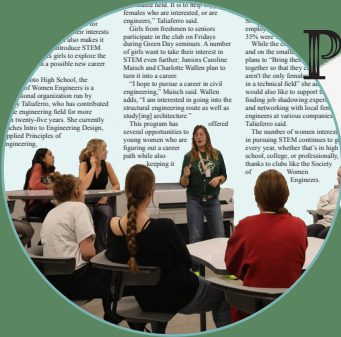




De Soto High School
De Soto, Kansas
Volume 54, Issue 2
Dec. 2024



PG 3

UNDER

PG 6



PG 18



PG 23



Josi Kral sits as a passenger on the golf cart as Kara Steen drives Photo by Kasha Kemnitz

PG 8-9



THE

TREE

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PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Senior Lucy Brandmeyer sings during this years fall musical, *Mary Poppins*. Photo by Jannelle Conley

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DHS' SOCIETY OF WOMEN ENGINEERS OFFERS OPPURTUNITIES FOR GIRLS IN STEM

MADDIE HELLERICH

ONLINE CO-EDITOR

In today's world, the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics, more commonly known as STEM, are constantly shaping our future, as well as how we perceive the world and the environment that surrounds us. Despite the growing opportunities in STEM, young women continue to be underappreciated.

High school is a critical time for young ladies to discover their interests and capabilities, which also makes it the perfect time to introduce STEM. It also encourages girls to explore the subject or even a possible new career path.

At De Soto High School, the Society of Women Engineers is a professional organization run by Nancy Taliaferro, who has contributed to the engineering field for more than twenty-five years. She currently teaches Intro to Engineering Design, Applied Principles of Engineering,

Drafting/CAD, and Architecture/CAD. Her experience in the engineering field sparked inspiration for adding the program to DHS.

"Recent growth in female students enrolling in engineering, drafting/CAD, principles of applied engineering and other courses has brought about a need to support this minority group in a mostly male-dominated field. It is to help support females who are interested, or are engineers," Taliaferro said.

Girls from freshmen to seniors participate in the club on Fridays during Green Day seminars. A number of girls want to take their interest in STEM even further; Juniors Caroline Maisch and Charlotte Wallen plan to turn it into a career.

"I hope to pursue a career in civil engineering," Maisch said. Wallen adds, "I am interested in going into the structural engineering route as well as study[ing] architecture."

This program has offered several opportunities to young women who are figuring out a career path while also keeping it

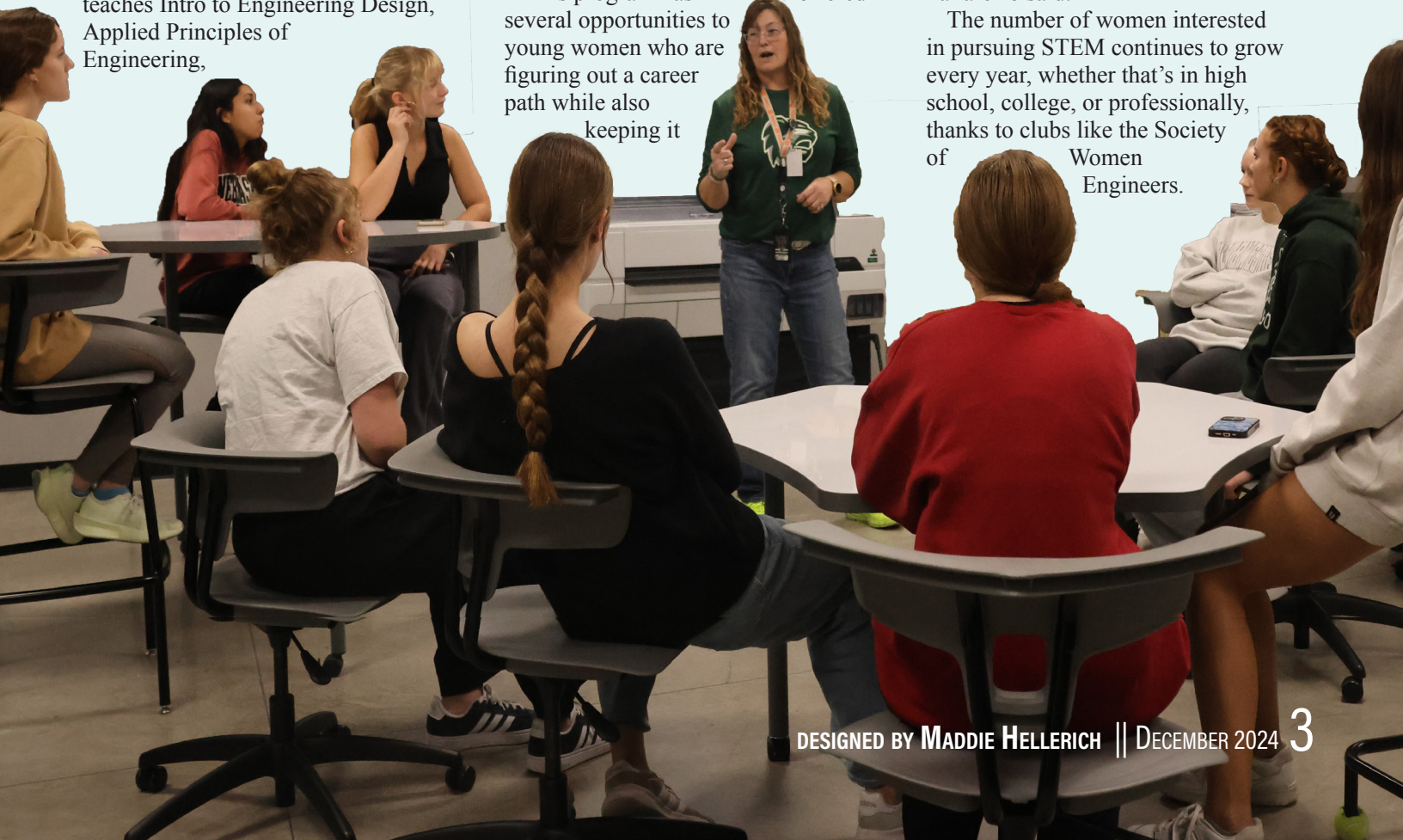
entertaining.

"My favorite part about the STEM club is being able to have a community of girls who are also interested in engineering. It's been pretty hard because, in the vast majority of my engineering classes, I have been one of the only girls," Maisch said.

In a field that is known to pertain to men, the Society of Women Engineers invites women of all ages to come together and share a variety of ideas. Studies have shown 65% of those employed in these fields are men and 35% were women.

