong message to me, that's truly what matters." While having diverse voices in literature embedded within curriculum is important, in order to properly serve our students, it's also important to ensure that the stories are allowing all different students to be represented in the literature they read.

The teachers in the English department do discuss which books they want to include in their lessons for that school year, so oftentimes there will be a few books that are read across grade level. However, teachers have a lot of freedom when it comes to the books they give their students, as long as it fits appropriately with their given curriculum.

While Hill does think that "the literal substance is great," she adds that she would appreciate the opportunity to read books from a more diverse range of authors. "I think as a school, if we wanted a change, it would start with finding books that better suit the needs for students and that were more insightful of various cultural backgrounds than books that were previously read."

Although there is a time and place for reading classic novels, such as *Of Mice and Men* and *The Great Gatsby*, there is also a clear need to make room for stories that are predominantly focused on stories from multicultural backgrounds.





# Make up or Break up

BY YANA ABRAMOVA (idea Alex Casper)

Relationships are tough to handle, especially when one or both members of the couple graduate from high school. According to surveys conducted by college students across the country surveying their peers, a very small percentage of high school sweethearts survive college (usually less than 10%).

Below are the experiences of some Waterford High School seniors and alumni who broke up or made their relationship work.



WHS senior Gracie Bartelli was in a year-and-a-half long relationship when her boyfriend had to leave for college. While Gracie did her best to keep the relationship stable, with time, communication became more and more difficult as the two spent less time face-to-face; “There were a lot more disagreements which quickly became a problem.”

Eventually, Gracie realized that the relationship was draining her and ruining her mental well-being. Instead of sacrificing herself for the relationship, she decided to put herself and her mental health first, “I stepped away and although I learned a lot from the relationship, I am much happier on my own now”.

Another senior at WHS, Emma Way, had been with her boyfriend for almost two years before he left for college in Rhode Island. The comparatively shorter distance made it easier for the two to visit each other pretty often throughout the following year. In fact, the two saw each other almost every week, on top of Facetiming as much as possible.

Ultimately though, the distance proved to be too much and the two parted ways in the spring. While Emma appreciated the relationship and learned a lot from it, she is now able to focus on school and her personal life stress-free.



With so many breakup stories, there are couples who stayed together post-grad and are still together.



WHS alumnus Jack Donovan shared the story of his (now almost four-year-long) relationship with fellow WHS graduate Skylar Neidig.

The two alumni had a strong relationship based on two factors: they were graduating at the same time, and they had been together for a long time. Jack and Skylar had been together for almost three years before they graduated high school. Thanks to this, they had already built up a lot of trust in each other.

Donovan and Neidig were also fortunate enough to end up at schools close to one another and so they are able to visit each other fairly regularly. Donovan shared that

while he wishes he could see Skylar more often, he believes that the distance has only been beneficial for the two of them.

Being at different schools, Donovan feels that he and Neidig were able to develop freely and branch out, making new friends independently of one another. “When you’ve been together for so long... and you more or less grew up together, becoming your own person is an important part of developing into an adult”.

Donovan also mentioned that it is completely normal for people to experience lots of stress and conflict in their relationship going into college as it can be a very difficult time and process.

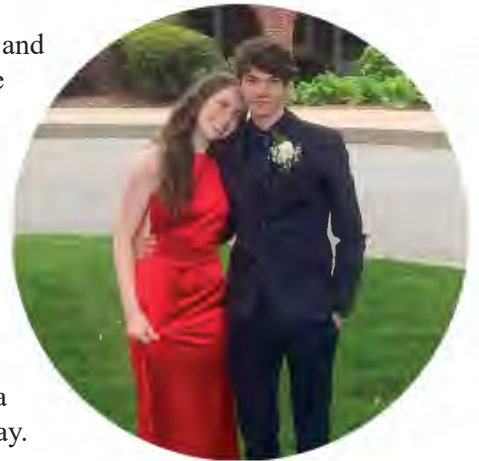
Ultimately, he believes that if that stress becomes too much or if one person begins contemplating a breakup, a serious conversation must be had in order to figure out the future of the relationship. If the relationship becomes too much, dragging it out will only make things worse.

Donovan shared that he and Neidig were able to work through things and stay together because they were both 100% in the fact that they wanted to stay committed to each other. As important as a relationship is, it should never drag you down, Donovan shared.

Another couple that stayed together post-grad consists of senior Louis Dhervilly and college freshman Emma Grimsey. The two started dating two years ago and have stayed strong despite Grimsey going to college.

Fortunately, Grimsey stayed fairly local so spending time together hasn’t proven to be too difficult for the couple. Dhervilly shared that the two do their best to meet up every weekend and facetime as much as possible to make up for time spent away from each other.

When asked about how the two handled the transition to being at two different schools, Dhervilly shared that it wasn’t too bad for them. Rather than this being a difficult situation, he shared it just felt very different not seeing Grimsey every day.



“Her college decision didn’t affect where I wanted to go to college”

Dhervilly shared that the distance will get slightly more difficult next year as he plans to study in Glasgow, Scotland. Even despite the large distance and time difference, Dhervilly has a calm approach to the change, having faith that they’ll be able to make it through it.

Dhervilly’s calm approach to these obstacles comes from the trust the two have in each other. He shared that they have never once considered breaking up and are very close. The two share passwords and have each other on the tracking app Life360 to check up on each other occasionally.

Grimsey and Dhervilly will be attending different colleges in the fall, with Grimsey transferring to the University of Connecticut and Dhervilly enrolling in Northeastern University.



# Balancing The Sun

By Samara Holley

According to Dr. Trevan Fischer, from Saint John's Cancer Institute, "About 20% of Americans will develop skin cancer by the time they are 70 years old, and almost 10,000 people are diagnosed with it every day."

As summer approaches, many high schoolers are eager to soak up the sun and achieve that golden tan.

However, it's important to prioritize skin health.

Sophomore Lauren Piotrowski shares her approach to tanning: "I use sunscreen on my face only, and I wear a hat sometimes, or I cover my face, but other than that I don't use any precautions on my body."

Piotrowski goes on saying "I have experienced really bad sunburn, but

the bad burns have only been on my face, so now I am sure to wear sunscreen on my face."

Despite acknowledging the importance of skin health,

Piotrowski admits, "Countless people tell me I'm going to get skin cancer, but honestly I'm like any other teenager and I just really don't care."

"I'm kind of just like I'll cross that bridge if I get there."

However, Piotrowski does not recommend her tanning tactics for everyone.

She is aware it's harmful and leads to sunburn, which a lot of people would not like.

Similarly, another sophomore, Elle Dibuono, shares her perspective on tanning and skin health.

"During summer, I prefer to be in the sun while reading a book and intermittently take refreshing dips in the saltwater, which I've heard boosts tanning."

"I don't take specific precautions, unfortunately."

"I'm mindful of the long-term effects, and I try to cover up when I've been



in the sun for too long."

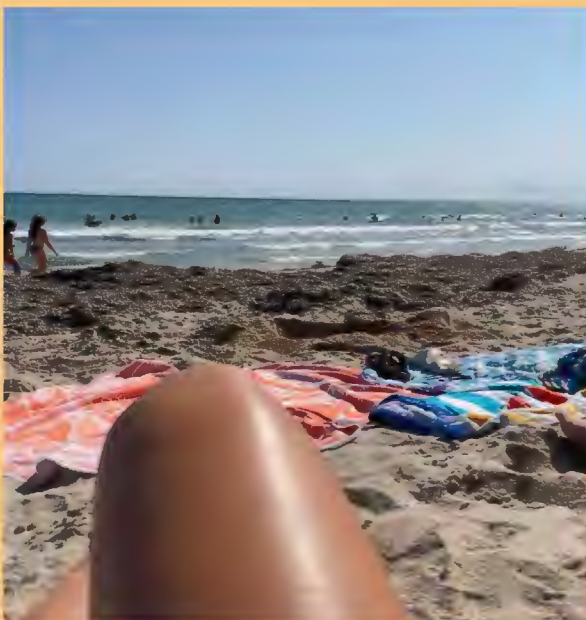
"Post-tanning, my routine involves an everything shower, applying body oil, and soothing my skin with aloe."

Dibuono also shares what she does when the sun is no longer out.

"In winter, when my skin tends to lose its color, I use the Tan-Luxe tanning drops once a week to maintain a healthy glow."

Dibuono advocates for a balanced approach to tanning while emphasizing the benefits but still making sure you're safe.

"I would recommend tanning to others, considering the importance of Vitamin D and the healthy glow it provides, but also being mindful of moderation and protection from excessive exposure."



