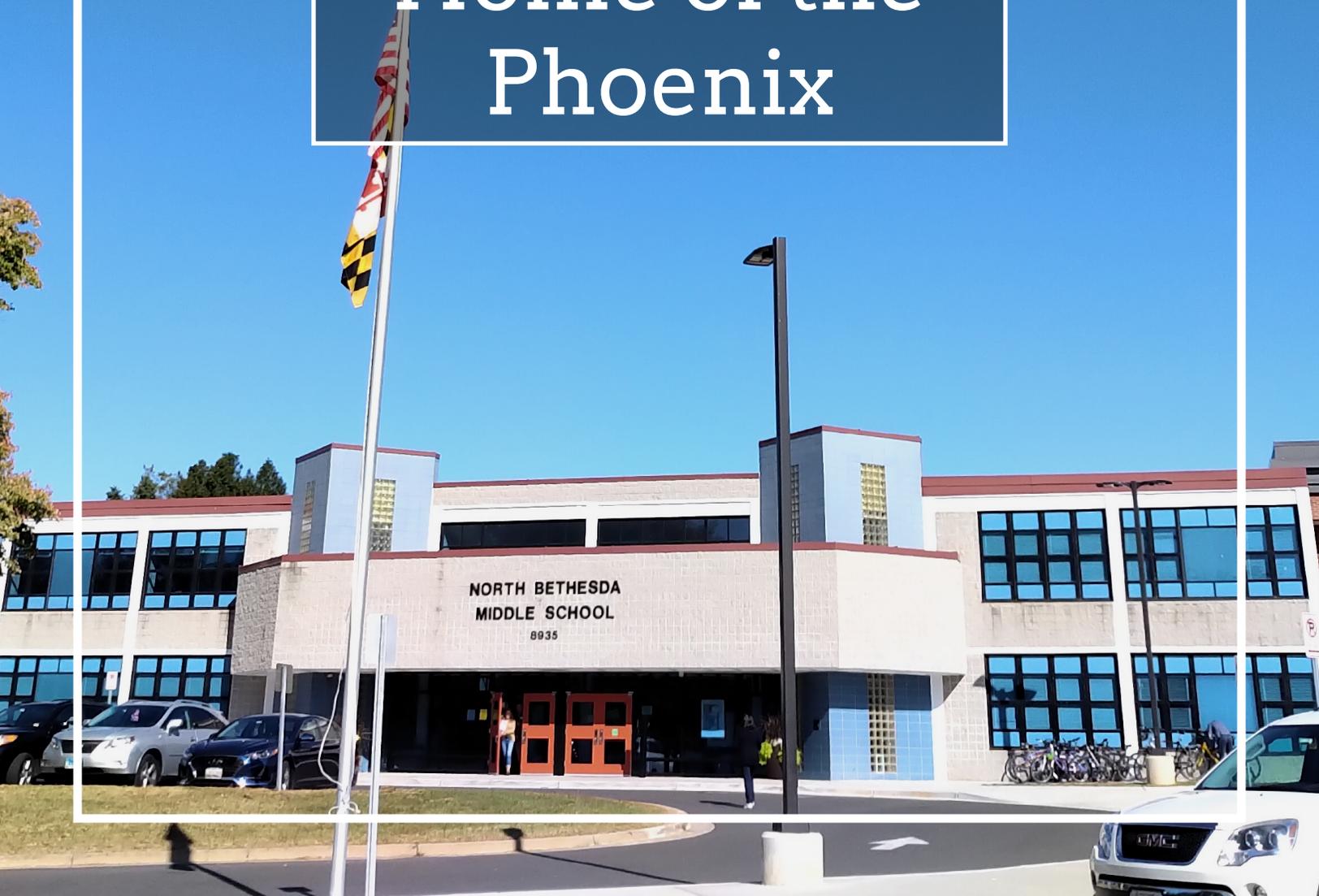


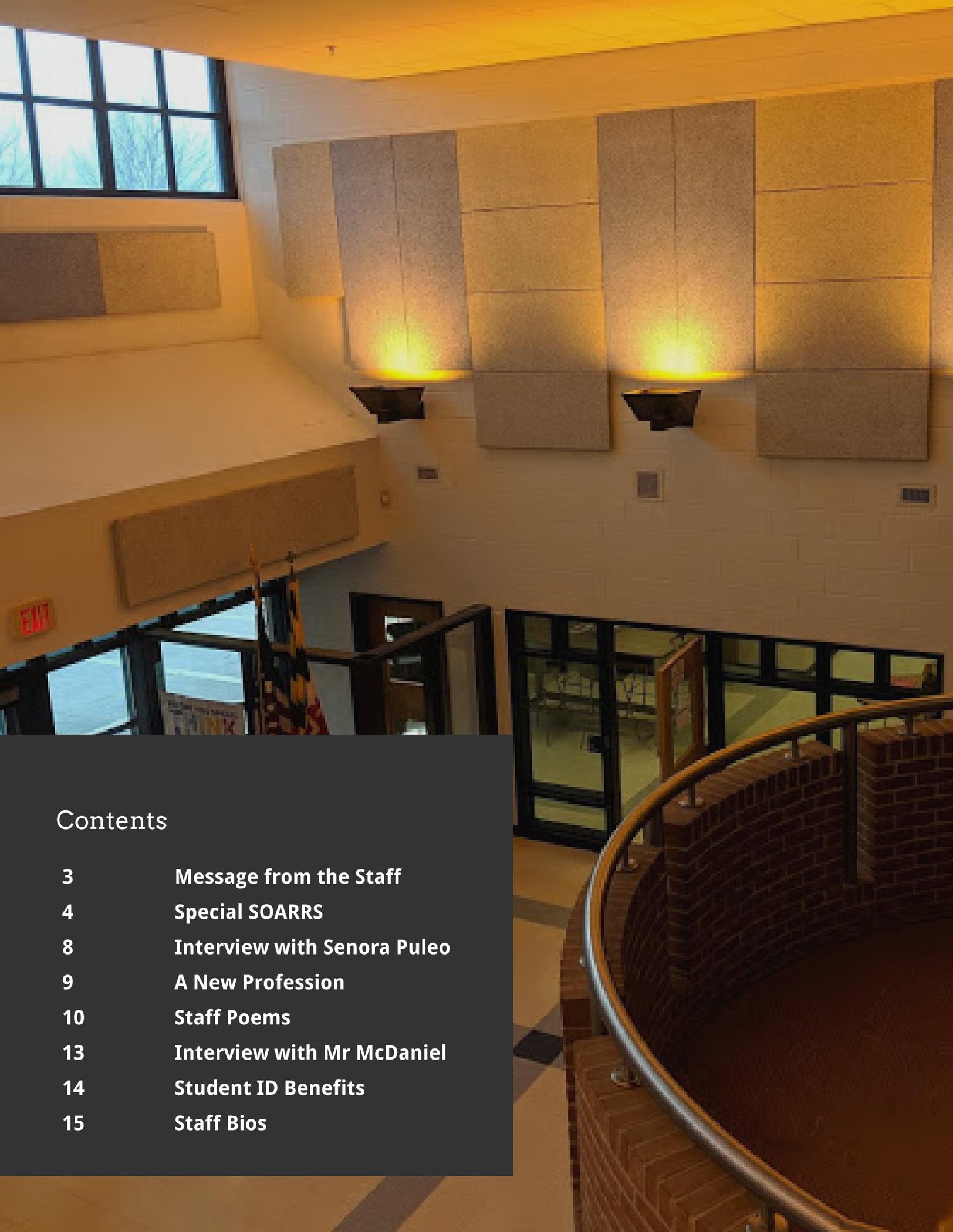
# Polaris

## North Bethesda Middle School

Issue #4 | Spring 2020

Home of the  
Phoenix





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## From the Staff of Polaris

### *Staff, Polaris 2020*

Here is our first issue of the year. In this issue, we focused on new changes to our school, including new staff, new clubs and new practices in our school. Look for articles on special SOARRs, changes in the way kids have fun while preparing for their future, the benefits of Student IDs, and interviews with the staff and faculty of the school.