While the club is still relatively new and on the smaller side, Taliaferro plans to "Bring them [the girls] together so that they can see they aren't the only females interested in a technical field" she adds, "We would also like to support them in finding job shadowing experiences and networking with local female engineers at various companies." Taliaferro said.

The number of women interested in pursuing STEM continues to grow every year, whether that's in high school, college, or professionally, thanks to clubs like the Society of Women Engineers.



CLUBBIN' AT DE SOTO

KAYLA TOLLY

OPINION EDITOR



ART CLUB

Art Club started several years ago when Mrs. Wilkens was in charge of it and it was started to allow students additional time in the art room to explore artmaking on a deeper level in a fun and relaxed environment. This club allows students to explore their creative process with a variety of art materials at all levels of artmaking experience. They meet Thursday 3-4:30, the club is a safe space, where you refine individual skills in a stress-free environment. Get to hangout with friends and make art, choose your art materials, and you can participate in other activities or sports without the worry of getting kicked out.



MODEL UN

Model UN Started when Mrs. Crainshaw reached out to Bella and Lucy Guess their junior year. They were a part of the club at Mill Valley, had competitive success, and enjoyed it enough to say yes to the offer of starting the club. The club started in the Fall of 2023. They had their first competition in April of 2024, as there is one tournament they go to a year, the next one will be April of 2025. They meet every Tuesday or Wednesday, depending on which is a white day, every week. Model UN is a club where the goal is to essentially roleplay as a country and pass a resolution. There are 5 general assemblies, and so the resolution would be related to that topic. Within those general assembly's students emulate the real United Nations through sharing the research they did in preparation and giving various speeches.



ENVIRONMENTAL CLUB

Madelyn Neeland and You-Ha Kim found out that Mrs. Moran would be available to sponsor the club, and had a list of people who would be interested in our club to prove that we had something that would be important to our school. It started in the 2023-24 school year, but they started planning and finding a sponsor teacher for our club in the 2022-23 school year. You-Ha was seriously concerned about the increasing onslaught of negative climate news, and Madelyn agreed with her that starting an Environmental Club would be a good way to increase participation and awareness about nature. Generally meet 2 times a month during seminar. Entirely student-led, so they are very flexible in our plans



GAMEBOARD CLUB

A student proposed the club and asked if Mrs. Morgenstern would be the sponsor, and it's been going ever since even though he graduated and was started in 2019. The student wanted a way for kids to socialize that was low commitment and low stress, something for kids to do that wouldn't be as stressful as a sport, it's free, no physical, no uniform, no skill, anybody can join. They meet every Tuesday 3-4pm. Kids of all grades and all interests gather and play board games and play anything from guess who to chess and love card games, our interests vary, we had a monopoly game that had been going the whole year in 2019 and Covid shut down school and when we came back we picked up right where we left off.



AT DE SOTO HIGH SCHOOL, WE HAVE SEVEN CLUBS RANGING FROM YOUR TYPICAL BOOK CLUB TO A CLUB THAT TALKS ABOUT OUR ENVIRONMENT.



BOOK CLUB

Book club started as a movie to book club where they would read the book that was a movie or about to have a movie, then they switched to a project lit book club to bring diversity to the club. Then after covid they switched to bringing your own book and discussing it. Book club has been a club since the late 2000's. Book club was started because Ms. Sosna and Ms. Sweet had an interest in starting a book club as well as some students. They meet 1-2 times a month during seminar in the library. Every student reads any book of their choice, each student takes about 2 minutes to talk about what they are reading (without spoilers). Usually, baked goods are also involved.



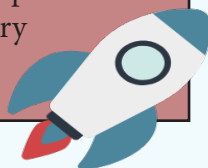
WILDSIDE

The club got started as an add on/transition from the original pep club. Admin wanted to combine assembly planning and events with the student section. Wildside officially started last school year, (2023). The school was looking for more student involvement with assembly, student sections and overall student engagement within the school. They meet about once a week on a regular schedule, but when assemblies are upcoming, they meet about three times a week. Wildside is the heart of energy throughout DHS. The Wildside plans everything from student section cheers and themes to exciting pep assemblies. Wildside provides the school with new ideas, organization, and all things hype!



ROCKET CLUB

The club started in 2011-12 by Ms. Sixta, to provide students an extracurricular hands-on STEM experience and apply design principles to the American Rocketry Challenge competition. The TARC is an annual competition in which students are to design and build rockets that will launch an egg to a designated altitude and meet a designated duration from launch to landing without cracking it. Teams have until the end of March to complete and submit their three best test flights meeting those parameters, and the top 100 teams across the US are invited to the national fly-off competition in Washington, DC in May. The club meetings are in Sixta's room but their sponsor is now Thomas Kuhn and they meet every Tuesday from 4-5:30.



HOW TO START A CLUB

1. Find a advisor/sponsor, and officers, figure out positions, and the purpose of the club.

*You will also need the date and time of when you meetings will be, as well as membership criteria and pre-planned activities!

2. Got to the office and ask for the form

*will probably get emailed to you or printed!

3. Fill out the form

4. Turn the form back in to the office

5. Wait for approval

6. Once the club is approved, you can officially start having meetings!



CLAIRE THOMPSON
STAFF REPORTERSERIAL KILLERS
NOT CELEBRITIES

THE REALITY OF TRUE CRIME IN THE MEDIA

There is a reason you never know the names of the victims, but you always know the names of the killers. With the rise of social media, interest in true crime has exploded, but this interest is far from harmless.

One of the most recent pieces of media that popularized a serial killer was Dahmer - Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story, which was a show based on the life of notorious serial killer, Jeffrey Dahmer.

While the show was meant to be a tribute to the lives Dahmer took, it was over-dramatized for television. When presented with a narrative like Dahmer's, we can not help but be enthralled. The problem with this is that true crime stories—no matter how twisted or horrifying—happened to real people, and it is wrong to obsess over them like the latest romance film.

A similar case where the media was involved was the case of Gypsy Rose Blanchard. After years of abuse, Blanchard ended up assisting the murder of her mother, Claudine Blanchard. Whether or not Blanchard was morally right in assisting her mother's murder is up for debate, but what is less debatable is the insensitive way

many social media users have reacted to the crime.

After seven years in prison, Blanchard was released, and soon after went on a press tour in an attempt to clear up her story. While Blanchard brought a lot of light to what she went through, 'fans' on social media often made unserious comments about her in the same fashion they did with celebrities. It is important to hear and learn about what she went through, but with how recent the crime is, she should not be painted in the light as a star. When looking at Blanchard's case, it is necessary to consider the lives that were ruined instead of making her out to be a celebrity. As of the first week of December, Blanchard has 759k followers on Instagram. But how does society portray a criminal who died before the age of social media?