Ms. Herr, Science teacher here at Waterford High School shares, “I personally do not tan, so it is not something where I seek that out. I do not mind that people want to get tan, but I do not think they should be seeking it out”

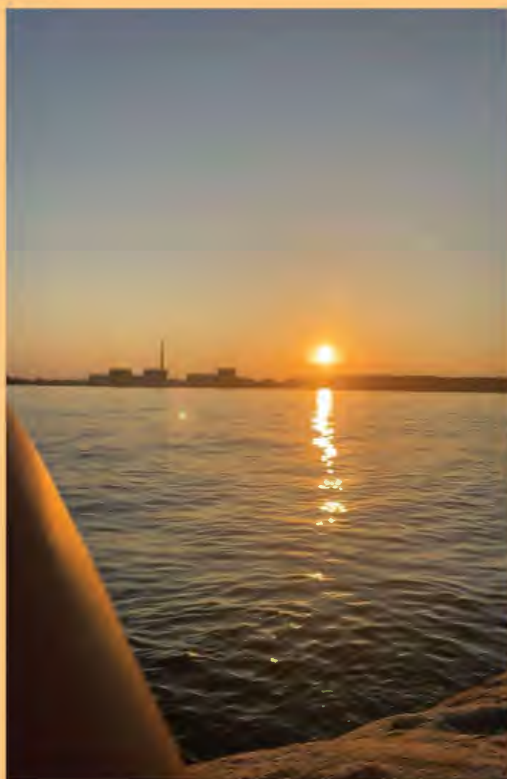
“If it happens as a natural consequence of doing activities outside, it makes more sense to me.”

“I actually have never understood just laying in the sun for hours on end.

Not that I've never laid out in the sun, but it gets so boring.”

Ms. Herr also shares her thoughts on the importance of wearing sunscreen.

“I think sunscreen is your best bet. Wear a hat, for sure.



My brother-in-law just had a melanoma (cancerous skin tissue) removed from his face and it looked like a big black hole after they cut it out.”

While tanning may signify beauty for some, without proper precautions it can come with serious risks.

Tanning under the sun can give your skin that sun kissed glow, but what about your hair?

Just like your skin, your hair needs protection from harmful effects of UV rays.

Goldwell offers a range of products, including a leave-in spray, that contains UV filters to shield your hair from getting damaged.

While this particular product does not contain SPF, its UV filters work to protect your hair from sun rays.

These filters act as barriers, which prevents UV to cause dryness, breakage, and color fading.

So even if you're lying out by the pool or soaking in the sun at the beach, your hair can stay healthy and vibrant.



In light of the perspectives shared, it is clear that while the attraction of a sun-kissed glow is strong, the risks associated with tanning should not be ignored.

By advocating for a balanced approach, we can enjoy the benefits of the sun while protecting our skin for the upcoming summer season.





# Camp Dash

BY NOLA GESSNER

As the end of the school year approaches, many students are searching for a summer job. Camp Dash provides many opportunities for teenagers looking for a job over the summer.

Camp Dash is a summer adventure day camp with games, crafts, beach days, and opportunities to make new friends for kids Pre K - 8th grade. The camps run Monday through Friday for six weeks and is an affordable alternative for working parents who need child care, as well as for kids just looking to have fun.

Special activities include guest speakers coming in to teach about community organizations. Officer Hodges, Waterford PD canine support animal, comes to visit the kids. This special officer sits and lets the kids interact with him so that they feel safe around his human partners.

Last year, one of the firefighter from the Oswegatchie Fire Department came and demonstrated how the



protective gear was used to keep the firefighters safe. The children were also shown how a firetruck works and what firefighters have to do when working a hose or fire extinguisher. The best part of this visit for many of the kids was when they were given the chance to turn on the sirens and get in the trucks.

A weekly experience for the kids is their visit to Waterford Beach. Each group of kids would have a set time to leave and return for the beach. Kids who chose to not go to the beach still had a fun day by getting pizza and play time.



The camp offers employment and volunteering opportunities for Waterford High School students. Head Director, Brandon Smith, says they are one of the largest employers of Waterford High School students.

By working with kids, students get to practice their leadership skills and gain a sense of responsibility. Managing a group of kids takes responsibility and a lot of decision making.

Brodie Scott, a former volunteer, says, "It gave me experience with kids and helped me get a feel for what having responsibility feels like."

"Camp DASH offers high schoolers the opportunity to build essential skills for entering college, and the workforce, like collaboration, time management, organization, and fostering a strong sense of empathy. We also offer students going into the education field a great piece for their resume, as we have name recognition around the state and at several universities where our staff members have graduated from education programs while still working for us," said Brandon Smith.

Each year they offer, take, and approve job applications from about 35 to 40 high school students. Students make up approximately 60% of their staff.

Camp Dash relies not only on returning employees, but also new volunteers each summer. Now that Learning through Service (LTS) hours are no longer required for high school students, there has been a reduced amount of applications for the program this year.

Smith said, "We have seen a slight decline in volunteer applications.



To combat this, we have reworked our volunteering program into a leadership program geared towards giving students a good volunteering opportunity for their resume when applying to colleges and jobs."

Students improve their communication skills by not only working with kids but peers and adults as well.

They need to know how to handle certain situations and problems effectively.

On top of this, members of the Youth Leadership Corps participate in workshops apart from the regular staff training. This is a two-day workshop that features guest speakers, interactive games and discussions that help develop leadership skills.

Camp Dash is a beneficial program for children as well as teenagers to get great experiences in their community.



The summer season is fast approaching and has signaled the opening of the area's ice cream shops. Everyone appreciates a cold creamy ice cream treat on a hot summer day or night.

There are many places to visit in Waterford, Niantic and New London.

We'll start the ice cream journey at New London's longtime favorite place: Michael's Dairy at Mitchell College on Montauk Avenue. Michael's Dairy began operation at their New London location in 1938 as Mitchell Dairy.

It later changed hands and became Michael's Dairy in 1943. The red barn that processed milk until the 1970s has been rebuilt and is now used for plays and other entertainment programs. Michael's boasts that it hand scoops over 35 flavors of ice cream and also serves shakes, sundaes (like Build Your Own and Banana Boat), floats, and pints and quarts.

It only features hard ice cream. Michael's has a 4-star rating with a large parking area and outside seating. Some of the ice cream flavors available include their own original Coconut Almond Bar, Graham Central Station and Birthday Cake.

For the kids, they feature Cookie Monster - a blue colored vanilla with choc chip cookies and mini chocolate chips. The cost is comparable to other ice cream shops. With cups starting at \$4. They are open from 12PM- 9PM, 7 days a week.

Michael's reviews are favorable:

"I think Michaels Dairy is a very good ice cream place to have an excellent tasting ice cream but there can be a very long line and every time I've gone the line has been excessively long," says sophomore Dominic Munsell. Aneeb Mirza also goes on by saying, "It is a very good place to go after a hot summer day at the beach, the flavors are amazing and so tasty."

Traveling west to our town of Waterford is the popular Cowlicks. This is a locally owned business that not only serves terrific ice cream, but has a large outdoor area in the back where patrons can hold private parties with all manner of ice cream treats.

Cowlicks serves both soft serve and hard ice cream with prices ranging from \$5 to \$8.50 for soft serve, small to extra large, and \$6.50 to \$10.75 for hard ice cream. They offer hot fudge and banana split sundaes ranging from \$8.50 to \$11.25. In addition to those flavors, they also offer special sundaes like Peanut Butter Bomb, Mint Oreo, and Banana Pudding.

Another unique choice is Pup Cups for \$2.50 which is very popular. Cowlicks is open seasonally from 12 -8 everyday. Reviews state: "I think it's good, but if you prefer soft serve ice cream over hard serve then it might not be the best choice," says Sadie Tiven. Gavin Valentine also adds on to that saying, "Very good, I love it, if you prefer soft serve ice cream then don't go there."

Niantic has 3 ice cream shops in very close proximity to each other and attracts a seasonal tourist

# We All Scream Cream

By Zoe

crowd as well as the locals. First up is Tony D's Creamery on Main St. Tony D's is open 7 days a week from 12:00 to 9:30pm. They are a "small batch creamery located in Niantic, CT, creating artisanal premium ice cream for retail, wholesale and catered events. Service is with a SMILE." Tony's flavors have clever names, Poetic Justice, St. Thomas S'More, Foster the People, Cherry Sinatra, Cherry Seinfeld to name a few. Flavors rotate, but they always feature Vanilla Envy and Bluesberry.

The only soft serve is vanilla and chocolate. Prices range from \$4 to \$8 for the regular homemade and \$3 to \$5 for the soft serve. There is on site parking and outdoor seating. Tony D's has an overall 4 star rating.

Patrons enjoy the unique flavors and creamy texture as evidenced by online reviews: "Delicious fun flavors. Soft serve was super creamy. I appreciate the affordable child size option."

"Tony D's isn't your typical whole bunch of flavors Ice cream location but they look fun."

"Service was quick and efficient but I wish she would have suggested options since I was lost. The actual location has no seating but the house next door seems to be where you can go and sit, and it looked comfortable. What I liked about this place is that it is just outside the hectic downtown

# Ice Cream For Ice

## Ice Cream Cone

"Niantic and accessibility is perfect and has ample parking"

A short distance down Main Street is Gumdrops and Lollipops. This shop is the only open year round. Gumdrops not only features ice cream but also has a wide variety of candy and gift shop items in the front of the store. The ice cream area is in the back of the building. During the warm months customers order from the back deck.