Along the way we also played with words, writing Pass-it-Back stories, and lots of poetry. We especially liked writing Twooishes - poems limited to 140 characters. You should try this out!

Speaking of trying out -- if you like to write and like to share your writing with others, try out one of our meetings.. The Writers Club meets every Wednesday in C205 and is open to all students at NBMS.

# *Special SOUTHERNS*

By Seyun Park



**T**his year, a new system of SOARRs was implemented at our school. In years past, at the end of seventh period, students would head to their lockers, get their stuff, and go to their SOARR teacher, one specific teacher, and would receive time to work on homework, long term projects, or read. With the start of the 2020 school year, students now go to different teachers depending on the day. For example, on Monday, students go to their period one teacher for SOARR, on Tuesday, their period two teacher, and so on, until the cycle starts again, and the students go back to their period one teacher for SOARR. This gives students an opportunity to meet with all of their teachers each rotation.

Along with the new implementation of this system, other things have come to our SOARRs, mainly, special SOARRs. On special SOARR days, depending on the type of SOARR, students will go to one of their teachers

(depending on what SOARR day it is) and will participate in a special SOARR, such as a lesson about our school values (C.A.R.E.), a lesson about mindfulness, or a lesson on study skills. Sometimes, students also have social SOARRs, where students sign up to go to a specific teacher's classroom for that afternoon, and are able to participate in activities like playing board games, dancing, and playing computer games, whilst socializing with friends.

These special SOARRs originated from the *Be Well 365* program initiated by the county. The program aimed to have students "become positive members of the school and broader community, manage their emotions, build academic and social resilience, identify and access support for themselves or a friend, peacefully resolve conflict, and make positive decisions" Last year in the spring, our school was directed to implement programs as part of our school improvement plan to

"foster, develop, and nurture authentic, meaningful relations" through the use of mindfulness practices, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), which is our schools C.A.R.E. the program, and community and restorative circles.

***"I think mindfulness is important, but it shouldn't be forced. It should be an optional thing"***

*-North Bethesda Student*

Although the social SOARRs have received positive feedback from students, the other special SOARRs such as mindfulness and C.A.R.E. lesson SOARRs were not as popular. In various student interviews conducted, students explained their problems with the special SOARRs. One student said of mindfulness SOARRs, "I

think mindfulness is important, but it shouldn't be forced. It should be an optional thing," Many other students have expressed similar concerns that the special SOARRs take away time from their homework. Another student said "C.A.R.E. lessons don't give us time to do our homework, which is the whole point of SOARR," whilst another said "...mindfulness is important. However, in SOARR, it is more stressful than relaxing. I want to get my homework done, and the way mindfulness SOARRs are conducted is frustrating..."

Despite problems some in the student body have raised, there is evidence that the special SOARRs that are being conducted are beneficial to students. Many studies have proven that mindfulness is beneficial to the mind and body, and helps reduce stress and anxiety levels. A study conducted by the Center for Education Policy Research at Harvard University, and MIT, found that, among a group of 6th graders in Boston, those who practiced 8 weeks of mindfulness were less stressed than a control group that had not participated. At the end of the eight

***"CARE lessons don't give us time do our homework, which is the whole point of SOARR"***

***- North Bethesda Student***

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***"Sometimes, it is how its framed, and with more understanding, people would be more embracing."***

***-Principal Dr. Smith***

weeks, half of the students who participated in mindfulness also volunteered to have their brains scanned. The results of the scan found that the amygdalas, the part of the brain that controls emotion, responded less to images of fearful images, compared to before undergoing the 8-week course. This suggested that mindfulness helped the brain cope with negative stimuli, and stay focused on the work in front of them. Although students claim that mindfulness causes them more stress, as it takes away time to do homework, the evidence points otherwise, showing that mindfulness will help students focus more on their work. In addition, other types of SOARRs, such as community circles are also proven to help students with peer-to-peer relationships. According to the United Federation of Teachers "In a classroom circle, all members feel valued and all members have a voice in improving the situation...In turn, we help our students develop

empathy for one another as well as an understanding of how their behavior affects their classmates. As students develop a greater understanding of other people's feelings, they develop stronger social and emotional skills."