Ted Bundy is one of the most infamous serial killers of the late 20th century. Despite reportedly appearing as a charming and educated young man, Bundy was secretly a monster. After his final arrest in 1978, women from all over

the world sent him 'fan mail' and marriage proposals. At his trial in 1979, some women arrived dressed as his victims as if it was a costume contest with Bundy as the judge.

These incidents may have happened 40 years ago, but we still see similar behavior in social media posts made by some young people who say things along the lines of, "Who cares what Bundy did, he's attractive!"

Before television and widespread social media, the only way to hear about criminals was through the local newspaper. Now more than ever we have access to instant information, which can lead to criminals being glamorized by the media and average people alike. When people do not fully understand the horrors Dahmer, Blanchard, Bundy and criminals alike committed, they romanticize the drama of it.

To prevent the glamorization of murder, we need to start pushing against these fan posts and shows, no matter how interesting they may be. It's immoral to continue giving criminals the attention they don't deserve.



WRAPPING UP THE SEASON

THE GIRLS GOLF TEAM CLOSES THE FALL 2024 SEASON WITH A HISTORIC ACCOMPLISHMENT

SADIE CLARKE

FEATURE AND SPORTS EDITOR

After scoring 394 points, the De Soto High School girl's golf team finished in second place at the Cypress Ridge regional tournament. This outstanding performance qualified the team for State. They went on to the 5A girls golf championship which was held in Salina, Kansas on the 21st and 22nd of October.

Although it did not come easily, this was a great achievement for the team. Girls golf coach, Mr. Sharp discusses the effort that it

Andrea Cabral, won the most improved, but there could have been so many kids to win that because so many kids made such huge strides," Sharp said.

In addition to their dedication, the team built strong relationships with each other.

"The [girls'] camaraderie, it's the first time I've seen the team just be so close," Sharp said.

The girls golf team ended up getting two girls into the second day of state.



Coach Sharp and athletes pose with their regional runner up plaque. Photo by Michelle Mages

"EVERYBODY TOOK GETTING BETTER SO SERIOUSLY, [THEY WERE] JUST REALLY WORKING HARD AND PUTTING IN EXTRA TIME ON WEEKENDS." SHARP SAID.

took to achieve this success.

"Everybody took getting better so seriously, [they were] just really working hard and putting in extra time on weekends," Sharp said.

This work ethic and commitment to the sport paid off, helping athletes show immense progress throughout the season.

Mr. Sharp notes the students he saw growth from during the year.

"Faith Settlemyer and

Sophomore Kenzie Laster tied for 19th place in the tournament. This is the best the team has ever done.

Overall, the team's devotion to their sport and companionship helped them reach a ground-breaking accomplishment that will pave the way for the future of the girl's golf program.



The girls golf team prepares at an invitational. Photo by Michelle Mages

MARY POPPINS: FLYING INTO THE MUSICAL

STORY BY LIBBY MEYER
NEWS EDITOR

This 2024 fall semester, De Soto High School's upcoming musical is one to remember. The theater department will debut the musical *Mary Poppins* on November 14 and 16 but with a twist. The members of the theater department at De Soto have worked tirelessly to not only perform a wonderful show but also to integrate a state-of-the-art-fly system into their new show.

The first step to making their *Mary Poppins* dreams come true was finding the best company to supply the technical equipment. Mindy Fry, the choir teacher, describes the extensive process of finding a company that meets all of the requirements and is willing to help.

"There are not very many companies in America that have flying systems,

"I think this show is amazing, our students have worked so, so, so, hard on it. They are so talented and it is going to be a really fun time, so everyone should come see it and you should try out for the musical next year because we have a lot of fun," said Bryant.

there are only 4 or 5 companies that do this kind of rigging for schools. Ours is called On the Fly and it is based out of Saint Louis," said Fry, "basically,

we have to give them all the specs and measurements, pictures, blueprints, all this information about our stage and talk to them about our flying needs and budgets,"

After finding On the Fly, a company that perfectly suited their technical needs, the installation process could commence.

Sara Bryant, the theater teacher, assisted On the Fly with installing and then teaching members of the department how to operate the technical aspects of the system on October 11th and 12th.

"It was so cool. I think it is truly the coolest day of my life and always will be..." said Bryant. "October 12 was a Saturday rehearsal that we had our cast come in and we spent from 9 am to 4 pm with our two actors who are flying, working directly with the rep from the company, making sure they know what to expect, how to navigate moving about in the harness, in the system and also are students that are working the system. So, we have two actors flying, but also two backstage crew people actually making them fly, pulling the ropes and making them move around. Lots and lots of training on those two days."

After the installation, the theater department quickly got to work perfecting the use of the new technology. The complicated nature of the fly system, explained by junior Carson Hanley, could lead to complications.

"The harness is what keeps you in, it is essentially kind of like a zip lining harness but there are no upper straps, it is just around your waist and there are two little hooks for mine that spin because I have to spin in the show. So, it is held on by two little hooks that spin around and that lets me either do a front



flip or a back flip. The harness just has so many things they have to check, so just all the checking is really stressful," said Hanley.

With the incredibly technical nature of the fly system, new members of the department, such as Emma Caldwell, the student teacher for choir and band, have stepped up to help with this difficult element.

"I am what's called a fly captain. Essentially, I am the adult that does the safety checks for the people who are going to fly and then I also get to help lift them sometimes, hook them up to the system. Just make sure that all the safety procedures that we have in place are going as they are supposed to," said Caldwell. "There are so many safety checks and it is a lot of little pressures, of like something could go wrong...It is kind of just constantly doing those safety checks to make sure that the kids aren't going to fall out of their harnesses or a line isn't going to snap."

Caldwell's role is vital to ensure that the fly system runs efficiently and organized come show time. Her position allows the actors and students running the system to enjoy their work.

"Well my favorite part about flying is probably all of it. I mean, it is just so cool to be up in the air because I have

never done this in another production out of the probably, I don't know, 15 productions I have been a part of. I have never had a show where there has been a fly system or that I have been able to use and actually be on the fly system. So, just getting the opportunity is probably my favorite part," said Hanley.

The fly system not only gives actors a new and exciting opportunity, but it has also given all members of the department an opportunity to experience the more technical aspects of theater.

"Getting to watch our performers that aren't flying learning how to work around and with that professional equipment, because some of our cast members also work on hooking and unhooking the actors that are flying during a scene," said Fry.

Ultimately, the addition of the fly system has been wonderful for the actors, crew, and directors involved. Finally, the members of the theater department have one last comment to make.