There is limited seating on the deck, but the Hole in the Wall Beach and Boardwalk is behind the shop and many people like to stroll there or sit on the benches along the boardwalk to enjoy their ice cream. Gumdrops also makes their own ice cream and has a large amount of flavors to choose from.

Prices range from \$3.99 for a kid's cup to \$5 for a one scoop cup. There are also pup cups for \$3.50. It has an overall 4 star rating, but as the following reviews show, it is considered pricey. Reviews state: "This review is just for the ice cream portion of the business.

As I sometimes say, ice cream is almost always good, and that was the case with the cookies and cream, and cupcake flavored ice cream waffle cones I ordered. The ice cream was about average for CT. I have no issues with it. The flavors and textures just didn't pop for me like the best CT places.

It would be a decent place to visit if you are in the area."

"Stopped here after the beach, good service and great ice cream! We also stopped by during lunch time and got burgers and chicken tenders which were shack style-food and pretty good! They had a pup cup on the menu as well as gave my pup water. Great post beach spot."

Going down Main St. takes a left turn down Pennsylvania Avenue to the wildly popular Dairy Queen as indicated by the long lines you will encounter at just about any time of the day. This is the only franchise ice cream place mentioned in this article. Dairy Queen was founded in Joliet, Illinois in 1940 and has over 6,000 locations in the US, Canada, and in 20 other countries.

The Niantic Dairy Queen has existed in its location since the 1950's. Dairy Queen only serves its soft serve brand of ice cream with only chocolate, vanilla, and twist flavors.

They offer cones, shakes and sundaes, but their most popular item, according to their web site, is the Blizzard which comes with a chocolate or vanilla base packed with a variety of every imagined combination of fruit, candy, cookies, or brownies.

Prices are reasonable with cones ranging from \$2.69 to \$3.89. Blizzards range from a mini at \$2.89 to the large at \$4.69. There is on site parking and a few benches to sit on. Reviews are favorable for this soft serve

establishment which is open from 11:00 to 10:00 daily: "Are there better ice cream places?"

Sure ... there are many creameries, farms, and specialty ice cream stores and stands. But at 7:00 pm, when the sun is still up in the warm summer evening, there is something just right about a DQ soft serve cone, or Blizzard, or shake. Simply put - it's not summer without an evening visit to your local DQ."

"So many delicious choices but I mainly go back to a Blizzard. Hot fudge sundae is always my 2nd choice.

I recently tried a funnel cake sundae. It was ok but you can definitely tell the cake was from the microwave but no complaints except maybe on a really hot day there are just too many people!"

It's time to look forward to the wonderful days of summer. Plan and visit all the great ice cream places we are lucky to have close by, and while you are at it smile and remember the old saying, "I scream, you scream, we all scream for ice cream!"



# Jax Murray

BY YANA ABRAMOVA

For Jax Murray, working out isn't just a matter of changing his look, but also a dream career.

Jax first began his workout journey the summer of 2022. While he had already been doing calisthenic workouts at home, seeing bodybuilders on social media and going through a breakup were the catalysts taking his fitness journey more seriously.

Now, after two years of intense bulking, cutting, and pumping, Jax has decided that he wants to turn his passion for the gym into a career, "My ultimate goal is to do bodybuilding shows and be a freelance personal trainer".

As a part of his workout journey, in January of 2023, Jax started an Instagram account to track his progress and stay consistent with going to the gym. The account, @jax.lifts\_, is home to progress videos and gym tips. Jax films his own videos with the help of a tripod and an occasional helping hand from his younger brother Sawyer Murray or his girlfriend Elise Leonardo.

As of right now, Jax has



yet to establish a theme to his videos, most of them being more serious and a few showcasing his humor through silly cat filters.

Due to his busy school life, Jax has not had the time to develop a consistent upload schedule. He hopes to begin uploading five videos every week after graduation.

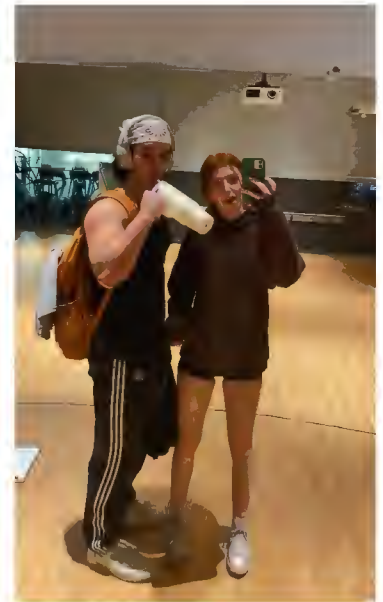
Jax plans to not only increase the quality of his videos but also to expand the content he puts out. He wants to make videos that explain the science and biomechanics of certain lifts, diets, and/or supplements. By developing his Instagram account, Jax hopes to get noticed by either an athletic wear company or a supplement company to secure a sponsor.

Jax's main career goal after high school is to become a personal trainer. He is currently employed by RENEGADE fitness, a popular gym chain in Connecticut and Rhode Island.

Jax is working towards getting a certification from the National Academy of Sports Medicine.

Over the past 35 years, NASM has trained more than 1.5 million fitness professionals in over 100 countries while also developing extensive partnerships with thousands of gyms and health clubs.

The importance of an NASM certification has led to "two offers on



the table for becoming a full-time trainer" that he will be able to take advantage of as soon as he is certified.

Jax has also taken steps in this journey by giving advice to fellow gym-goers. While he was firm in the fact that he never gives out unsolicited advice, if students have questions about his regimen, diet, or "supplement stack", he will gladly share some tips.

While Jax is supportive of others on their gym journeys, he also shared some of the struggles people may encounter.

While going to the gym to tone up or gain more stamina is less convoluted, achieving the physique needed for bodybuilding shows and competitions takes much more dedication. According to Jax, going to the gym for this goal isn't enough, diet and supplements play a huge role in

getting the level of muscle needed for a professional, competitive level.

Bulking, an increase in the amount of calories consumed, is used to gain muscle mass. While gaining muscle mass however, the body will also gain fat, which is where cutting comes in.

During a cut, it is necessary to decrease the amount of calories consumed. This is done in order to “shave off” the extra fat put on during a bulk.

If you want to achieve your desired physique naturally, it will take more effort than using artificial shortcuts, “Without the use of anabolics (synthetically produced testosterone), it is very difficult to gain muscle at the same time you lose fat.”

Jax shared that using steroids is not only considered unfair and unethical but it can also harm your health. While the natural process of building muscle takes longer, it is more sustainable and much less risky, and that is the process he wishes to teach and promote.

When bulking and cutting, patience and dedication are key. Jax said that he “did not have a cheat day until a year and a half after [he] started counting calories”. Thanks to this consistency, he was able to see results quicker than he would have had he taken breaks.

When discussing cutting and bulking, Jax once again emphasized the importance of balancing both a diet and exercise. Doing just one would not get him to the level that he is at now. While he has not yet reached a professional, competitive level, he has done extensive research to back his decisions and knowledge.

While many people worry about tracking calories and other aspects of their food this intensely, Jax said that taking such care about what you put into your body is beneficial. Plus, such an intense diet regimen is only recommended for those who are trying to achieve an above-average physique.

Food tracking can go beyond just looking at calories. Most professional bodybuilders and athletes also track their macros (protein, fat, and carbs) in order to really max out their diets. Jax, however, shared that tracking macros isn’t worth it for the average person as it overcomplicates dieting.

College is not necessary to discover your passion and goals for life. Jax is a prime example of that fact as he has been dedicated to his goals for years and is ready to jump right into his career right as soon as he graduates.

**“I think that if you want a body which is better than average, you have to do things the average person is not willing to do”**



# SOPHIA TURPIN: JOURNEY TO WORLDS

BY LEXI HULLIVAN

Waterford High School is home to many athletes, from the quarterback of the football team to the captain of the cheerleading team. A group of true athletes that also deserve the spotlight are our Irish Step Dancers, who represent Waterford schools in competitions around the world.

Senior Sophia Turpin is an Irish Step dancer who has put 15 years into developing and mastering her talent. Turpin has trained her whole life at Spirited Soles Irish Dance Academy in Oakdale, Connecticut. She says that the reason she originally started Irish Step Dancing was because “my mother is the teacher and she put me in the classes.”

Lisa Santacroe is the owner of Spirited Soles, also known as the Santacroe School. Santacroe brings her students to all kinds of competitions, and finds opportunities for them to perform at venues such as the Garde Arts Center and community parades and festivals.



Irish step dancing is characterized by high kicks, stiff upper body, and rapid movements of the feet that must be performed with excellent technique and precision. Dancers who perform in this style wear specialized shoes that are unique this style of dance.

Recently, Turpin competed at the World Championships for Irish dancing in Glasgow, Scotland. In order to qualify to attend the World Championships, dancers must first prove themselves at a competition called Oireachtas in either the fall or the summer.