Our principal, Dr. Smith, believes many students are having trouble adjusting as many people just don't cope well with change, and because of the fact that the special SOARRs are being framed in a bad light. In an interview with her, she said, "Sometimes, it is how it's framed, and with more understanding, people would be more embracing"

Although the new special SOARRs have faced resistance from students, there is evidence that supports the idea that participation in these SOARRs brings benefits to students such as increased focus and less stress, as well as greater peer-to-peer relations. In addition, with time, students will be able to adjust to the new system and will be more understanding of the benefits.

*Where do YOU stand on this issue?*



Students participating in a social SOARR.

## Interview with Senora Puleo

By: Liliana Katz-Hollander, Audrey Stelzig

Mrs. Puleo, a Spanish teacher here at NB, has taught at many schools, such as Quince Orchard High School, Seneca Valley High School, and Tilden Middle School. At these schools, she has not just taught Spanish, although it is her favorite, but also ESOL, reading intervention classes, third grade, and Pre-K.

### ***What other schools have you taught at?***

I've taught at Quince Orchard High school, Seneca Valley High School, and Tilden Middle School

### ***What is your favorite color?***

Purple

### ***Why do you teach?***

I teach because I love working with kids and I love the Spanish language

### ***If you could go on vacation anywhere in the world, where would it be?***

Hawaii

### ***If you could have any career, what would it be?***

Travel Journalist. I could travel the world and visit interesting destinations

### ***What is your favorite spanish-speaking country?***

Mexico



### ***Cats or dogs?***

Cats

### ***Would you rather meet a Harry Potter main character or a Star Wars character?***

Harry Potter

### ***What is your favorite food?***

Ravioli

### ***What is your favorite part of Spanish?***

Culture and history

### ***What is your favorite holiday?***

Christmas

### ***What other subject would you teach?***

I would teach ESOL, reading intervention classes, third grade, Pre-K, but my favorite is Spanish.





Kids playing outside of school after dismissal. Recently, fun pastimes have changed for kids.

## A Popular New Profession

By: Mireya Gutierrez-Micallef

**A**s of recently, there have been new clubs popping up around North Bethesda such as the Super Smash Bros. club and Minecraft Modding.

These clubs offer fun ways to interact with others while at the same time playing games you like. While these clubs are definitely a fun way to end the day, the question remains, why were these clubs not brought to NB sooner? It could be, perhaps, due to the recent rise in video game popularity.

Video games have always been considered a fun pastime for people of all ages, but up until recently, children have been encouraged to play outside rather than stay on a screen all day, so why would parents send their children to after-school clubs where the main focus is to play video games? The answer is simple: video games can be more than just a fun game.

On July 28 of 2019, 16 year old Fortnite player, Kyle Giersdorf, won 3 million dollars at the Fortnite World Cup. Some would consider this the spark of a whole new take on video games, and Kyle isn't the only one becoming rich off of video games. Many gamers play on platforms such as Youtube, Twitch, and even Facebook, and consider it a legitimate job, as they make a lot of money off of it. One twitch gamer, Tyler Blevins, makes \$500,000 a month just by playing video games in front of people. It's not just playing video games that's helping people make money, either. Gamers can be paid over \$50 an hour to tutor children in playing video games, so that they can win money, and perhaps even get a scholarship. A software developer in Texas says he pays for video game lessons for his twelve year old son because, "...he hopes it will set up his son for scholarships down the road" (AJC News).

## Dialogue Poem

Dialogue poems, or poems for two voices, are a kind of conversation between two distinct speakers, real or imaginary. The conversation can be between historical figures like George Washington and Thomas Jefferson or Susan B Anthony and Shirley Chisholm. The conversation can be between a child and a parent, sibling, teacher, or coach, real or fictional. Often they discuss ideas across generations or debate conflicting ideas, yet despite their differences they hold some ideas in common. Notice how the lines of the dialogue move you from one speaker to the next. Notice also where the speakers are in agreement. Try it yourself!