"I think this show is amazing, our students have worked so, so, so, hard on it. They are so talented and it is going to be a really fun time, so everyone should come see it and you should try out for the musical next year because we have a lot of fun," said Bryant.



Pictured above are Lucy Brandmeyer (Mary Poppins) and Carson Hanley (Bert).
Photo by Amy Riley



Above, the cast is pictured singing and dancing to the song "Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious" for the audience.

Photo by Amy Riley



You-Ann Kim (Jane Banks) and Savannah Hendry (Miss Andrew) are arguing intensely in the scene above.

Photo by Amy Riley

Add to Cart



Henry Tanner (Michael Banks) and You-Ann Kim (Jane Banks) are singing in the image above.

Photo by Amy Riley



Above, Brooke Mermis (Mrs. Brill) and Quin Hadley (Robertson Ay) act their hearts out when performing in the kitchen.

Photo by Amy Riley

RUKUS TAKES THE STAGE:

THE DHS, STUDENT-FORMED BAND GAINS POPULARITY

RIA HUDSON

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR



Although the Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines a ruckus as “a noisy fight or disturbance,” this up-and-coming cover band, consisting of De Soto High School students, has people clamoring to hear them. The members of Rukus: Jack Bolen, Ethan Dobson, and Carson Workman, are making their way in the musical community and “jammin’” as they go.

practice. The band didn’t begin knowing exactly what path to take. Senior Jack Bolen speaks on the slow start to their music career.

“I grew up not really listening to music at all, but I love playing the guitar, so I started listening to what they do, and ever since then it’s been awesome,” said Bolen.

Not only was the work put into the band exponential, but the dedication and commitment the members have to Rukus has been as well.

“I play my guitar every day, if it’s for five minutes, I play every day after I get home from school. Just doing that every day is awesome,” said Dobson.

In addition, the inspiration that propels the band forward comes from a good place. Pryor addresses the person that allowed him to enter into the musical world.

“My dad played guitar when he was a kid, he was in a band. And that all influenced me a lot to start playing. These guys started playing before me, but it was really my dad that encouraged me to pick up the guitar,” said Pryor.

Knowing each other prior to starting the band certainly helped move the process along. Owen Pryor, one guitarist, speaks on the bonds between the group before Rukus began.

“Me, Ethan and Carson are all related, me and Carson are cousins by marriage, and they’re step brothers, so we’ve always been close,” said Pryor.

Rukus originated with the members knowing each other, and the roles that they have taken on over time all fit them to a tee. Carson Workman, a band member, comments on the new positions.

“We completely flipped around to Jack being on the drums, and I play bass now, and Ethan’s the lead singer, and he [Owen] plays rhythmic guitar,” said Workman.

This new arrangement didn’t come without hours of



Carson Workman plays guitar at JT’s for the audience.

As believed by Workman, the creativity that it takes to play came from within the band as well. “Ethan is my biggest inspiration. He’s the reason why I pick up my guitar every day, and I play, ‘cause I like jammin’ with him,” said Workman.

So where is this innovation demonstrated? As reported by



Junior Ethan Dobson and Senior Jack Bolen perform in front of JT’s.

Dobson, the best opportunities for performing are right here in De Soto. This is our second show here [at KJ’s], we’ve played a few times at Lenexa City Center, as acoustic,” said Dobson at their performance. “But we played our last time there last week. ‘Cause we like playing this music more than acoustic songs.”

Their biggest suggestion for audiences is to come to these performances. Every person can make a difference when supporting a local band.

“Come see Rukus!” said Pryor.



The band, Rukus, plays together directly outside of JT’s in De Soto.

WINTER GAMES

HAVE FUN IN THIS WORDPLAY WONDERLAND

Find the hidden Holiday words.

J A N U A R Y N U S D W
E X E P N C L K E K I O
K M W H G R V L E N C U
A I Y T F A D O T O P N
L D E M I N U E O R A T
F N A T A T R K B K R D
W I R C I B I C R E T O
O G E N R E L D A Y Y W
N H R E S O L U T I O N
S T A O C O C T O H I S
K K Y A D I L O H A F N
N E W N D A M C E N E L

WINTER BREAK PARTY HOT COCOA JANUARY
SNOWFLAKE MIDNIGHT NEW YEAR CANDLES
HOLIDAY COOKIES RESOLUTION

UNSCRAMBLE THE WORDS:

ALOYIHD - _____
WMTONSSOR - _____
YLGU ERESATW - _____
UAGSR ICOEOK - _____
COTTAHOLHCEO - _____
ASLMLMWROHA - _____
DCYAN - _____

Key: Holiday, Snowstorm, Ugly Sweater, Sugar Cookie, Hot Chocolate, Marshmallow, Candy



SPOT THE FOUR DIFFERENCES



Key: Color of buildings, Tree in snow on right side, Reindeers nose and collar color, Sun switched sides

WHAT'S UP WITH THE BUDGET?

JASON NEUBAUER
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

AMID MASS CONFUSION, SOME CLARITY ON
HOW THE BUDGET IS MANAGED IS IMPORTANT.

Scrolling through Instagram, one can see numerous promotions for fundraisers. Whether it is through Chipotle, Smoothie King, or some other company/organization, it seems like everyone is scrounging around for money.

Of course, everything costs money; that is just the way the world works. But it can seem like some activities have to fundraise more than others. It can quickly lead to the idea that De Soto High School and the USD 232 district are possibly biased toward some programs.

For senior Stella Showalter, while it is understood schools do not make the most money, there have been some recent positive events.

"I think that it is fair to say that schools, in general, do not make enough money, but there are some things we're really excited about. For example, band got new uniforms, [the school] got breakfast club back, those are all wonderful," Showalter said. However, there have been some frustrations. "I think it can be frustrating at times when bigger sports or activities such as dance or football get a lot of money when more niche activities, like band and certain clubs, don't get as much money."

However, senior Ellery Wilson mentions the possible warped perspective that students may have

about the district's finances.

"I feel like students definitely have a warped perspective because we're such a good school in Johnson County," Wilson said. "We're a 5A school, it's not like we're in super western Kansas where they may not have as much funding as our district does."

Senior Sydney Moore also discusses the possible different perspectives students may have.

"For the students that aren't involved in a lot of things, I just feel like they don't care," Moore said. "They're just like 'Whatever happens happens,' and they're able to get by without really caring about it and not worrying about it, even though it is something I worry about, because a lot of it is very unequal."

Just a simple look at USD 232's website and searching "Budget" allows you to view this year's district budget, simplified.

At first glance, the row labeled "Activity Funds" on page 8 of the document "Budget-at-a-Glance" states that as of July 1st, 2024, there was \$136,050 in the bank account for activities. However, things start to get complicated the more you look at each graph and chart, with more questions following. What exactly defines an activity? Does it mean clubs, or sports? What qualifies as "Transportation"? Does that mean regular morning and afternoon

busing, or transportation for teams to other schools on meet days?

