



# Middle School Newsletter

February 2020

## OUR MISSION

*To educate and inspire a diverse community of K-12 learners by engaging them in rigorous real-world learning experiences which prioritize intellectual, social and emotional growth.*

## LETTER FROM THE PRINCIPAL, MRS. LEE



Dear Middle School Families,

Our Middle School Students have much to celebrate at the mid way point of the school year! All students have taken their midyear NWEA MAPS Reading Assessment and have demonstrated tremendous growth. **70% of students in 6th grade and 66% of students in both 7th and 8th grade have maintained or grown their reading level since September!** This growth is attributed to the hard work students have been engaging in with their reading. We have developed a culture of literacy within our middle school. Students are engaging with rigorous texts and have common strategies to support their reading development across the content areas. Please connect with your child about how they did. If you are looking for ways to support your child's reading, please contact your child's ELA teacher.

I would like to recognize the following students for having PIRRRfect attendance: Hlakee Day, Vincent Vasile, Angel Lynch, Kameron Wright and Nathan Mulligan.

On Friday, February 14th there are *Intervention* Student Led Conferences (SLC), **there is no school on this day.** This conference day has been set aside for students who are struggling to meet grade level standards and expectations and have failed two or more classes for both quarters placing them in jeopardy for attending summer school and possible retention in the grade. The purpose of the conference is to set attainable goals with a support structure in place that will lead to achievement for students. If your child qualifies for this intervention SLC, your child's crew leader will contact you.



The 8th grade students are currently engaging in their expedition, "Finding Home". Students have participated in fieldwork to local cultural locations across Buffalo as well as the West Side Bazaar. There has also been a guest speaker from the Tapestry Community who shared her journey of being a refugee. We have been recognized by and will be partnering with WNED for the important work and topics students are studying. The expedition supports the

*Making Buffalo Home Project* at WNED. Our students and teachers will be featured with a video piece that will live on the website. This is such a great opportunity to highlight and celebrate the important work we are doing here at Tapestry. Students will be facilitating a Pop Can Drive to raise funds for new American entrepreneurs who hope to start a business at the West Side Bazaar on Grant Street. The goal is to raise \$1,000 by collecting 20,000 bottles/cans. There are bins collecting the donations in the front foyer. Please help us out! **The 8th graders will showcase their learning on Wednesday, February 12th at 5:30 in the high school cafe.**

**Mrs. Lindsay Lee - Principal**



Hello Middle School Families!

We can't believe that it is already February! This month we have many exciting opportunities for students to demonstrate random acts of kindness as we celebrate Valentine's Day in middle school. We will be selling carnations and candy grams February 10-12th in the middle school office and cafeteria during lunches. You can purchase either of these items for your child and they will be delivered on February 12th. Carnations are \$2.00 and candy grams are \$1.00.



We continue to encourage our students to come to school on time every day. We will be holding another incentive for students who arrive at school each day on time for the month of February. Students will be able to wear a hat or a hood up on Friday, March 6th if they came to school on time everyday for the month of February!



On February 13th we will be engaging in our second PIRR day of the year. During this time, students will be able to reconnect with their crews and reset expectations around our core values of PIRR (perseverance, integrity, respect and responsibility). We will start the day by celebrating our students that have achieved Merit and Honor rolls with a Breakfast of Champions! Then 6th grade and 7th grade will be able to experience the 8th Grade Showcase from their expedition called, "Finding Home." The sixth grade will be heading out of the building to go to the Buffalo Science Museum. The seventh grade will be heading out to Escape Rooms to overcome challenges with their crews. Eighth grade will be staying in

the building and working with a professor in a workshop model on the topic of taking a stand. We are very excited for these opportunities for our students.

As we are approaching February Break (February 17-21st), now would be a good time to have conversations with your children around digital character. Digital character is how you are represented on line and through social media platforms (Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, Snapchat, text messages, FaceTime, Skype, etc.) In December, students engaged in crew lessons around building a positive digital character. We have found that students often engage in more digital dilemmas over extended school breaks. Opening up this conversation before an incident occurs makes it easier to talk through these issues as they arise. If you need any resources, please check out this website for some helpful tips for parents: [www.cyberbullying.org](http://www.cyberbullying.org). Have a great February!

