

THE POINT

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Building A Safe School Environment

By Cheyenne Pero

In a world that changes day by day, the importance of one's mental health diminishes severely. When crimes occur, we look further into the physical aspects of the situation rather than the mentality behind these actions. We are taught at a young age to prohibit rash behavior, but not how to deal with the emotions that cause them.

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), for youth between the ages of 10 and 24, suicide is the third leading cause of death. This shows that mental health is something that should not be taken lightly.



In Poinciana High School, summits are held each Tuesday and Thursday to offer advice to students, and a plethora of ways to reach out for those in need. Although, as the income of students increases substantially each year, these outlets are looked past. As a student, it's time to ask the question: What can you do to support a student in need?

Alanis Guzman, a sophomore, shares her perspective. "If the peer is new, you could at least try to talk to them. As hard as that sounds, it can actually brighten their day just a little knowing that they've found someone who's a possible friend/ acquaintance."

Offering your time and ears to someone who may just need to be listened to can have grand effects, all of which contribute to the mental safety of that peer, and the amiability of our school environment.

Mr. Petrangeli, who teaches video production, and coaches our baseball and golf teams, explains, "Students should try to connect off-campus, whereas, you can bring that connection on-campus, and then that's where you can get that environmental switch. Right now, I think everybody sees each other in school, and then *that's it*. If you actually meet face-to-face instead of online and such, then students can have that better connection."

For Petrangeli, school pride is a prominent factor that bleeds into the success of Poinciana High School. He further executes the importance of supporting peers by participating in clubs, seeing the plays, attending games for PHS's sports' teams, etc. Encouraging the accomplishments of our school is a simple, but incredibly effective way to build a closer learning environment that also involves pride and safety.

As culture becomes increasingly modernized, our connections with the outside world and our peers diminishes, and instead builds behinds social media and other outlets. We lose the trusting dynamic with our friends, along with the urges to build relationships as we can supposedly do it over a device. But this doesn't prevent the quizzicality and mistrust that spurns, and collectively, society grows more disconnected.

Let it be for the well-being of our peers, and the path to creating a stronger, prouder school environment—now is the time to make a change.

ELECTIVES BTS

Inside the Culinary Program

By Susan Viera Norford

Food and the love of food are all around us. From our dining room tables at home to fast-food restaurants, we visit for quick bites, and the hidden gems we hope no one finds. Food is everywhere; including right here at PHS's campus.



The culinary program here at school is small but mighty. With an estimate of about one-hundred and thirty students, the program packs a punch of flavor and knowledge. Culinary, according to head chef, Joseph Santiago, is “A way for students to learn the restaurant business; inside and out.” This means working with different types of foods, styles, and cultures.

The program has four different levels, culinary 1-4. Culinary 1 is a beginner level course, 2 is coming into culinary, and 3 and 4 are the more advanced classes. The majority of higher course chefs have their five-year certifications in the art. A core aspect of culinary is Servsafe. Servsafe is the certificate that students would get so they would be able to cook, plate, and serve. The authentication is especially important when the culinary team is working in the Eagle Café.

Eagle Café is Poinciana High School's on-campus restaurant. Although not open to the general population of the school, it is open to staff, administration, teachers, culinary students, and the school's business partners. In the café, students can get real-life restaurant experience serving, cooking, and hosting. Students have the ability to stand and chat with the diners.

Other than cooking for the school, the Culinary program does events. Events such as the college and career fair and events for business partners. Big events will be done “once our students get the actual ServSafe, then I can include more students into events,” says Santiago. Menus for said events are thought up by Santiago and the team of executive and sous chefs, or the clients themselves.

Dreams Santiago has for Culinary are big; in quality and quantity. He mentions his appetite for a bigger number of students, as high as the two and three hundred. He's aspiring to integrate students who are interested and passionate about food and culinary, or those looking to pursue cooking or just learn how to cook.

Poinciana High School's culinary program have their arms (and stomachs) ready for new and big things, they just have to take the first bite.

Building Tiny Homes For Vets

By Susan Viera Norford

In a classroom tucked away next to the culinary room, incredible things are happening. Led by Poinciana High School's construction teacher, Mr. Inwood, the construction program has been granted the opportunity to build tiny homes for disabled veterans.

According to Inwood, the idea of building tiny homes isn't new. The idea derives from his previous experiences building similar homes through his non-profit organization 'New Start Housing Partners Inc'. He explains how the group acquired property in St. Cloud and decided to



build tiny homes for disabled Veterans. The houses will be built by his construction students, however, anyone is welcome to volunteer.