Dancers who attend the summer competition must make the top 20 to qualify for Worlds. But dancers like Turpin, who attend the fall competition, it is much more difficult to make the cut. Turpin explains, “they pick out the top ten dancers in New England.” Turpin not only made the top ten but placed 5th of all the New England dancers.

In Irish dance, an oireachtas refers to an annual championship competition held at a regional level. The oireachtas is the general name for this type of competition, but they are held by individual Irish dance organizations. Another type of competition she performs in is called FEIS, which

Turpin describes as the smaller one’s compared to oireachtas, nationals, and worlds.

Turpin loves the environment of competitions because “they let you show off all the amazing work that you put in leading up to it.” Turpin also takes a lot of pride in the beautiful costumes that she wears. Irish Step Dance is widely known for the beautiful and distinct costumes that dancers perform in. They are brightly colored and tailored to fit each dancer perfectly. Turpin loves getting to show off the unique dresses that are made for her.

Turpin describes the practices for Irish Step Dancing as “very intense right now, but also very fun.” Currently, Turpin rehearses her dancing in the studio Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday for about two hours each day. The time she spends in the studio ultimately pays off in a big way for Turpin.

Turpin also has a passion for teaching. Turpin will be attending Mitchell College in the fall for Early Childhood Education and to minor in Environmental Science. She plans to continue pursuing Irish Step Dancing post-graduation, as well as teaching for her studio. “I have a dancing exam coming up next month,” Turpin explains. This exam is the final step for Turpin to become a certified teacher of Irish dance, just like her mom.

# Yana Abramova

By Emma Way

Yana Abramova, a senior at Waterford High School, is a talented artist, performer, and speaker. Yana is well-known amongst her peers.

Alexa Collins, another senior, describes Yana as “Comforting, like a ray of sunshine.” Collins views Yana as always being nice to everyone, as well as pointing out Yana’s good style.

Yana is bilingual, as well as literate in multiple languages. Fluently speaking English and Russian, Yana is able to switch between languages as easily as flipping a page.

In addition to her two native languages, Yana has been taking Spanish and Latin since 6th grade. She is currently taking Spanish 5 with Señora Caño and ECE Latin 5 with Mr. Wheeler. She hopes to learn German and Turkish in the near future, her goal being to study



abroad in Germany in order to be well-exposed to both languages.

When asked how many languages she would like to learn, Yana replied, “Ideally, as many as humanly possible. Realistically though, I’d like to be able to speak 3 very well, and be able to hold basic conversations in a few others.”

Yana’s interest in languages began with her mother, who is a Russian translator.

She says, “I’ve watched my mom work since I was a child. Once, she took me to a seminar for translators, and we were given the opportunity to translate texts with some well-known Russian translators who she looked up to.”

This seminar focused on different children’s books, and those who attended were asked to translate these books.

One of the interpreters who had organized the event took interest in Yana, and specifically recognized her work. This experience sparked Yana’s interest, giving her the motivation to

become a translator just like her mom.

Knowing more than one language can be beneficial not only to those like Yana who wish to become a translator, but also to those who enjoy traveling and experiencing different cultures all over the world.

Yana, who excels in languages, also has a talent for artwork. Making art since she was a child, she uses it as a way to express her feelings and find an escape from the stress in her life.

Taking private art classes outside of school, Yana was able to create her pieces from the comfort of her own home. Her instructors were Boris Kuznetsov and Lena Kunetsova, a Russian immigrant couple living in New York.

Yana hopes to continue studying art but doesn’t want to pursue it professionally, keeping it as an activity that brings her joy and clarity.

Yana plans to attend university in Europe in order to reconnect with her family and roots while expanding her knowledge of language and culture.



# The Final Check

By: Emerson Lane

Madison Laforte, a senior at Waterford High School, finishes off the Laforte's family's time at WHS. Madison is the youngest out of three siblings of the Laforte family, all who are avid lacrosse fans and players. Coming from a family with such high praise in the athletic world, Madison has made sure to set her own path through her four years at WHS.

Laforte is committed to play Lacrosse at Messiah University, a Christian University. She has been brought up to always honor her commitment to God and when she found Messiah University she knew it would be the home for her next chapter in life. Throughout middle and high school, Madison has made sure to keep religion a big aspect of her life.

Madison's parents prioritized attending church every single Sunday, although difficulties come up when having such a young group of kids and waking them up early and getting ready for Sunday morning church. She is very thankful for the efforts her parents put into making church such a big piece of her life.

Over the past couple of summers Maddie attends lacrosse camp FCA (Fellow Christian Athletes),

where she spends weeks with other highly competitive athletes looking to strengthen their connection with God and gain further skills in lacrosse. After attending her first year at FCA camp she learned, "These players emphasized to me that I had to let go of my fears and play more for God, rather than myself". She took her life lessons learned at FCA to WHS and her recruiting process throughout her junior year.

After her years of attending a camp where her brothers also worked she grew great interest in the program as a whole. She fought to bring this amazing opportunity to WHS for other students and athletes of all sports to come together with a common interest and take the time out of their day to praise God. She began the challenging process of beginning the first religious club at WHS and one that would also not block the creativity other students may have to begin a club of this sort.

After a meeting with the school Sophomore year Maddie was denied the club. She spent countless hours with head advisors from FCA to teach her how to become a leader in this particular role, and how she could make this club an opportunity for everyone. Laforte encountered many long debates with higher

up admin in Waterford and compromises on behalf of both. After a long battle halfway through Sophomore year Maddie was granted the FCA at Waterford. Not even a couple weeks after her tough battle to bring the club to other students, a fellow classmate came up to Laforte after finding out she was the one to begin FCA, saying, "You're homophobic and a bad person". Madison did not let this stop her club and dream from growing and continued to push away the negative energy and start her new chapter.

Her endless hours devoted to sharing her love for athletics and religion has paid off when she was in her junior year being recruited by multiple schools all over. While some coaches questioned her choice of college after being multiple D1 and D2 coaches expressed great interest in Laforte, she was certain Messiah was the place for her.

After her summer at FCA camp one of the counselors came up to Maddie, eagerly wanting her to reach out to her coach just to see if it was something that sparks interest. The coaches at Messiah put a tremendous amount of effort into recruiting Laforte and finally persuaded her enough to visit for her first overnight. Being able to see the family environment and

perfect education for her major, Maddie knew this was going to be her future home.

Her last chapter at Waterford High School prior to Messiah is spring of 2024, girls high school lacrosse season. Being elected captain Maddie knew she wanted to take what she learned at FCA and her countless lessons she has received from previous captains she wanted to make this year a new environment. Already her new mindset and leadership has helped the team to one of their best seasons yet current 14-1 and their first win against East Lyme ever as a program. Laforte says, "I am so proud of this team for stepping into their roles and gaining confidence in one another". After all her hard work and dedication of leadership workshops and taking in valuable lessons from captains, family members, and religious outlets,

*"ALTHOUGH WHEN I WAS YOUNGER I NEVER REALLY UNDERSTOOD CHURCH, LATER IN LIFE WHEN I DEVELOPED A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD IT HELPED ME ALOT."*  
*-MADDIE LAFORTE*

Laforte has led her team to become a family and allow each and every single player to enjoy the sport of Lacrosse.

memories and inspirations she has made throughout her time at WHS is an amazing way to end the Laforte legacy.

Maddie is off to a new chapter in her life following the end of the 2024 summer, where she will take her family's time and commitment to religion and continue her faith. As well as her dedication to lacrosse training and competition, as she will be competing at the high Division III level. The many



# THE LAST AT BAT

By Alyson Lewis

Senior captain of the WHS softball team, Emilia Podeszwa, is on track to being a successful collegiate softball player after graduation to play D1 at Binghamton University.

Any athlete going through the recruitment process knows the stress it can hold over one's head. It is a need to be perfect in front of recruiters and coaches. When asked about her experience in the recruiting process, she stated, "Personally, I hated the recruitment process.... Luckily coaches saw me in person, saw me play, and decided to recruit me." While she faced many trials and tribulations, she had to account for a factor in the recruiting process that some athletes do not have to face if they're lucky enough. Podeszwa is a multisport athlete that faced a serious injury during her senior soccer season. She broke her ankle mid season putting an early end to her senior soccer season.

For a single sport athlete, an injury such as breaking an ankle isn't major, it is a 6 week recovery and even more time to recover when waiting for the season to come back around. But for an athlete like Podeszwa, a multisport one, this can be detrimental. It gives you the standard injury recovery time, but only a short time in between off season in one sport and the start of another. Even more inconvenient was the timing of it all, senior year, the last season you get to play high school sports with the people you've grown up with. For many unlucky athletes this can be a major setback or even a career ender, but not for Emilia Podeszwa.