**Miss Amy DiMaggio - Assistant Principal**

### P.I.R.R SPOTLIGHT

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The PIRR Spotlight value for January was Perseverance. Crew Leaders in each grade level nominated one student that demonstrated the PIRR trait of Perseverance. **Perseverance means that you keep on trying, even when the task is difficult.** Please help us celebrate the following nominees:

#### 6th Grade Crews:

**Gerchick:** Nick Filice  
**Beerman:** Simier Sweet  
**Brunner:** Julia Griffin  
**Tomasik:** Emina Wilkins  
**Hoerner:** Alix Broccolo  
**Gentile:** Anita Collins  
**Scanlon:** Aaliyah Cooley  
**Bailey:** Jaden Ortiz

#### 7th Grade Crews:

**Steffan:** Savannah D'Amico  
**Close:** Allison Brady  
**Hartke:** Anson Spates  
**Frost:** Faith Kauffman  
**Fields:** Andrew Meier  
**Coyne:** Jason "Teddy" Walter  
**Slepian:** Cydney Johnson

#### 8th Grade Crews:

**Matos:** Aynsley Hazelton  
**Hills:** Emoni Jones  
**Flores:** Aidan McGriff  
**Smerda:** Kyle Smyntek  
**Hohl:** Arianna Pizarro  
**Ritchey:** Amaiyah Davis  
**Raham:** Lana Rizek

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## HEALTH OFFICE UPDATE WITH NURSE BURNS, R.N.

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**7 Warning Signs Your Child Is Struggling in School:** When a child or teen begins to struggle with their school work, it is best to get them the help they need as soon as possible. The longer it takes for a student to get help, the more lost they become since the learning continues forward.

**Your child suddenly refuses to discuss school:** This could be a signal that something is not right at school which can be limited to subjects they are struggling with.

**Your child has a sudden major attitude about school:** If your child suddenly becomes distant or angry towards school, you can bet they do not like how things are going at school. Another big attitude shift to watch for is boredom. Often kids will complain they are bored when they don't understand what is going on at school.

**Your child begins having trouble sleeping or eating:** Problems eating or sleeping often result from worry. Older children and teens may be aware of the overall importance of school to their future and are concerned about their future success if they fall behind.

**Your child spends an excessive amount of time on homework:** It is a big warning sign if your child is falling into a pattern of having no free time outside of school because they are spending all of their time on homework.



**Your child's teacher expresses concern:** If your child's teacher believes that your child is struggling more than other students, pay attention to what the teacher is saying. Your child's teacher letting you know about a change in their academic progress is the teacher's way of giving you a chance to address any issues they may see beginning to develop.

**They begin misbehaving at school:** Sometimes misbehavior at school is really your child's way of trying to take attention off the fact they are struggling in school.

**Your child receives low grades:** The sign is an obvious one, yet sometimes children and school parents do not want to believe the child is struggling. An occasional poor grade on one assignment may not be cause for serious concern, but a pattern of low grades - or worse - a report card full of poor grades is a concern

## STAFF SPOTLIGHT - NIKKI RITCHEY: 6-12 ART COORDINATOR & EDUCATOR

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### Share a little about yourself.

In 1996 I graduated from Buffalo State College with a Bachelor of Fine Art in Sculpture. I also acquired a minor in Printmaking and Art History. By May of 1998 I completed my Master of Fine Art in Sculpture with a minor in Printmaking. While going to college I exhibited my work in small galleries within the downtown district. To this day I am still producing my personal artwork and continue to exhibit around Western New York with my family at my side.

### How long have you been a part of the Tapestry Community?

I have been a founding Art educator since 2001. And, I must say... teaching is a very interesting art form in itself. I have learned so much from the growth and expansion of Tapestry Charter School. And in my years to come, I have so much more to learn from the mentors of Expeditionary Learning. I am excited to look towards the future to continue to be inspired by my many students.

### Why Tapestry?

Tapestry is a way of life for my family and I. You might say, the Tapestry's core values have structured and crafted me as an individual to become the engaging educator that I am today. I owe Tapestry a BIG thank you for the continuous mindset of growth that is rooted in a culture for learning. Everyday I am inspired to raise a higher level of performance to drive my students to success.

### What is your favorite Tapestry memory?

When I think back to the memories of Tapestry, it is an awesome blur that is surreal. It is remembering all the smiles, tears, laughter, and grumbles that keep me coming back for more. Each fleeting snippet of my past drives me to make each lesson more spectacular than before.





## STAFF SPOTLIGHT - JESSICA KAUFFMAN: EXPEDITIONARY LEARNING COACH K-12

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### Share a little about yourself.