Because of the general vagueness and complexity, it can be really hard to wrap one's head around how the district and each of its buildings are spending and earning money.

Principal Sam Ruff is able to clarify some things about the ways USD 232 receives funding.

"The school district [receives] funding from essentially three different ways. The state of Kansas gives school districts funding based on a per-pupil amount," Ruff said. "It's called 'based aid,' so there's a certain amount for every student that the state of Kansas gives to school districts and that's across the entire state."

According to De Soto High School's report card for the 2023-2024 year from the Kansas Department of Education, DHS enrolled 980 students. On the other side of the district at Mill Valley High School, they enrolled 1,388 students.

"Another way in which school districts get money is they get money from property taxes," Ruff said. "A certain percentage of the money that landowners pay from property taxes gets put to the school. The higher value of the land the more money goes to the school."

Based on the Department of Education's National Center for

Education Statistics, USD 232 has 12,142 households, with the median income being \$139,719. In comparison, USD 229, better known as the Blue Valley School District, had an average household income of \$133,266 for those years.

"The last funding source is school fees. Students who enroll in a class like Res. Carp., well they're probably gonna cut some pieces of wood, so we have to pay for that wood," Ruff said. "Consumables, things that are consumed by that class, [like for] Nutrition and Wellness, the food gets purchased, that comes from the school fees."

So, those are the ways that the district earns money. But, how exactly is it spent?

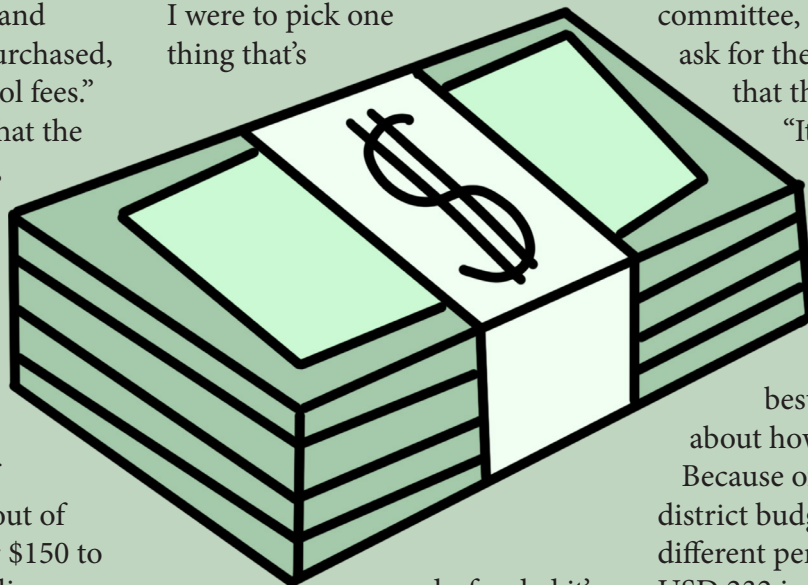
"The district then turns around and gives the school, it's still the district's money, but they give the school a budget that we are able to spend money on," Ruff said. "We pay for Minga out of that, we give each teacher \$150 to spend on classroom supplies so Expo markers, things that they use during the year. It's not very much money, \$150 is not very much money, but we provide that."

Going back to fundraising and taking a quick glance at DHS' Theatre Instagram, one can see four fundraisers alone for this year's Fall Musical, Mary Poppins. Of course, such a large production requires lots of fundraising that way the program can buy everything needed. However, few students ever hear of other programs doing

fundraisers.

Showalter, who is a part of Band and Environmental Club as well, comments on the number of fundraisers some programs have to do.

"I do think it's interesting to see the dynamic where you see the band kids kind of like, getting their parents to donate, getting all the friends and family and neighbors and teachers," Showalter said. "I don't think anyone else has had to fundraise like we do. If I were to pick one thing that's



underfunded it's band. We fundraise like no one else's business."

Moore, who is in AVID and Band, talks about the number of fundraisers that others have to do.

"Seeing the results of fine arts teams like marching band, theatre [and] having to fundraise abnormal amounts to get props for the marching band show, [while] having to see us blatantly ask parents for money, doing a mattress sale fundraiser, Butter Braids bake sale. We have to do fundraising

but we don't ever see football, basketball ever having to fundraise," Moore said. "We're constantly asking for money and it's just not fun to have to, cause money for some families can be a really tough conversation [while] for others it's not."

While it does appear that the district is biased towards some programs over others to students, Ruff reassures that the district tries to be unbiased with its finances.

"I'm on the capital outlay committee, which all of the schools ask for the district to pay for stuff that they need," Ruff said.

"It can be complicated. It's hard to explain it in a way that doesn't make somebody feel like they're left out, I understand that, but we really try our best to try to be thoughtful about how we're funding things." Because of how complicated the district budget is, it has led to many different perspectives about how USD 232 is spending its money. While some know that schools are not the most funded thing, there have been some frustrations about the way the budget is balanced and whether or not programs are getting enough money.

HELP OR HURT

DIFFERING OPINIONS ON BOOKS IN THE ENGLISH CURRICULUM

BROOKE MERMIS
ASSISTANT EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



Whether students love it or hate it, English is the gateway to future success. What is learned in class directly translates to real-life experiences and tackle them. Specifically, certain books that are required to be read by students in Honors English, AP Language and Composition, and AP Literature hold historical, ethical, or social value. However, some of the literature is not exactly pertinent to the courses' content and what it aims to teach to young adults of the modern age.

Many students like Senior Kira Lynch find the selected books to be enjoyable.

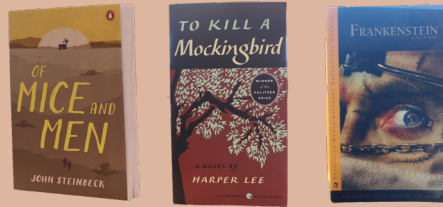
"I actually really liked the one I read in APLAC. Of Mice and Men was really good," Lynch said.

Others, like Junior Chloe Weber, note novels read in honors English classes that include important literary devices.

"I really liked Lord of the Flies...I feel like there's a lot of apparent symbolism in that book," Weber said.



Although books such as *Of Mice and Men* and *Lord of the Flies*



incorporate elements of rhetorical situations and literary terms, the question remains of whether or not these books allow for deeper themes and messages to be sent to readers.

Students who want morals and ethics presented in English books suggest certain novels that would be helpful in peaking teenagers' interest and relatability in reading. Junior Charlotte Wallen advocates for a read that she has grown to love.