During her road to recovery it was a running countdown and race to being fully healthy and ready for the start of the softball season. Podeszwa faced a lot of struggle during her recovery not only physically but mentally. "It was really draining not being able to play sports but having to watch everyone else get to." Podeszwa made a speedy recovery perfectly in time for the softball season. Don't be fooled, it wasn't magic and it definitely didn't happen overnight. Podeszwa was in the gym almost every day after school following a routine that focused on rebuilding the strength in her ankle, and also following the pre-season softball workouts. Not only was she recovering from an injury but she was also working towards being in mint condition for her senior season.

Coaches must have seen her dedication for the sport translated through how she plays and trains. Podeszwa grew up playing Waterford softball from the age of eight : "I always want to win and I love doing it... I have grown up around baseball and I feel like it's a part of who I am now." Podeszwa grew up surrounded by athletes. Her older sister, Sophia Podeszwa, a former Uconn track runner, her older brother, Connor Podeszwa, 2020 Gatorade player of the year and college baseball player, her father, Christopher Podeszwa, former overseas baseball player and now uconn baseball assistant coach. Athleticism runs in her blood and so does the passion to be a great athlete.

She likes to hold herself

accountable and play to her best potential in order to also elevate her team as a captain. "I feel bad because I feel like I am letting my teammates down when I mess up, and I really have to remind myself I can't control what just happened but I can do better."

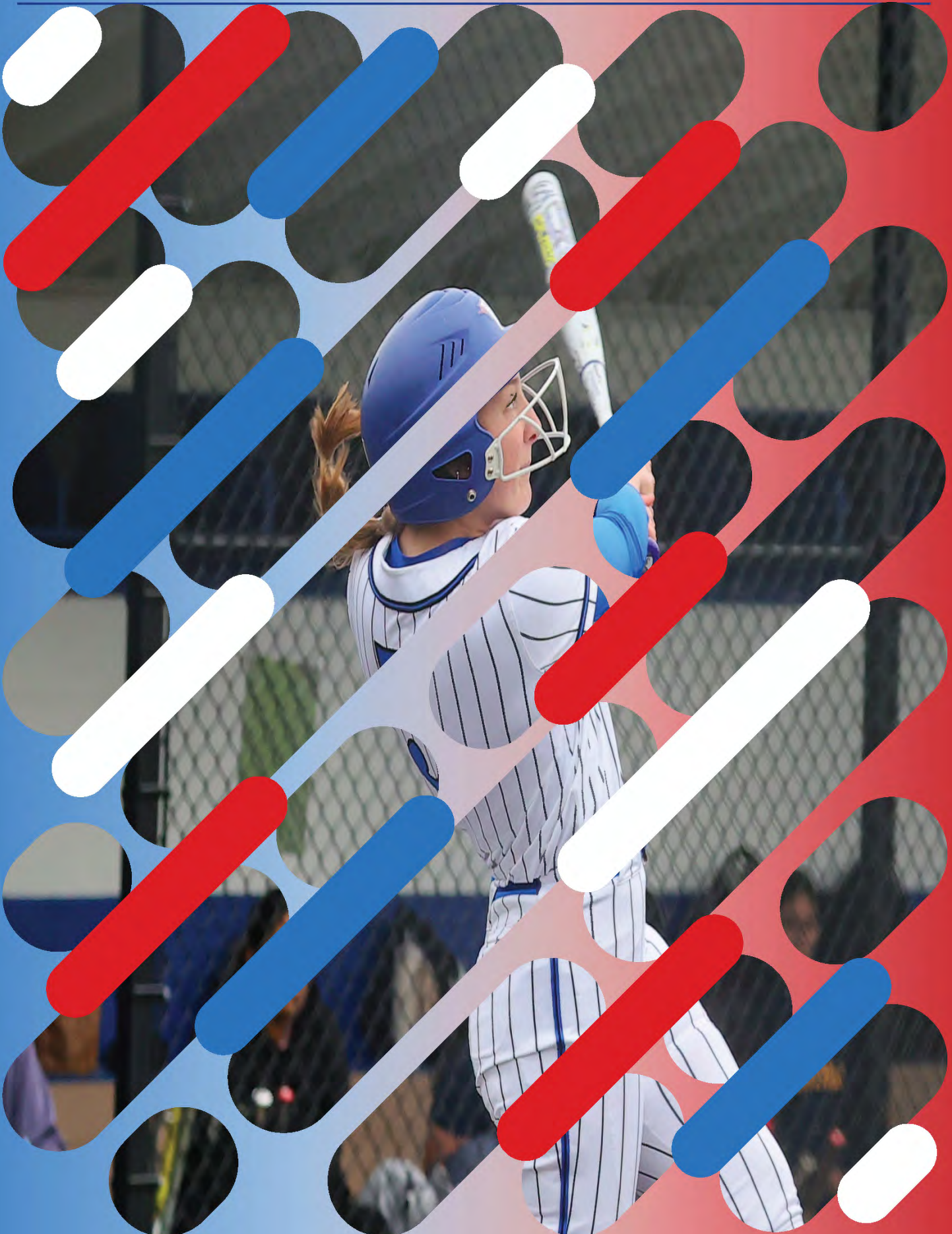
She follows the example of leadership that was set by the seniors before her, the seniors that she had known since she was eight years old. "I was amazed by them and wanted to be just like them... When I finally got to the high school and could play with them they had taught me so much." Now Podeszwa gets to do the same for the underclassmen that look up to her as a player and a person.

Isabel Henry: "Emilia has truly been a mentor to everyone on the team and a key player to the waterford softball success. She means so much to the program and to me as a person. She will be extremely missed when she goes off to do great things at Binghamton"

While Podeszwa's senior year and season is coming to an end, her softball career is truly just beginning. She will be playing D1 softball at Binghamton University in New York.



All photos used taken by Wendy Morris



# Lucas Vincenti: Driven to Succeed

By Samara Holley

Sophomore Lucas Vincenti is a WHS hockey and golf player.

At just four years old, his grandpa Richie Vincenti introduced him to the game of golf.

It started with simply putting on his porch, but that sparked a lifelong love for the sport.

His passion for golf runs deep, thanks to his other grandfather, Warren Costedio.

“When I would go to Massachusetts, we would go to the driving range”.

“He also bought me my first pair of golf shoes and a few golf clubs when I was first getting into it.”

Over the years, he played golf casually, but last year he put in his full effort for the sport.

One of the things Vincenti loves about the sport is that it allows him to



balance his passion for golf and his academic life and responsibilities.

Vincenti said, “Balancing school with golf is pretty easy because golf isn’t very time consuming.”

In spite of this claim, Lucas has practice from 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm and stays until 8:00PM.

He also plays for over ten hours.

“I take advantage of my study halls so I won’t have to do homework when I get home.”

Vincenti attributes some of his golf success to his coach, Mrs. Pesko.

“Having Mrs Pesko as a coach is amazing.

She really sees a lot in me and I wouldn’t be where I am now without her encouragement and the opportunities she has brought me.”

Pesko says, “His passion for the game of golf is evident in the way he approaches every practice session and match with unwavering determination and a positive attitude.”

She says, “His “obsession” with the game is contagious; he often recruits his teammates to join him in practice sessions or golf rounds outside of school hours.

Lucas’ dedication and leadership to the team led him to be named captain of the golf team this season.”

Overall Vincenti is portrayed as a dedicated, passionate, and inspirational leader who values integrity and sportsmanship on and off the golf course.

His leadership qualities make him a valuable asset to the team and a role model to his peers.

Looking ahead, Vincenti dreams of playing golf in college.

He thinks it’s likely that if he plays at a higher level it will help him maintain his love for the sport.

Vincenti also believes that his work ethic and dedication makes him a strong candidate for college-level play.

Teammate Ethan Haynes says, “I’d say Lucas is one of the more consistent players that our opponents play against.”

Haynes also says “Lucas also beat some of the top players in the ECC.”

While golf has become his primary focus, hockey has also been a big part of his life.

Vincenti grew up watching the sport, but didn’t start playing until sixth grade.

However, as much as he loves hockey, he realized that his potential in golf far outweighed that in hockey:

“If I’m lucky enough to go pro, I would only play hockey on the side for fun with my friends, but I would love it if I got to play hockey my whole life”.

Whether on the golf course or the hockey rink, these sports have taught Vincenti valuable lessons on dedication, persistence, and the importance of pursuing your dreams.

# New Spring Coaches

By: Emma Way



As the spring sports season comes to a close, now is the perfect time to recognize the new coaches who have joined the Waterford High teams.

Assistant coaches Jared Glasser and Gerry Clark have recently begun to coach Waterford's Girls and Boys Track team. Glasser specializes in jumping and sprinting, while Clark coaches the team's distance runners.

For Coach Glasser, this is his first coaching opportunity, and he is thoroughly excited to begin his journey as a coach.

Glasser graduated from Guilford High school in 2013 and was one of the captains in his senior year. He says that "People are in better moods with the weather warming, and students will be able to explore different events while cheering one another on."

Clark is a former distance runner, running all through high school and college. He coached in New Jersey for nine years, until he moved up to Connecticut. Clark asked Mr. Landry, the Athletic Director, if he would be able to coach for the track team.