For this project, about twelve houses will be built on campus. The entire house--including floors, roofs, and walls-- will be transported and assembled on the property in St. Cloud. "It's like having a big puzzle, and then you just put it together," Inwood describes. As of September, the designing process has begun. The students have been allowed to design these tiny homes and will be put in groups to design and estimate the measurements of the homes. And once that is completed, Inwood will be pulling the permits to build. Designs will be chosen and sent off to the engineer and architect to draw the plans.

The value that this project will have is big; not only for our vets, but for our community as well. For the veterans, it gives inexpensive housing, utilizing a big property to build many homes. Inwood expands on the question with, "A lot of people don't need big homes with a lot of square footage. So, by building these smaller homes for disabled veterans, it'll make it a lot easier to live, get around, and of course, it's accessible."

But it doesn't stop there! Building a tiny home for veterans is a volunteer-only project. This means no one will be getting paid in a monetary sense. Instead, they will be paid in volunteer hours and most importantly, a meaningful experience. Mr. Inwood emphasizes the importance of this not being something of monetary gain but a meaningful and exciting experience. "This is a great opportunity for students here, especially at Poinciana High School, to get recognition... on taking their Saturdays to do a volunteer job to help a veteran." Building tiny homes will be a way of giving back to someone who served our country and was disabled in the process.

Inwood compares this program to the home renovation show '*Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*', where they build homes for disabled and deserving people and give them a more accessible and easier way to live. This would give the veterans a chance to experience that with their family in their tiny home.

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Transition to Inclusion

By Haley Dornberger

In this world, not everything goes the way we plan. Some of us are born a tad bit different, although people see these kids as incapable with no real knowledge of what they can do or who they really are. This is a disappointing perspective in our society because these kids are amazing and so loving.

Today's society should stop seeing them as incapable and pitiful, because these kids can do so much if we just gave them the chance. Truly, there is no difference between us, and so do Mrs. Ruiz and Mrs. Inwood.

They both state, "There is no difference between us and them, we have more similarities than we do differences. We all just want to be a part of something and a part of the community." This is true because, like us, they have dreams and desires. Just like us, they want to be loved and cared for.

I, for one, am super proud of the teachers and anyone who has been inspired to help with these kids and just give them a friendly smile to make them feel included. Now, we may never know what inspired them, but for Mrs. Ruiz, it was "to make a difference in someone's life."

Mrs. Inwood says, "Both of my parents were teachers, which inspired me to be one. But my mom helped with kids like the ones I teach ever since I was little, so that inspired me to help them. Just like my mother."

Though these jobs are rewarding, there is stuff to remember, and to Mrs. Ruiz and Mrs. Inwood it was "patience, and that we need to treat them equally because they're not aware of any difference. We want them to feel loved and accepted just like everyone else because, in reality, they are not any different than you and I."

So treat everyone the same. Try your best to include everyone, even if they don't meet your "ideals" of normal, because at the end of the day, you never know what someone's been through or what's going on in their head. So let's start the transition to inclusion.



Avid Field Trip

By Crystal Maldonado

The AVID Family went on a field trip as of Thursday, the 24th. The University they went to was Flagler University.

This was a historical university that was built in 1968 by Henry Morrison Flagler. Henry Flagler is known for the evolution of Florida's east



coast. The centerpiece was originally a hotel named the 'Ponce de Leon Hotel'.

When I went up to speak to a few AVID students about the field trip I was elated to see the various amount of people who loved this university. One AVID student, Julien Ortiz, said, "The University was a historical place with a bunch of artwork around the university. It was also a chill vibe to be around, everyone we saw looked very happy to be attending Flagler University. I would love to go back." He wasn't the only one who announced that. Many sources had said the same thing.

The bulk of AVID students who had attending the trip loved the University. A few of the common things that were noticed when talking to these students were numerous loved the small class sizes, the artwork situated around the University, the history behind it and most importantly the atmosphere around which made it a undisturbed environment.

Teacher Spotlight: Culinary Teacher, Mr. Santiago

By Doel Montes

Joseph Santiago is a new culinary arts teacher at Poinciana High School.

Mr. Santiago got into culinary by working at Walt Disney World as a dishwasher and worked his way up into the kitchen, becoming a traveling chef, a supervisor kitchen manager, and then opening a restaurant for one of his friends.

With all of his skills, he decided that being the executive chef at his friend's restaurant, and working to his standards and colleagues got him to where he wanted to be.

“It's a big experience being a culinary teacher in high school. Working with students is a privilege because I can relate to them, and teach them more hands-on skills, mainly the actual cooking”.

Mr. Santiago used to be a substitute teacher and a basketball coach, but at the end of the day, he loves teaching culinary because he used to be one of the students, along with helping them succeed in life. What he wants for everyone in his class is to get out and decide if they want to continue their path, and get the knowledge they need with a certification (which is for 5 years) and if they're not ready for college, they can use that certification and apply at a restaurant with that.