"The Maze Runner; I feel like that book incorporates a lot of strong messages and includes a lot of teenagers our age facing adversity," Wallen said.

Because the focus of high school English classes mainly center around basics like literary devices and speaking methods, students feel that they would rather pick a book of their own to read than one from the curriculum. Not only does this allow learners to broaden their perspectives, but it helps them become stronger readers and more likely to read outside of class.

Novels like *Of Mice and Men* and *To Kill a Mockingbird* are certainly not insignificant reads, but some students may feel like they are not able to fully engage in the wonders of the books if they are too busy picking them apart to find similes or metaphors.

Despite the critiques, the district administration intentionally chooses literature for specific purposes. Curriculum coordinator Joe Kelly elaborates on the decision-making process.

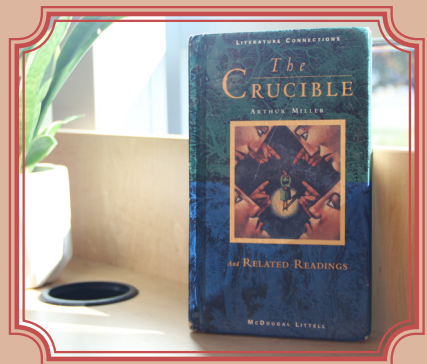
"When reviewing possible resources to adopt, we encourage open dialogue between teachers," Kelly said.



"Certainly, teachers have debated the best resources to choose, and have done so very professionally."

Although students may dislike it when they have to dissect novels, the staff at DHS and across the district aim to teach their pupils the social conflict that occurred throughout history. Senior Austin Chase shares what he appreciates about this aspect of the curriculum.

"The *Crucible* was really fun because it had a historical tie to McCarthyism and the Salem Witch Trials," Chase said.



History is a vital part of learning, but the time is now. Progression into modern society and what constitutes it is what students should be learning about the most. Being stuck in the past makes students focus on what "once was" instead of "what should be."

Ultimately, teachers only wish to use the books required for Honors or AP English classes to push teenagers toward a brighter future, even if they are no longer relatable or helpful to students.



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UPCOMING EVENTS

1st Semester Finals

Tuesday, December 17

W1 Regular Class
W2 Regular Class
Seminar
W4 Final Exam
W5 Final Exam

Thursday, December 19

W1 Final Exam
7:50 - 9:26
W2 Final Exam
9:31 - 11:07

Wednesday, December 18

G1 Regular Class
G2 Regular Class
Seminar
W4 Final Exam
W5 Final Exam

Friday, December 20

G1 Final Exam
7:50 - 9:26
G2 Final Exam
9:31 - 11:07

Winter Break: December 23 - January 6



Boys & Girls
December 20
@ Seaman
January 3
@ Mill Valley



Boys
December 20/21
@ Blue Valley
Girls
December 28
@ SMNW



Swim & Dive
December 21
@ Blue Valley North

Boys & Girls
January 9/10
@ Royal Crest



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REACHING NEW TEACHING HEIGHTS

AIDEN REICHLÉ
STAFF REPORTER

HOW TEACHING AS A CAREER IS PREPARING STUDENTS

High school is all about preparing for the future and students deciding what career path they want to take. Some students at De Soto High School are interested in becoming teachers. For those students, DHS offers a great class for potential future teachers to take with Mary Friday, called Teaching as a Career.

Friday shares her feelings about teaching the class, “It’s so fun to watch my former students become teachers and be successful and have the passion for teaching that I knew they would have when they were in high school.”

One of her former students who is now a teacher, is Adrianna Christopher, who teaches Nutrition and Wellness, Family Studies, Career and Life Planning, Human Growth and Development, and Fashion and

Interior Design at DHS.

Christopher talked about her experience in class, “I loved it. I knew I wanted to be a teacher, it was so fun. We did everything that I thought teachers would do.”

When asked roughly how many former Teaching as a Career students are now teachers, Friday estimated that “it would definitely be over 20, but maybe even more than that.”

A current Teaching as a Career student of Friday’s is “unsure of what [she wants to] do, but [is] enjoying getting time in the classroom.” Senior Aubrey Julian, who is currently in Teaching as a Career for the second year in a row.

In class, they “work a lot on projects for [their] Educators Rising Competitions, make lesson plans, and talk about a lot of the stuff that

goes on in [their] shadowing” said Julian.

Roughly once a week, the students go out to either an elementary school or a middle school within the district to shadow a teacher of their choice.

“Make yourself uncomfortable by going out into the other classes because you really do get to experience what it’s like in some aspects, and it’s a good way for you to get experience in the classroom before you’re spending money on it in college,” Christopher said.

The class is a great opportunity for DHS students who are considering becoming teachers. It allows students to get an idea of what being a teacher is like, by practicing things teachers do on a daily basis and getting to spend time in classrooms and asking teachers questions about their jobs.

It is more beneficial to get an idea of what teachers’ jobs look like in high school, rather than going to college for four years and spending a lot of money, just to student teach and realize it may not be the right job for them.

“[Teaching students] have had that experience in high school that helps them be more successful when they get to college and that path,” said Friday.

Throughout the year, the students create several projects to help them prepare for their future in teaching.

One of these projects is creating a mini classroom out of a shoebox and any materials they would like. These classroom models were pre-

Cooking Utensils Bulletin Board by Aubrey Julian and Allie Atkinson

Photo by Aiden Reichle



sented in Spotlight DHS 2024 last spring.

Another thing these students do in this class is compete in a conference that is similar to an actual conference that a teacher would go to, called Educators Rising Conference, also called EdRising.

EdRising is an annual competition that is held at MidAmerica Nazarene University. They have Kansas Teachers of the Year come to speak to students all over the area. There are games, activities, and lectures students can attend, as well as private competitions over a wide variety of topics for students to choose from.

This year, “every student [from DHS] who competed, placed in the top three or higher” said Friday. “[They will] move on to state, which is in Wichita in February, and then if some of them place in the top two or higher, [they] will compete again in June in Orlando, Florida.”

On November 6th, when the competition was held, Julian and senior Allie Atkinson were two students who competed. They won first place in the Interactive Bulletin Board category.

The two created a bulletin board to help students memorize different cooking utensils. The board includes photos of commonly used kitchen utensils, as well as a pouch with the correlating names of the utensils, that students match with the photos using velcro.

Several other students competed in a variety of different categories and will advance to state along with Julian and Atkinson.