Both coaches have had the opportunity to join the track team at regular meets, as well as invitationals such as the Runnin' Rams Invitational and the David Tetlow Relays.

Both the girls and boys teams have an impressive record this season, as many athletes have qualified for both ECC's and states. The girls remained undefeated throughout the season, while the boys won all but one meet.

Senior Alexa Collins says, "I think they are a great addition to the team! They helped us improve our technique and form for the upcoming meets."

Another senior, Eden Alexander, says, "The coaches are very helpful, and they know what they're talking about."

This season Taylor Shannon, a former student at Waterford High, became an assistant coach for the girls lacrosse team.

She says, "I wanted to start coaching girls lacrosse at WHS because I wanted to give back to my community that gave me so many positive memories and experiences."

Shannon played lacrosse at Waterford High, as well as at the collegiate level at Eastern Connecticut State University.

This coaching opportunity gives her a chance to "be a positive and

Senior Alexa Collins says, "I think [the coaches] are a great addition to the team! They helped us improve our technique and form for the upcoming meets."

relatable female role model for them."

Senior Payton Smith says, "Having Coach Shannon join us has been nothing but an amazing new start for our team. She knows how to lead, and she definitely knows lacrosse."

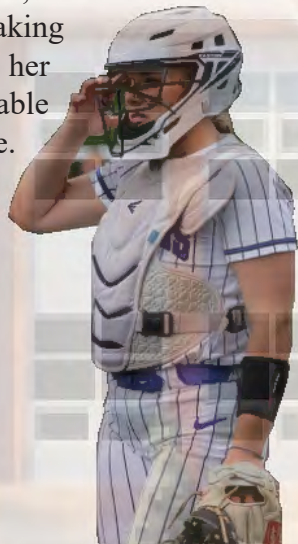
Becoming a new coach is an exciting opportunity, and Waterford High is more than lucky to have these three.



# Senior Sports

By: Lauren Piotrowski

Many high schoolers would say that they have met some of their best friends playing sports, and have developed great friendships with their teammates. This is just the case for senior softball captain Melanie Martin, who says her favorite takeaway from playing high school sports is the different bonds created with her team for different sports. Martin has had a very successful high school career, with her most treasured memory being making it to the state championship her sophomore year and being able to play in such a good game.



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Senior baseball player Harley Mish says, he has learned the skill of dealing with failure through high school athletics. He says coming off of a successful junior season, he had a hard start to his senior season, and he held himself to a high standard, expecting himself to perform the same, if not better. Alongside this, his favorite memory was hitting his first ever home run at a home game.



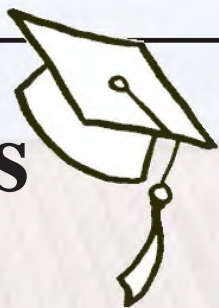
Senior track captain and school record holder Elliot Childs says that learning to work hard through sports even when you don't feel like it. Connecting to this, Childs says his favorite memory of high school athletics was having the opportunity to run at the Nike Indoor Nationals 2023 championship for the 60m hurdles. Alongside Childs, track captain and also school record holder Rhys Tickner says his favorite memory was too competing at Nike Indoor Nationals championship for high jump, and he looks forward to attending nationals again this season for the javelin. Working through adversity is a skill that he says he has taken away from high school athletics.



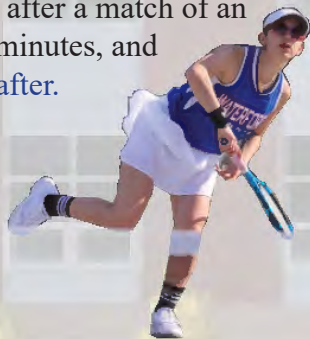
Senior golf player Jacqueline Tran says that confidence is the biggest takeaway she has from high school sports. Learning to be confident in every shot and not letting feelings of doubt or negative emotions affect her athletic performance is something she has learned over the years. Her favorite memory is going to Fisher's Island with her team. She had been hoping Coach Pesko would let her go, as it was only the top four players on the team. She describes it as a once in a lifetime opportunity that she will never forget.



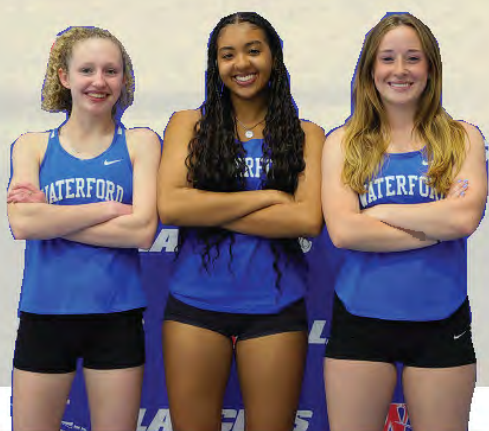
# Memories



A balance of school and sports is crucial for being successful, and as senior tennis player Sarah Hage says, and she has also taken away what it takes to be a good teammate, and cherishing the memories she has made with her team throughout the years. Her favorite moment from high school sports was winning the ECC title after a match of an incredible 3 hours and 17 minutes, and celebrating with her team [after](#).



For senior ex-volleyball player and track captain Emma Way, she says that the number one thing she has taken away from Waterford High School sports specifically is that there will always be favoritism in athletics, and you cannot let that affect how you perform and see yourself. Way says that actually quitting volleyball was the best decision for her, proving that sometimes it can be best to let go of a sport regardless of playing for years. [regardless of playing for years](#).



Another senior track athlete and captain Lexi Collins' number one takeaway from sports at Waterford High School has been the work ethic she has developed. She says showing up to practice and working hard every day is a motivating feeling. Her favorite memory is going to state opens for both indoor and outdoor track.



Senior Emma Smathers, member of the field hockey and basketball team, says she has truly learned the importance and value of teamwork. She says it is hard to be successful without communication with your teammates, and that sticking together through a season of emotions truly bonds the team. Her favorite memory is the big win against East Lyme in field hockey her junior year. Through ups and downs that game helped the team build confidence.



Photos by Wendy Morris

## ADIOS SEÑORA MORALES



BY GRACIE BARTELLI

Señora Morales, one of six foreign language teachers at WHS, she grew up in Colchester, CT.

Her mother decided to send all of her children to be exchange students to learn another language and culture because she didn't want her children to grow up ignorant about the world. Señora and her siblings all spent their sophomore years in high school in another country. She was the only one to go to a Spanish-speaking country while her siblings went to Belgium and France to learn French.

She spent six months living in Colombia with her host family: After three months there, she could understand everything and by the time she left: "I Could say almost anything I wanted."

Morales loved Colombia and its culture and was sad to go home. She went back to Colombia after graduating from college with a Spanish degree and intended to live the rest of her life there. However, her dream of living in Colombia came to an end because she only had a tourist visa and had to return home after a year.

Morales didn't plan on being a teacher because both her mother and father had been teachers, and they didn't like it and had a collection of horrible stories.

She tried travel and tourism for a while, working at Bradley International Airport with Delta Express Airlines. It was a fun job working as a flight attendant, but the pay was horrible. She also tried working for the cruise lines, but again, the pay was horrible. This is when

she became a teacher, cleaning houses to pay off her graduate degree in education.

Morales started her career teaching Spanish in 1989. Her first job was at Hartford High School, then a year in Coventry. She worked in Groton for three years, and finally ended up in Waterford in 1994.

In Waterford, she taught Spanish in elementary school for 14 years, 4 years at Clark Lane, and finally started at high school in 2010.

At the high school she was only given the opportunity to teach the non-honor level classes and taught Spanish 1-4. She also had to create all the materials for two semester courses: Spanish for Healthcare, which is no longer offered, and Hispanic Studies: The Arts.



After her 30th year at Waterford and her 34th year teaching, she will be retiring in June. She hopes that the impact she had on her students will be long-lasting and meaningful. The 5 things she wants her students to take away are:

1. Anyone can learn another language! The proof is that they have already learned to speak one.  
... English!
2. I would like them to have an open mind about other cultures, ways to live life and tolerance.
3. I want my students to keep trying. We learn the most from our failures, not our successes!
4. That it's important to learn and be able to work with people we don't necessarily like.
5. The key to getting what we want is

consistency in working towards our goals.

In her retirement she will spend time with her husband, Edwin Morales. He is from Puerto Rico and they both speak Spanish and English to each other.

In her free time she enjoys spending time with family and friends, shopping, swimming, walking, hiking and horseback riding –she used to compete in her younger years.

She loves to travel and has traveled to Europe, Central and South America, the Caribbean and Canada. She plans to travel as much as she can when she retires.

Señora Morales explained that the hardest thing about retiring is leaving her students behind. She loves spending time with them and talking about all kinds of topics with them. She loves to know about their lives and what is important to them. She enjoys seeing how creative they can be along with their sense of humor. Señora explains, "I will miss celebrating their accomplishments and trying to help when they are going through a hard time or a heartbreak. I am going to miss my students a lot!"