He himself is a Poinciana native, and he's been here since 1992.

“I was a student and came here up to my senior year. I was in new dimension, and I love this school and everything here is amazing. It has changed, but for the best, and a lot could change for the better, but at the end of the day, we go for what we got and this is my home school. I played football, basketball, and all sports, and now I'm here doing my dream as well.”



Oasis Club

By Haley Dornberger

Club Oasis is a reflections club on Christianity, and teenage struggles that meet every Wednesday at 6:50am up until the bell. Though there is already 15-20 people showing up, they would love to have more students join them!

Oasis “isn’t based on a certain religion. It’s more based on helping and supporting each other and knowing who God is,” says Andrea Cruz. They usually have “series about different topics teens struggle with, and then connect it to God and sometimes even have interactive games to help better connect with the topic.”

Cruz was inspired to join this club “because it helps motivate others and it’s like a little family.”

This club is prominently supportive towards one another. I’m sure they would love if you joined them! For more information, go see Mrs. Haderle in 12-207. Hope to see you there!

Signing Into Sign Language Club

By Skylynn DeLeon

Looking to learn a new language that isn't typically taught in school? Well look no more! Now at Poinciana High School, the Sign Language Club is available to anyone looking to learn beyond your own skills.

For those who may not know, sign language is communicating in a way done with visual gestures such as hand signals. It is used upon those who are deaf and have impaired hearing. Just like any form of language, such as German or French, sign is another way of communicating and can be very beneficial in the future.



To start off the club, students usually practice amongst themselves on what they previously have learned. Then with each other, many students sign various questions such as, "How was your day?" or "Where do you live?" along with daily conversations. Ms. Capone, who teaches a variety of new words or ways to sign through the group session, also accompanies the students and helps correct little mistakes here and there.

Ms. Capone, the advisor, has started the sign language club to teach students about another culture and to spark interest in anyone who's curious about the club as well.

"I think there are people interested in learning to communicate in sign. There are lots of deaf people out there that would be nice to communicate with. It's like learning Spanish, so you can communicate with other people that speak that language."

When asked why we should learn sign specifically, Ms. Capone states, "For me it's also about exposing the students into learning and experiencing other cultures as well."

The Sign Language Club is held in Mrs. Aponte's room (179) during both A and B lunch on Thursdays. Hope to see you there soon!

Cont. from pg 3

He hopes that the experience that the students get out of this impacts them deeply. Explaining the two things volunteers (especially students) will get from this project. The first being what they learn through this project. And second, "you give an hour and you get back ten." Inwood expresses this to show the potential benefits this could have in future commitments such as jobs and college applications.

After the homes are sent in, built, and made, the houses aren't given away for free. Instead, they are sold with a zero percent interest on them. Inwood gives an example of the house costing fifty-grand and having zero interest, the homeowners will only have to pay about one hundred fifty to two hundred a month. "This way it gives us money back, that we can buy materials and build the second home, and the third home, etc.."

The full process begins during these second nine weeks of this school year. Led by the construction program in school, building tiny homes for disabled veterans is a way for the community at Poinciana to give back to the soldiers who fought for our country.

Breast Cancer Awareness

By Skylynn Deleon

Welcome to an October filled with pumpkin picking, hayrides, and many other fall activities! But for others it has a different meaning. October is also Breast Cancer Awareness month, the month where we increase the awareness of this disease.



Breast cancer is the second most common cancer in women. 1 out of 8 women will develop breast cancer within their life span. Just this year, 268,000 women have unfortunately been diagnosed with this disease, thus, getting screened and checked out multiple times throughout the year is very important. Being aware of the signs of breast cancer is necessary and so is showing awareness to it as well.

There are actually many ways you yourself can spread awareness. Walking in marathons, donating to charities, or simply wearing pink shows your support for the people fighting this disease. On Friday, October 18, the students of Poinciana High school have shown their support by wearing pink.

For more information, you can go to www.cancer.org to learn more about breast cancer. Let's join together to help support all people fighting this disease and to educate others about breast cancer!

Leadership, Loyalty, and Lack of Trust?

By Johvan Merilus

In America today, there are the signs of concern when it comes to character. Character is something based off of the evaluation of someone's personality. Personality is shown off of expression, which nobody has seemed to be more spoken of in this day and age as Donald Trump.

A leader of the free world is what he is titled, as due to his ranking and being voted to be the best suited to be in charge at the moment. But how can you follow a leader whose actions are seemingly suspicious? That's a choice made by the individuals themselves. As a nation, we put him in power to be the one to decide how we move and operate for 4 years. As that term begins to come to an end, we see and discover things that were not apparent before, yet we choose now to be intensified by the matter.