I am a parent of two children that are also Tapestry students. One is in 5th grade and the other in 7th. My husband and I (along with many others) run 5 Loaves Farm on the westside of Buffalo as well, which is a huge part of my life focus. I have a lot of hobbies, which include hiking, skiing, gardening, scrapbooking, playing soccer and I am now learning how to play guitar as well!

### How long have you been a part of the Tapestry Community?

I have been an educator for nearly 15 years, 9 of which have been at Tapestry. The first 5 years at Tapestry, I taught middle school science. Now, I am an instructional coach with a focus on EI Education philosophy. That means that I am involved in planning learning expeditions with teachers, helping plan community meetings, overseeing crew, organizing intensives as well as many other daily tasks that involve teaching and learning and culture.

### Why Tapestry?

I was a founding teacher of an EL School in Syracuse NY called ELMS. When I moved from Syracuse to Buffalo, I didn't think I would ever find another school like it, but I did! Tapestry!

Tapestry allows for teachers to work collaboratively to do what is best for students. Tapestry allows for rigorous academic learning in the community around us, but here at Tapestry, we also highly value the social and emotional well-being of our students!

### What is your favorite Tapestry memory?

There are so many really great memories that I have at Tapestry that is hard to name just one. However, I think my favorite memories of all are of when I was teaching middle school and all of the showcase nights that I hosted with other teachers and students. On those evenings, it was so good to step back and watch students be their absolute best selves knowing how much work and effort it took to be



## EXPEDITIONARY LEARNING (EL), MRS. KAUFFMAN

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Tapestry prides itself as being an EI Education School. Being a part of EL Education inspires a unique approach to teaching and learning. As an EL Education school, we don't just value academics. We value character development and community.

We have multiple traditions at Tapestry Middle School to inspire a sense of belonging and a sense of purpose. We have school-wide and grade level community meetings that celebrate student success and bring the students together. We celebrate academic success through a quarterly celebration called the Breakfast of Champions. We engage in team building, both as day long outings and in crew on a weekly basis. We promote a sense of community by giving opportunities for our students to give back to the community throughout the year. We have PIRR days. PIRR days are quarterly events where students spend the day, mostly in crews building relationships with their classmates by engaging in a tailored activity. During the PIRR day, we give space and time to pause and ask the students to think about their academic and social and emotional well-being. Finally, we end PIRR days with a school-wide celebration or community meeting.

The effort and intentionality it takes to make this kind of culture a reality is often intense, but it is well worth it.

**Jessica Kauffman, Expeditionary Learning Gr. K-12**

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## MIDDLE SCHOOL ATHLETICS UPDATE WITH MARC LaMORTICELLA - ATHLETICS DIRECTOR

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As we begin to wrap up the winter season, I would first like to thank all of the parents for working together to get our students promptly to and from games, practices and events. Our coaches and athletes have done an excellent job in representing the Tapestry Thunderhawk Athletics Department. The winter is a long season for Buffalonians and staying active in the winter months can be difficult. Getting involved in sports is a great way for our kids to continue to stay healthy and busy throughout the winter months.

This upcoming spring we have a number of middle school sport opportunities to take advantage of. Tapestry will be offering boys volleyball, girls lacrosse, and co-ed baseball this spring. Towards the end of the year we will be partnering with PAL (Police Athletic League) and Buffalo Bills to offer flag football for our students. Please keep a eye out for paperwork and permission slips about these amazing opportunities.

If your child is thinking of participating in a sport please make an appointment for a sports physical with your primary physician. Physicals are good for one year.

### 7th and 8th Grade Boys Basketball Team

**Coach: Matt Kahrmanian**



### 5th and 6th Grade Boys Basketball Team

**Coach: Brett Vroman**

**GO THUNDERHAWKS!**

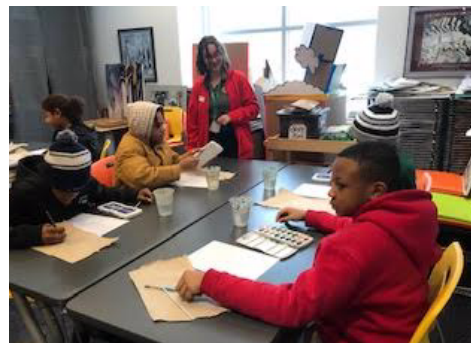


## VISUAL ARTS

### **Grade 6**

Students in grade 6 have been constructing collages inspired by Romare Bearden. Romare Bearden was an African-American artist and author. He was very well known for his oil paintings and collages.