# Oh, oh, Connor



By: Elizabeth Saucier

**O**n the third floor of WHS is the marine science room. Various tanks containing anything from fish, to lobsters, to seahorses fill the room, and in charge of it all is Michael O'Connor.

O'Connor has always had an interest in marine science. Growing up, he summured at his family's cottage in Cape Cod, Massachusetts. O'Connor and his brother spent their time fishing, boating, and scuba diving.

However, he had not planned a career involving marine science. His initial undergraduate studies at the University of New Hampshire were in mechanical engineering, but O'Connor "realized on day one of Calc III that [he] was not an engineer," and that was when he made the switch to receive his degree in Psychology and Marine Biology.

Following his undergraduate education, O'Connor began work as a researcher at the Shoals Marine lab. The marine science lab was on the Abbleadore Islands off the coast of Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

Over the course of two years, O'Connor participated in a variety of studies including whale migration patterns, lobster population, and hagfish.

The most interesting part of O'Connor's studies was basking sharks. At that time, there was little information surrounding the species, so the group worked to tag and collect samples to learn more.

In order to collect those samples, O'Connor and his team had to jump in the path of the

sharks, keep pace with them, and then grab onto their dorsal fin. While basking sharks are filter feeders and do not pose the risk of attacking humans, the sheer size of these animals is not something to be ignored.

According to the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, a full grown basking shark is upwards of 40 feet in length and weighs more than five tons.

Along with conducting studies, O'Connor managed the facility's educational program, where student groups of all ages visited the labs to learn about marine science. It was during this time that O'Connor made his most important discovery: he loved to teach marine science.

He went back to school and received a second bachelor in environmental earth science from Eastern Connecticut State University, and a teaching certificate and a masters in marine science from Connecticut State University. Eventually he made his way to WHS, starting his first year here in 1993.

When O'Connor first arrived, the only marine science class offered was an





oceanography course of 12 students. His predecessor, Richard Conway, told O'Connor to do whatever he liked with the program. He saw the need for multiple levels of the marine science courses that better fit the students and expanded the program, and began doing so in his second year.

In 2005, the director of the UCONN ECE program reached out to O'Connor and they worked together to pilot UConn's first ever ECE Marine Science class. Now there are around 15 ECE Marine Science classes in Connecticut.

Today, there are four marine science classes offered at the high school: Marine Ecosystems Advanced/Standard, Marine Organisms, and ECE Marine Science. Next year, O'Connor will expand the program again with a unified science class for students who are interested in teaching or in science.

# Fishy Fashion

Each day, O'Connor can be found sporting an ocean themed/related button down shirt. This collection initially began with science related ties that his family would get him for fathers day.



However, O'Connor says that he "realized ties are awful to wear" and he switched to

themed shirts. While he has bought a few of them himself, most were gifts from family members. In total, O'Connor has around 25 of these ocean themed button downs. Among them he has two favorites: a blue shirt with gamefish and another depicting the scene from the Disney Pixar movie Finding Nemo where the school of fish is doing charades.



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# T

# Teachers

## and their SUMMERS

By: Isabella  
Dioquino

Throughout the school year, teachers work to ensure that classes go smoothly and that their students learn the curriculum.

Some teachers have jobs over the summer, while other teachers use their off-time to work on their personal endeavors.

Vice Principal Mandy Batty states that she has been working in the restaurant industry since she was 16. She stopped working in the industry after her daughter was born, though she returned to waitressing around 2017 because she loved it. She currently waitresses at the S&P Oyster in Mystic during the summer.

“It’s always reminded me of teaching in a way because when you’re waitressing, you’re managing [and] meeting the needs of several different people,” Batty continues, “it always kind of reminds me of how we as teachers try and manage classrooms.”

During the summer, science teacher Kimberly Agins works in a small shop in Rhode Island called the Small Axe. They sell clothing, jewelry, incense, instruments, and

owner-made pottery. She works there a few weeks each summer, and she loves it because “I have my own thing again; I’m separate from my kids, which is such a healthy thing to do.”



Additionally, Agins states that every summer for the past six years, her family has gone camping for a week up in Maine at a campground called Hermit Island. She and her daughters work on a summer playlist, and she states, “It’s always like fun, upbeat songs that you can like, roll the window down and belt out the words. Just feel-good kind of songs,” she adds, “Taylor Swift has always made it [on].”

Language teacher Nathan Wheeler states that alongside lacrosse coaching and recruiting this

summer, he teaches two virtual ASL courses at Connecticut College: ASL 1 and ASL 2. This summer will be his third year teaching there. He enjoys teaching the courses over the summer, as he is able to pour all of his energy into them. “It’s a different avenue—teaching online. It’s a nice way to have a different style of teaching,” says Wheeler.

Alongside teaching courses over the summer, Wheeler also likes to travel. This summer, Wheeler states that he and his family would like to travel up to Maine, as well as try to hit the eastern coastline and visit some beaches.

History teacher Chris Gamble owns his own business, which he operates from April to November. It’s called C + Z Lawncare, with the C and Z standing for him and his son’s names, Chris and Zach. He began his business in 2020 and has had it as a “side gig” ever since.

He offers many services, such as mowing, hedge trimming, and wood cutting. Currently, it is just him and his son, Tyler, working. While he works, he enjoys listening to podcasts, such as the “Jocko Podcast” or “Huberman”

podcast. When he retires, he hopes to grow and expand his business.

His business does not affect his vacationing, as he does not vacation over the summer. He's "just not big on vacationing," he states.

English teacher Francis Silvestri used to do landscaping over the summer. However, he had to stop once his kids were born. He states that he would like to return to landscaping, as it was the job he did before teaching, and he enjoys working outside.

Silvestri says that since he doesn't have a summer job, he spends most of his summer with his kids, which he loves doing. "The last five or six summers, I've been a stay-at-home dad," he adds, "I really like being able to spend that much time with my kids." He and his kids love going camping over the summer at a spot in Griswold called Hopeville Pond.

Tracy Moore, assistant principal at Waterford High, states that contractually, she and her administrative colleagues have to work further into the summer than the teachers are required to. Those extra days are for her to do projects, such as scheduling and reworking systems and policies. "I keep a list on my whiteboard of things that I need to work on," she said.

When Moore is not at school in the summer, she states that she enjoys reading, especially

books with strong, female leads. She states that reading is a good escape from work and keeps her off of her phone.

However, just because the teachers aren't physically at school, doesn't mean they aren't still thinking about it. "You can't help but think about 'okay, what lessons do I want to change, how do I want to do things differently?'" Agins states. Batty supports this statement, saying "I don't think there's a single teacher in this world who does nothing related to school over the summer."

Many teachers also do various projects over the summer, such as curriculum revision,

professional development, or even just independently planning for the next year.

"There's always something to do, I think the summertime just gives teachers a little more flexibility," Batty says.



Wheeler



Gamble



Agins



Silvestri

# Mrs. Batty: From Failing Calculus to Vice Principal

By: Evy N.

Amanda Batty has worked at Waterford High School for 24 years. She has taught biology, chemistry, environmental science, forensic science, and anatomy and physiology during her 24 years of teaching at Waterford High.

Mrs. Batty grew up in Ellington, Connecticut. She loved the sciences, even in her early childhood. In high school, she had a chemistry teacher named Judy Puttnam, who she keeps in touch with to this day. Puttnam showed Mrs. Batty how fun chemistry could be and gave her the confidence to study science in college.



Mrs. Batty attended the main UCONN campus in Storrs for her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in the sciences. She also studied at Sacred Heart University for her six-year degree in Educational



Leadership. She has six certifications in biology, chemistry, general sciences, and educational leadership.

In the second semester of her sophomore year at UCONN, she was failing calculus and went to see her advisor for help. The advisor steered her onto the path of education, something she had never considered before. She tried out some exploratory classes and realized that she loved teaching and that she should have been studying education all along. Mrs. Batty says, "Sometimes, your failures are what show you the next direction to go in."

Part of the Neag program, an education program at UCONN, is to have the students go to teach different grades to see which grade they would like to teach. Mrs. Batty always loved more advanced sciences like chemistry

and biology, so she chose to work with high school students. She and Judy Puttnam bonded over their love of the advanced sciences, and Mrs. Batty hoped to make that same kind of connection bond with one of her students.

When she was graduating from UCONN, there was a career fair to introduce the students to different schools. During this fair, Batty would meet Mrs. Becky Amanti, who was the vice principal of Waterford High at the time. Mrs. Batty said she took a liking to Amanti and found herself drawn to the principles of Waterford High School. This became the first and only teaching job she has ever had.

When Batty started working here at Waterford High, she was only 21 years old. She thought the staff was welcoming, and eagerly became a part of Lancer Nation. She had looked at the teachers who had been at WHS a long time and thought they were crazy for staying in one place for so long.

Now, she is that "crazy" teacher. She has stayed so long because she feels like she belongs, both in Lancer Nation and in the Waterford community.