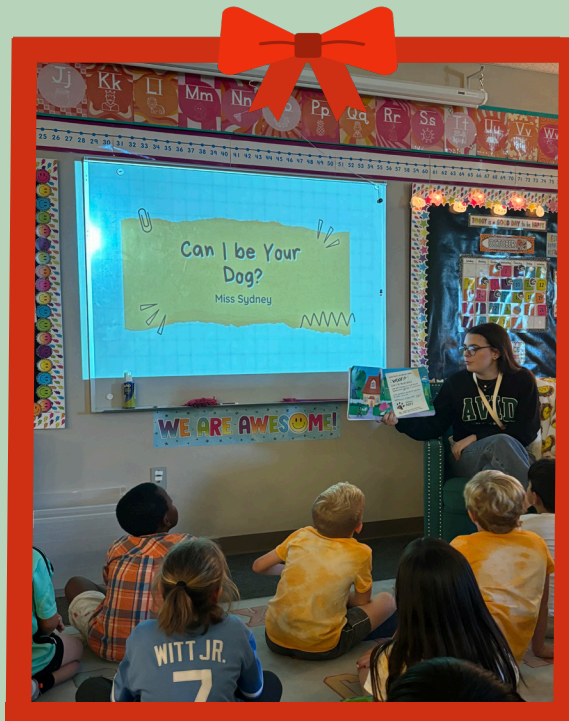
Teaching as a Career can be taken for college credit through Baker University, and can help students



Classroom Project
Photo by Aiden Reichle

earn scholarships, especially through Baker.

Teaching as a Career is very beneficial to students who are considering becoming a teacher and is one of the many opportunities DHS provides for students to get a head start on their future careers and college education.



Senior Sydney Moore reads *Can I Be Your Dog?* by Troy Cummings to her class of second graders during her teaching internship.
Photo by Sydney Moore

BACK ON THE MAT

KICKSTART TO THE SEASON

CARRIE WALLACE
Co- ONLINE EDITOR

The De Soto High School wrestling team has grown tremendously over the past couple of years. This year, the wrestling program is projected to have 20 girls and 50 boys on the team, one of the biggest teams yet.

Coach Vieyra came to De Soto High School in 2022 and became head coach of the wrestling team as well as a history teacher.

"I felt it was extremely important to establish a culture or 'standard' that all athletes and coaches need to strive to live up to," Vieyra said.

Senior Kimbal Sweeney has been wrestling since freshman year. "It's very hard, you have to push yourself everyday to build endurance and learn new skills," Sweeney said. Wrestling is a grueling sport that takes a lot of practice and focuses on mechanics as well as technique. When talking about the team's success, Coach Vieyra says, "Wrestling is unique where you compete individually but you need a strong support system to get better every day- and this team is really figuring out what it takes to be successful."

Making and maintaining weight is considerably one of the hardest parts of the sport and makes it stand out in difficulty. In wrestling, there are different weight classes for every athlete to match up with people of similar size. Several aspects can determine which weight class is best for an individual. Wrestlers will have to cut or bulk during the season to make their specific weight class. This part of wrestling takes a lot of responsibility and self control. It takes good and healthy eating habits for every athlete to reach their goal. Although challenging, the wrestling team's success is worth it to every athlete. Senior Ava Taylor has watched

the girls team grow since her freshman year.

"The wrestling season can be described as fun, but at the same time it can be pretty intense between watching weight, going to all the meets, staying focused during practice, etc. However, despite the intensity, it is always the highlight of my year, and very rewarding," Taylor said.

Coach Vieyra has brought great inspiration and work ethic to the team. He has made a family within the team and holds them all to great standards. He puts his all into coaching and finds it very rewarding.

"Wrestling is such an individual sport and it requires a lot of discipline and focus, so watching the kids have success in practice or real matches in situations we practice regularly and seeing the "light bulbs" go off is absolutely the most rewarding thing for sure," Vieyra said.

All of the work Coach Vieyra has brought to the team can be seen through the great success brought from the past seasons. Senior Ava Taylor talked about the progress over seasons. "For the girls at least, it was only me and Gabby Chaney through freshman year. Sophomore year we got one more addition, Art McNemee, junior year

we had 5 more additional girls, and finally for my senior year, there seems like there is going to be at least 15 girls total," Taylor said.

The team does a lot for the community and school. Every year they help out with community service and offer a helping hand to others. In November, before the season officially starts, they are going out and doing community service by raking leaves for elderly, disabled, or people in need in conjunction with the football team.

The team's first practice will take place on November 18th. Afterwards, the team and their families will get together at Burnt Ends in De Soto to eat and celebrate another season. This year, the De Soto wrestling team is hosting another home tournament which is supposed to have a great turnout. Each member contributes their grit and determination to the program; this year, these athletes are worth looking out for.

Below, Senior Casey Bowlin and Sophomore Emerson Tjaden drill takedowns during practice.

Photo by Carrie Wallace



Below, Sophomore Shepherd Young and Freshmen Johnny Legatt, demonstrating technique as Vieyra coaches outloud. *Photo by Carrie Wallace*



BEHIND THE COUNTER

BROOKE MERMIS

ASSISTANT EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Lunch is a pivotal part of all students' days. Athletes need to eat to gain energy for after-school practice, students in academic activities need the nutrients to focus, and teachers need to take a break from their students. Despite this, it is easy to take access to school lunch for granted without thinking about who makes and serves it. The women in the lunchroom work to make sure students are fed healthy, nutritious food that can enable them to carry out their day-to-day tasks.

More often than not, serving lunch can be a difficult job. Kari Streeter, the head of the kitchen staff, describes a typical morning for her and the rest of the group.

"We start arriving at work at 6 a.m. and start preparing for the day's service," Streeter said. "We have to make sure everything is ready by 10 a.m. when we sit down for lunch."

Although the labor may be intensive and the time may be strenuous, it all comes together to create a positive result. Streeter shares the most rewarding part of her job.

"Knowing that we have given the students a well-balanced meal and hearing the students [get] excited when lunch [served] is

something they love," Streeter said.

Students being appreciative of the hard work put into preparing the food is exciting for the lunch ladies, but other issues arise when certain parts of the day get out of routine. Streeter gives an insight into what happens when a piece of the puzzle is missing.

"If any of the team calls

especially if things are not going according to plan.

Streeter elaborates on these troubles.

"Another challenge is when our food distributor does not have what we are needing in stock. When this happens, we have to change the menu," Streeter said.