By Nia Johnson

**I am Sad**

**I am Mad**

**The tears stream down my blue face**

**The tears steam off my red face**

**What's the point? It won't make it right**

**I don't care! I'm not going down without a fight**

**It's depressing that you're so *aggressive***

**It's agitating that you're so *passive***

**I don't think it's worth the trouble,**

**The world will die eventually**

**And that's why I'm angry,**

**Why think then when you can think now?**

**You can punch them in the face. Pow!**

**And then what? Feel happy?**

**You shouldn't waste your energy,**

**On something dumb like punch- Ow!**

**See? You've made me mad**

**Now I'm more sad**

**Shouldn't you be glad?**

**Shouldn't you be glad?**

## Warning Poem

Modeled on Jenny Joseph's "Warning" poem, which begins "When I am an old woman..."  
Read the model, then use the template and your ideas to create a poem about how you will face growing old.

By Aurelia Withers

When I am an old woman I shall wear green gloves  
With a purple shirt which doesn't go well and doesn't suit me.  
And I shall spend my pension on a live tiger and golden toilet  
And a diamond encrusted toothbrush, and say we've no money for silverware.

I shall play in the mud when I'm older.  
And jump in puddles in Kansas and steal puppies.  
And only eat cake in Kansas.  
And make up for the good behavior of my youth.  
I shall run in the street.  
And pick on my brother.  
And learn to argue.



## Twooish! Poems

A twooish is a poem of exactly 140 characters, the limit for a Twitter message. These poems are a new form being shared by writers in on Twitter and Instagram. It does not need to rhyme and may not have a beat. They can be compared to the Haiku, but do not require a specific number of lines or syllable count.

This form of poetry can be on any topic, but as in all poetry, they use language to create images, and provoke feelings. Some Twooish poems spur activism, protest or call for social reform, some relate creative expression. The overall goal of the writer is the same, to get the reader to see the world in a new way, with fresh eyes and hearts.

Try writing your own twooish! Use the word count tool to help you stay within the character limit of 140 keystrokes (including spaces).

By Bella Rose Liu

6th graders dance in a dark room  
They play ping pong & basketball in the gym  
There's Italian Ice, cookies, chips, and popcorn  
They all have fun

By Aurelia Withers

I had a birdy  
He sat on my head  
And do my hair for me  
He would play with his friends  
And fly around free  
But on Halloween  
The kitty had a treat

By Abigia Samuel

Guns, they are so helpful but are damaged  
They help us with war, they kill people  
Our loved ones could die because of these  
monsters  
THEY HURT

Drugs do they help you, or kill you  
You are hurt, I understand, let us help you  
We care, don't hurt yourself  
Drugs don't help people...  
Release



## Interview with Mr. McDaniels, thoughts on NBMS

By: Marie Palayer, Aurelia Withers

**1. Has your perspective of the school changed from when you first came to this school?**

Yes, my perspective changed. I first came here three and a half years ago, and it was my first time working at a school, let alone a middle school. I had a lot to learn. In my first year, it seemed like the students were under a lot of stress, so I tried to greet the students everyday. The more I

greeted them, the more students responded to me each year. The first year, it took six or seven months to make the students say Hi back. This year, there still seems to be unkind behavior, so we try to help them change how they treat each other.

**2. What physically changed about the school?**

Physically, the school has changed. For example, there was a cafeteria expansion and 18 new rooms were added for the teachers. When we had the portables, everyone worked together, even when it was unpleasant.

**3. What is different about 6th, 7th, and 8th graders in your opinion?**

The students grow up, from the first day to the last day. Emotionally and physically. Socially, and they matured. I'm able to talk to people from sixth, seventh and eighth grade.

**4. Why do the assistant principals change from grade to grade?**

It enables us to follow the grade. It goes sixth, seventh, eighth, then back again.

**5. Did your expectations go higher than 6th grade?**

Oh yes. My children are grown, and I found that I have liked my children as they got older. The students are like my children.