At the end of the 2021-2022 year, all vice principal positions were open for applications--and Mrs. Batty took a chance. She said it felt like the "right time" and that everything aligned for her to step into the role. At the beginning of the 2022-2023 school year, she became vice principal to the ninth and twelfth graders. She said, "I was ready for a new challenge."

Mrs. Batty lives in Groton, but loves the beach at Harkness Memorial State Park. She knew a little about

Waterford because she and friends would visit Waterford for vacation in college and go to the beach. She loves Waterford’s dynamic and diversity as well. She also loves the Quaker Hill area and says that it is “a cute little town.”

Batty loves to work out, whether it be by walking, hiking, or running.

She also loves spending time with her family and friends and her dog. She is an avid reader and loves to travel with her husband, a karate teacher, and daughter, Fitch Junior Karli Batty,

when she can.

Recently, Batty participated in the shadowing program. She went to Great Neck Elementary School during her student’s internship, ate in the cafeteria, and fully immersed herself into everyday student life. She said she felt very “overstimulated” as she ate in the cafeteria. Mrs. Batty says she now has a better understanding of students and how hard their lives can be.

Mrs. Batty is also the administrator that is in charge of the planning

committee for advisory events. Mr. Silvestri, English teacher and another member of the planning committee, says that Mrs. Batty is supportive and helps the committee get permission to do things that push boundaries. “She is willing to stick her neck out there and take some risks.”

Mrs. Batty says her best piece of advice for Waterford students is, “You are here to make mistakes, you are here to learn from those mistakes, and try different things and take those risks.”



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# SUMMER CONCERTS

*By: Maddie Parent*



For many, the months of June, July, and August are a popular time to go to concerts. Although big name stadium shows can be fun, there are many close by opportunities in and around Waterford to enjoy local entertainment. Order takeout, bring a blanket, and spend a free summer night supporting Southeastern Connecticut's music scene.

The Waterford Beach Summer Concert series will be returning this year from June through August. Enjoy different local artists every Wednesday night from 6-8PM on Waterford Beach Park's green. The series is a great opportunity to support local bands and enjoy food and yard games. Parking after 5pm is free and no admission fee is required.

Esker Point Beach in Groton hosts the annual Summer Soundwaves concert series, one of the most popular in Southeastern CT during the summer. Starting on June 20th, the series will run every Thursday from 6-8PM through August 15th. Beach parking is available for \$10 per car. Scheduled bands change weekly, check out Facebook or [wailingcity.com](http://wailingcity.com) for

more information.

Find the widest selection of local and out of area music groups throughout the entire summer at Ocean Beach Park in New London CT. Famously featuring tribute groups including Billy Joel, Prince, Elton John, Grateful Dead, and ABBA tributes, Ocean Beach's summer concerts are a must-see this year. Details on parking and performance schedules can be found on [visitnewlondon.org](http://visitnewlondon.org) under "Ocean Beach Park Entertainment Schedule", or on the OBP Facebook.

More weekly concerts will also take place at McCook's Park Beach in Niantic CT will take place on Wednesdays and/or Fridays throughout the whole summer. Wednesday concerts will take place 6-8pm on the main beach, and Friday shows will take place in the McCook's bandshell from 7-9pm. The McCook's summer concert series will feature a wide variety of genres, so make sure to check the McCook's Beach Park Facebook page for further details.

Norwich's Rock the Docks music series will take place at Howard Brown Park from 6-8PM on Wednesdays. Admission is free and bands vary weekly. The Au-



gust 7th concert will feature a Taylor Swift Tribute band!

Another opportunity to see local bands, especially smaller indie groups is at the Telegraph Autonomous Zone Record Store on Bank Street in New London. The Telegraph has a wide selection of vinyls, CDs, and posters, perfect for any music fan. However they also regularly host local artists-stop by to shop and listen! To keep an eye out for upcoming shows, follow [@telegraphnl](https://www.instagram.com/telegraphnl) on Instagram.

Cure boredom this summer by showing support to local artists and bands for little to no cost! Bring friends, food, and enjoy a relaxing summer night listening to live music.

# Healthy Snacks

BY KAYLA KELLY

Here at WHS, a snack is an essential component of every student's day, whether it is at 8AM during the first block or 2:10PM during the last block. Snacks become a lifeline during long days of classes and extracurricular activities, providing the necessary energy boost to stay focused and productive. It's important for students to choose snacks that are nutritious and satisfying to fuel their bodies and minds throughout the day.

In a study conducted by the British National Library of Medicine, scientists surveyed 100 students and assigned half unhealthy snacks like chips and chocolate to eat and the other half healthy snacks focusing on fresh fruit and vegetables. Surveys then tracked the students' moods following their snacking. The students who ate unhealthy snacks reported increased symptoms of anxiety, depression, and stress compared to the students who consumed only unhealthy snacks.



Healthy snacks can help bridge the gap in between meals, and prevent hunger and fatigue. Snacks also aid in cognitive function, memory function, mood, and concentration. Healthy snack habits in school also teaches students healthy decision making and helps create autonomy over their decisions after High school.

A Waterford High School, students have spoken, and their favorite healthy snacks are:

- Carrots and Ranch, preferred by Emma Smathers who loves the crunchy texture and tangy flavor. As Senior Emma Smathers puts it, "Snacking on Carrots and ranch helps me stay focused during long classes, and I feel good knowing I'm making a healthy choice."

- Dried fruit, Yana Abramova go-to snack providing a natural source of sweetness and energy to keep her going throughout the day. Yana Abromva says, 'Dried Mango slices are my Favorite snack because they're sweet, chewy, and give me a natural energy boost to power through my busy day.'

-Vegetable chips( baked,not fried), a popular choice among students looking for a satisfying chip option.

-Yogurt bowls, Maddie Parent prefers yogurt bowls as her go-to snack, adding healthy carbs and protein from Nature Valley's protein granola and

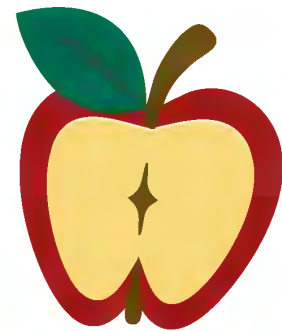
antioxidants from fresh fruits to keep her full.

- Fresh fruit, with apples, bananas, and grapes being top picks. Mr. Steady prefers fruit as his favorite healthy snacks for their antioxidants, fiber, and great flavor.

- Granola bars, a convenient and energy boosting option. Farrah Kelly-Driss prefers the Nature Valley Chocolate peanut butter WW bars for their protein and taste.

-Protein bars, an easy way to increase your protein intake while in school and satisfy a sweet craving Simon K.C prefers Quest protein bars.

Prioritizing healthy snacks, students at Waterford High School are developing essential habits for a lifetime of well-being success and a healthy future. So what's your go-to healthy snack?





# A Year To Remember 2023

After another successful school year, we say goodbye to our 64th class at Waterford High School. We wish you all the best of luck with your future endeavors.

- List of Events:
- Winter Concert
  - Boys at Homecoming
  - Signing
  - Junior Prom
  - Lancer, Whale
  - Senior Superlative Night
  - Turkey Trot
  - Dance Show
  - Basketball Celebration
  - Girls Rehearsal
  - Spirit Week
  - Waterford



# In Review -2024

at Waterford Highschool we say good  
High School. Farewell to our seniors and  
in your futures. Until next year WHS!

### Events:

- g ▪ Pep Rally ▪ Tennis Girls ▪ Seniors
- ers, Saints Art Show ▪ Seniors at Lunch
- rot ▪ Cultural Night ▪ ECC ▪ Fall Fest
- on ▪ Black History Month ▪ First Mean
- HS Cheerleaders ▪ Football Game



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[brandy@rbapparelplus.com](mailto:brandy@rbapparelplus.com)

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Wednesday .....	9 AM-5:30 PM
Thurssday.....	9 AM-5:30 PM
Friday .....	9 AM-5:30 PM
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## ***Classic Mixed Green Salad***

### ***Pizzas***

#### ***Mozzarella***

*Mozzarella cheese, red sauce and fresh basil.*

#### ***Pepperoni***

*Mozzarella cheese with a pepperoni topping.*

#### ***BBQ Chicken***

*Wood fired chicken, cheddar, hickory smoked bacon, red onion, topped with an unbelievable BBQ sauce.*

#### ***Golden Yukon Potato***

*Thinly sliced potato, hickory smoked bacon, sour cream, parmesan cheese, mozzarella, oregano, and white truffle oil.*

#### ***Sausage Cacciatore***

*Crushed plum tomatoes, fresh Italian sausage, caramelized onion, and Alfordo peppers.*

#### ***Summer Wind***

*Vine ripe tomatoes, olive oil, sun-dried tomato basil pesto, fresh mozzarella, finished with a balsamic reduction.*

### ***Dessert***

#### ***Cannolis***

***Lemon and watermelon gelato***

*Includes setup, cleanup, plates, napkins, and silverware.*

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