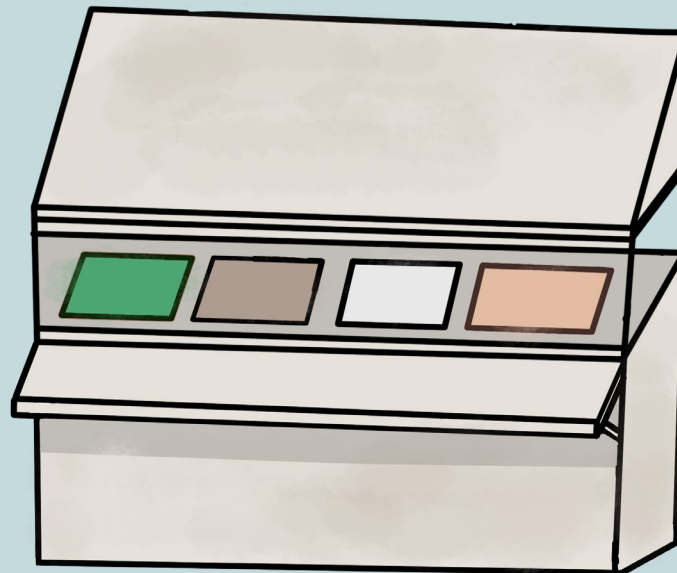
Although this may be frustrating, students at DHS are thankful for the food

grain that's needed with protein," Carpenter said.

Even students who do not participate in athletics are grateful for what the lunch ladies work hard to provide every day. Sophomore Addison Easter, a participant in theater and Scholars Bowl, shares her input.

"I appreciate the school lunch ladies because they always make sure we have enough food," Easter said. "They just always are so on top of it...."

Students and faculty all around DHS need nutritious food to make it through their days, and the lunchroom staff recognizes that as a duty that should not be taken lightly. Although people may not see what happens behind the scenes, the lunch ladies' perseverance and dedication to their jobs always go above and beyond.



into work [sick], then the rest of the team have to work harder and faster to do that person's duties," Streeter said.

An even bigger obstacle can occur with issues regarding the food itself. It can be demanding to do several tasks at once when getting the food out on time,

provided by the lunchroom staff. Sophomore Sloan Carpenter, a member of the girl's basketball team and the track team, explains how she benefits from the food as an athlete.

"It provides a lot of nutrition with the veggie portions and the dairy with fruit and also every other

HOLIDAY

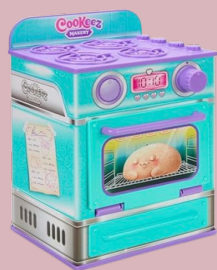
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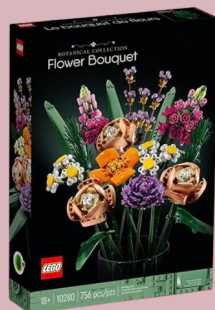


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THE VIEW FROM THE SIDELINES

THE WORK OF AN ATHLETIC TRAINER'S STUDENT AIDE

LIBBY MEYER
NEWS EDITOR

Students around De Soto High School are constantly looking for opportunities to prepare for their future while simultaneously getting involved in the activities and community of the school. Josi Kral, a junior at De Soto, wanted to explore the various opportunities that the school could provide for her that also follows the career path she wants to pursue.

"I'm not exactly sure on a pinpointing career yet. But I am interested in the field of neurology and traumatology," said Kral.

Once Josi began narrowing down career options she knew, she began searching for opportunities within the school community that also aligned with her career hopes. The process for exploring this within De Soto High School was much easier then she would have imagined.

"It actually wasn't an open opportunity that I went and looked for or applied for. It was just kind of out of my own interest. I went to Kara [Steen] and I asked if she would be willing to have a high school student as an assistant and she said yes," said Kral. "I didn't apply at all...I told her my general area of interest and asked if she would be willing to have a helping hand."

Working with Kara has given Josi not only the opportunity to begin exploring jobs, but it has also given her the opportunity to learn a wide variety of new things under Kara.

"I haven't even scratched the surface of everything there is to be learned but everyday you get to learn something new, it's a new injury that prompts a discussion about anatomy, that prompts a discussion about physiology, that prompts a discussion about rehab, treatment, diagnosis, all of these different things and I would say that's the best part for me, working with Kara," said Kral.

Every opportunity with

Kara for Josi is a hands-on learning experience that can help her prepare for her future. However, there are things that Josi is restricted from doing as a student.

"I cannot evaluate for injuries. Kara sometimes with the athletes permission will let me feel something, just because that is really the only way to learn. But I cannot evaluate an injury and then I don't do things that I haven't watched Kara do," said Kral. "I usually practice things on her first before I was allowed to wrap a wrist or tape an ankle, I did all of those on Kara first. I don't ever do things for the first time on an athlete and then if worse comes to worse all extraneous procedures go through Kara first."

Kral's experience as a student aide has been gratifying for her, but it can be taxing given her long hours.

"On most nights I start with Kara at around 3 and then I leave probably around anywhere from 8 to 9," said Kral. "Friday nights are a little bit



Josi Kral (left) and Kara Steen (right) deliberate on the sidelines during the game

Photo from Josi Kral



Josi Kral sits as a passenger on the golf cart as Kara Steen drives *Photo by Kasha Kemnitz*



different during football season. I start with her at 3 and we usually leave the school from like 10:30 to 11:00. Then it kind of just fluctuates as games move with weather cancellations, sometimes we will have soccer on a Monday."

Despite the long hours, Josi finds her work with Kara incredibly rewarding.

"The best part of working with the athletes is definitely watching them return back to their sport. Most of them aren't usually happy when they have to come see us, but it is kind of a different form of excitement. It is a vicarious joy watching them work so diligently through rehab and then watching them get to step back on the field," said Kral.

Despite the overwhelmingly wonderful experience and the valuable feelings Josi has experience, working as a student aide still carries some hard aspects to it.

"The hardest part is seeing an athlete with a season ending injury, knowing that there is absolutely nothing we can do, there is no rehab, no treatment. Most of the time its surgery, its physical therapy, but they are not going to get to return," said Kral.

Overall, the work Josi has done for Kara has not only helped her narrow down ideas for what she wants to do as a future career, but it has also been a wonderful experience for her.



QUIET, PLEASE

WHERE TO STUDY IN PEACE



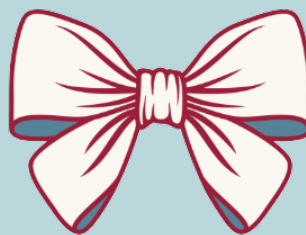
Sweet Tees Cafe in Olathe that has ample study conditions and yummy treats. *Photo by Samantha Estes*



Johnson County Library off of Shawnee Mission Parkway's best study locations. *Photo by Samantha Estes*



Starbucks off of Shawnee Mission Parkway has a warm and cozy environment to study. *Photo by Samantha Estes*



Panera off of Shawnee Mission Parkway has a warm and cozy environment to study. *Photo by Samantha Estes*