Students in grade 6 also went on a fieldwork adventure to the Burchfield Art Gallery. There they explored Op art from artists of Contemporary times, the Rumsey Collection, and some of the Charles Burchfield's collection. They even participated in a watercolor exercise in the galleries art studio.



### **Grade 7**

Students in grade 7 are continuing to explore wiring techniques in jewelry making. Each student is learning to apply wire of various gauges and hardness. Some of these wires have been applied to pendants with stones, and hand crafted rings.

### **Grade 8**

Students in grade 8 are sketching iconic characters (original characters or text) that exemplifies the comic style of the Pop Art Movement from 1960's to Contemporary times. These large renderings are being transferred onto hand stretched canvas.



## MUSICAL ARTS

### **Band**

Exciting things are happening in the Tapestry Band program. In January we had Grammy nominated music educator and proprietor of Pagu Batons Phil Aguglia in as a guest expert. The Tapestry Jazz Ensemble performed at Babeville's Asbury Hall as part of the Music is Art Winter Jam Jazz Festival.

This month the Tapestry band program is busy getting ready for our next performance February 13th as part of the Black History Month Program. We will be bringing in guest musicians Greg Millar and Dalton Sharp to give masterclass and perform with the students.

### **Guitar**

**Grade 6:** The sixth grade guitar students are working on "Don't Worry Be Happy" by Bobby McFerrin. The song allows us to develop techniques such as strumming and chord changes. They continue to improve their skills in technique, posture, reading, and musicianship.

**Grade 7:** The seventh grade guitar students have begun working on "Ransom" by Lil' Tecca. This song features four chords, a tricky strum pattern, and the use of a capo. We are also starting to polish "Don't Worry be Happy" by adding a bass line.

**Grade 8:** The eighth grade students are preparing for the Black History Month concert, where they will be performing "All Falls Down" by Kanye West. In addition, we continue to review our pentatonic scale, "Key to the Highway," "Allstar," and "Blackbird."





## THE MIDDLE SCHOOL ARTS (CONTINUED)

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### **THEATER**

**Grade 6:** Middle school arts have been so busy! Grade 6 theater has been learning techniques of performing with hand puppets and will begin scripts to the stories of, "The Hat" and "The Mitten" by Jan Brett. They will be performing at the Kindergarten community meeting.

**Grade 7:** Students in grade 7 have begun working on selecting materials for the use as costumes in their plays.

**Grade 8:** Grade 8 is now working on their monologues and will present their dramatic roles on life as a refugee and immigrants in a film for their expedition

### **DANCE**

**Grade 6:** Dance majors in grade 6 are preparing for their lecture demonstrations after the new year. They will focus on Marce Cunningham.

**Grade 7:** Grade 7 is developing their modern dance techniques and movement vocabulary for an interdisciplinary piece called, "A long Walk to Water".

**Grade 8:** Grade 8 is wrapping up their dance performance for the Black History Month celebration.

## COUNSELING CORNER - MS BEDELL

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Happy February! This month I will begin working with our 8th graders to create career portfolios. The goal is for students to begin thinking about their interests, values and what goals they have for high school and beyond. I am excited to embark on this project with our kids. I truly believe that this is an essential component to their success as higher level thinkers.

**Ms. Jessica Bedell - Counselor**

## MIDDLE SCHOOL UPCOMING EVENTS

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**February 3-13, 2020: Interim Assessments**

**February 11, 2020:** TCA Meeting, 6:30, HS Library

**February 12, 2020: 8th Grade Showcase, Finding Home, 5:30-7, HS Cafe**

**February 13, 2020: PIRR Day, Breakfast of Champions, Community Meeting (MS Black History Month Celebration)**

**February 13, 2020: K-12 Black History Month Celebration, 5-7 @ 111 Great Arrow**

**February 14, 2020: *Intervention* SLCs, NO Classes for students**

**February 17-21, 2020: February Break, NO SCHOOL**

**February 25, 2020: Principal Advisory Group (PAG) and Coffee with the Counselor (CwC), 8:15-9:30**

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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Tapestry Charter School is an arts-integrated, K-12 Expeditionary Learning, tuition-free, public school located in the city of Buffalo, NY. Founded by passionate individuals who shared a commitment to choice, accountability, and excellence, Tapestry received approval from the State University of New York Board of Trustees to open in September 2001.