**6. Which grade do you like better?**

Each year I move to a different grade. I like the grade that I have that year.

**7. When faced with situations where students are being bullied how do you decide on what to do?**

I listen to everybody. I look at the evidence. We look over the student code of conduct. We also go over the consequences. This is something that is very unhappy.

# STUDENT ID BENEFITS

What can you do with them?

By Abigia Samuel

*Everyone at North Bethesda has a student ID, the little card with so much information. It can do lots of things like identify yourself, get access to NB athletics games, or allow you to ride on buses for free, but there are even more ways to use them.*

## Adidas:

Most people own Adidas, it is one of the most popular brands for clothing and shoes. Their brand can be really expensive, but what if I told that there is way to save money, but still get what you want. Guess what? There is! Adidas is letting you use your student ID's to get a 15% discount and free shipping. For instants access to this discounts simply register on their website and verify you student status with UNIDAYS.

## Chipotle

Food is a very common thing people like. Chipotle is one of the fast food restaurants that gives a student discounts, if they show a student ID. Chipotle is offering a 10% discount to students with valid ID. Contact your nearest Chipotle restaurant and ask them if they offer this promotion.

## Amazon:

Amazon is a minefield of treasure, using student ID's are possible but only if as student signs up to be a prime member. A student can sign up on trial for 3-6 months. During a trial students can be eligible to receive a discount on Amazon Prime. This includes all Prime benefits, for four years. Prime benefits include FREE two-day shipping on millions of items, unlimited streaming of movies and TV shows, access to hundreds of playlists through Prime Music, and access to unlimited photo storage with Prime Photos. Unless you cancel, at the end of the fourth year of your Prime Student membership. Your subscription will automatically renew its membership anniversary date into a full paid subscription for Amazon Prime at the-current rate.



# Staff Bios

*M.E.*

ME was born in Egypt on November 16. A year later she moved to America to grow up. She was a very intelligent child. In kindergarten she received the honor that she knew how to read and write-ish. In second grade, she wrote her first article. In fifth grade, she wrote a 14 page story. Currently she is in her first year of middle school.

*M.G.M*

M.G.M. is an 8th grader at North Bethesda. She loves reading, writing, and languages. She started writing trashy fantasy novels with her friend in 3rd grade and has significantly improved from there, focusing on all types of genres as well. In her free time, she enjoys playing music, running, and ice skating. She is a crazy cat lady who loves to binge watch netflix with her friends (specifically The A List and Stranger Things)!

*C.G.*

CG is a 7th grade student at North Bethesda Middle School. She moved to Bethesda MD from Gaithersburg MD in November of 2018. She plans on getting her cosmetologist license when she goes to high school, in a program at Thomas Edison. Cosmetology is doing hair, makeup, and nails but her main focus is Hair Makeup. Then, when she goes to college she will be working to get her masters and business degree. She will start her business in college so when she graduates she can devote all her time

towards it. She had this goal for her future since the third grade. Some of her interest now is doing hair and makeup, and writing stories.

*N.J.*

N.J is a student at NBMS and is a new member of the writing club. She likes reading and writing stories in her spare time. She also likes drawing, playing video games and going on the internet. She moved from Silver Spring about 3 years ago to Bethesda, and lives with her brother and mother.



*L.K.H*

LKH is a seventh grader at North Bethesda Middle School. She loves to read, write, draw, act, sing, and annoy her crazy friends. Her favorite things to write are poems and fiction stories. She is crazy, sparkly, enthusiastic, and smart. Her favorite food is Greek Food, specifically Spanakopita. L's favorite types of books are fiction, specifically fantasy and realistic fiction. She is talkative, funny, loud, hardworking, and outgoing. In her spare time, she reads, draws, and talks to her friends. She is friends with a crazy cat lady.

*B.L.*

BL, a 7th grade student at North Bethesda. She used to live in Iowa and moved to Maryland. She lived in Gaithersburg for a year before moving to North Bethesda. She lives with her parents and her two dogs. She spends most of her time hanging out with friends and playing with her two dogs. She enjoys visiting her family in Virginia and California. In the future, she wants to be something in law.

*M.M*

M.M is a 6th grader at North Bethesda. She enjoys basic necessities such as eating, sleeping, and wasting her life away in front of electronic entertainment. She also finds entertainment tormenting her 3 kittens by dressing them up in stupid costumes and having photoshoots, which is not technically classified as a form of psychopathic behavior. She enjoyed writing the 5th-grade newspaper at her elementary school, and decided that contributing to *Polaris* would be a worthwhile project to pool her not-quite creativity into. In her free time she enjoys singing, doodling meaningless things, and annoying her two little sisters. She currently lives in Kensington with her family and computer.



*M.P.*

MP is a 7th grader at North Bethesda Middle School. She lives in Bethesda Maryland with her parents, brother and pet. She spends most of time doing her work and drawing. She also enjoys playing with her dog who's a golden retriever. She doesn't know what she wants to be in the future, but hopes it's a high-paying job.

*M.S.*

Meet M, a 7th grader at North Bethesda. She has a dog named Ivy, an 18-year-old brother, and an interest in art. She likes to listen to music, play video games, and hang out with friends. M likes to draw a variety of things, and write or imagine stories based on them. She has a creative mind and are very social. She also like theater and participates in the school play.

*A.S.*

A.S. is a 7th grader at NBMS, and a member of Science Olympiad. She works hard at violin, and has been playing for 6 years. She has been swimming for as long as she can

remember, and plays soccer on a team with a few of her friends. She started writing and drawing stories with her friends in about 3rd grade, and has improved not only her drawing, but also her writing skill. She applied and was accepted into the Takoma Park Math and Science Magnet Program, but declined. She is trying to pursue her dream of becoming a medical researcher by applying for the Blair Magnet Program next year. She lives in Kensington with her parents, brothers, and dog. She is excited to rejoin the NBMS Writers Club and work on Polaris this year.



*S.P*

SP, a seventh grader at North Bethesda, is a cellist in MCYO, and a volunteer at the Kensington Historical Society. In his free time, he enjoys playing tennis, following national and local politics, and writing about super boring things. This is his second year with Polaris.

*A.W.*

A is a 7th grade student at North Bethesda Middle School, she lives in Bethesda Maryland with her mom, dad, older brother, and her many pets. She spends most of her time drawing, longboarding, and hiking. She also

enjoys spending time with her many pets, which includes two dogs, one cat, one bird, one gecko, and five fish. Because of her creative spirit she has always wanted to have a job that gets her thinking and working with her hands so she hopes to become a structural engineer when she is an adult. She is also a quarter Ecuadorian and french from her mother's side of the family and the rest of Caucasian from her father's side of the family.

*A.S.*

A.S is a student in NBMS. She never cares what people think about her, making her confident about what she does. She loves to read, and she especially likes Harry Potter. Her favorite class is history. She is very open-minded. If she has a question she makes sure she can find an answer that makes sense. She gives great advice like if you see someone being a bully, stop it. Even though you might be sacred (like most people are) it could change someone's life. She is a loyal person. She is very persistent even if someone said you can't do it, she will do it. She is very hardworking, she studies hard to make sure she gets straight A's. She is a little overprotective of her friends and family. She makes sure that no one gets hurt. She is very loving. A.S is a wonderful student.



# Polaris

## Thank You to All Our Staff Members!

**Writers: Mayah Battle, Claire Barnett, Claire Blackman, Ilse Blume, Emma Bridges, Mirnan Elag, Vanessa Garcia, Daphna Goldstein, Mireya Gutierrez-Micallef, Ellen Johns, Cecilia Johnson, Nia Johnson, Liliana Katz-Hollander, Claire Kuemmerle, Berkley Linton, Bella Rose Liu, Molly McAlvannah, Angel Melgar, Marie Palayer, Dexter Purvis, Abigia Samuel, Ada Shin, Margaret Smith, Audrey Stelzig, and Aurelia Withers**

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**Principal: Dr. AnneMarie Smith**

**Come tell your Story**

**We Meet Every Wednesday in C203**