President Trump is under investigation for impeachment due to foreign interference. It is known that there are accusations, but everything seems to be exposure for the leader of our country. In this time of year, political parties are gathering and sending the very best among them to compete and run against the current chief in command in order to have a new president.

The accusations refer to the President getting in contact with Ukrainian President, Volodymyr Zelensky, over the phone and asking for aid on investigating a political opponent. The opponent who Trump wants to be investigated on is Joe Biden, a democrat running for presidency, and is also the former vice president to Barack Obama. Transcripts of the conversation were released by the White House.

Now, when looking at the issue, many political members of both parties have interpreted it as a way of allowing foreign power to influence our government. To others, it's seen as just a simple call discussing a matter involving another individual. What can be shown is that both sides of the political world are being torn due to the events transpiring. Democrats, who are hoping to regain the White House, have seen it to be a guilty action of a man who abuses power for selfish reasons which could violate the security of those he sworn to protect and lead. To Republicans, it's been sought out as the president looking into any potential corruption by those who oppose him for the up and coming election.

A Night of The Arts

By Paola Andujar

On October 4th, Poinciana High School held its annual fine arts gala. The gala featured the choir program, the theatre program, and band with color guard. This event allowed people to watch our talented students and appreciate all of the hard work they put into these programs everyday. The audience was very fond of our performers. There was a full house, supporting the students all night.

The first performance of the night were the choir programs. Cantique, a female choir, was up first singing an Australian folk song called “Kookaburra,” a song about a bird. The song was very refreshing and brought a smile to the audience’s face.

Roxchelle Ortiz, a ninth grader, said about their performance: “I was feeling nervous but at the same time happy because I was going to sing a song and present in front of people the thing I really like to do.”



The men’s choir sang “Cantar!” which is a Spanish song about joy. It really brightened up the room and brought a smile to the audience’s face. Bella Voce sang a Japanese song with an echo effect titled “Hotaru Koi” and it was about fireflies trying to find water.

Eagles singers certainly brought their piece to life by singing “Rejoice.” The songs contained two soloists and some subtle choreography. Their piece was certainly illuminating and made you want to jump up and sing along.

The theatre program followed. Emily Hooker performed an emotional monologue about a girl who suffered from obsessive compulsive disorder. The character had always wanted things to be perfect, until she met a girl and fell in love. This girl was perfect for her because she accepted her, until she didn’t. A performance of “Serial Killer Barbie” followed. This short act starred Emily Hooker, Lia Ulloa, Camila Ulloa, and Emily Carucini. This skit was about a girl trying to make it in the popular girl group. When overcome with jealousy, she kills the girls one by one. At the end, when we think she’s been caught, she succeeds and kills the final girl with poison.

The band and color guard programs performed last. Their piece was inspired by the Disney movie *Moana* and lit up the entire auditorium. It was a great end to a great night.

“As a senior, it was very significant because it was the program I’ve always been with, and it was kind of symbolic to me because I’ve got to play a role in the color guard and perform one last time,” said senior John Vayjanos, of his final year performing in the Gala.

It’s always an exciting time at the Gala, supporting our students doing what they love. Congratulations on another year of fine arts at Poinciana High School!

Play On!

By Paola Andujar

The theatre program has presented another show for us! The show was titled “*Play On*”, and it was a play within a play.

The play was shown three times, starting on October eleventh. It was an excellent performance and the audience truly enjoyed themselves.

It was surely one for the books and the students laid out an outstanding performance.



Camila Ulloa, a senior, shared her experience with this play and the theatre program. “This play in particular was really challenging due to the fact that we repeated a lot of lines, but we said them in different ways in the different acts, and every day it got easier. I really enjoyed being a part of this play in particular. We had a ton of fun while working, and because we had a small cast, we all really got to know each other and connect more. I felt at first that I didn’t really understand it, but by the second or third read through I got a better understanding.”

“I really liked my character,” Ulloa continues. “My character was named Louise, she was a handyman basically, and was the one who built the sets and did all the tech work and sounds, which is very different from me—I can’t do anything with tools! It was really fun getting out of my comfort zone and really doing research on this character and making her come to life.”

According to Ulloa, the play was about a cast acting in a play. The cast had plenty fun throughout the rehearsal process, transitioning from a state of making many mistakes, to presenting such a wonderful, enthralling show.

“I really enjoyed working with this wonderful cast and we’ve all grown to be amazing friends though we were previously acquainted, I now feel that I can call each and every one of them a family, and that’s the beauty of theatre,” finishes Ulloa.

Meet Our Newspaper Team

Pride is a critical part of PHS in which lives on in our students, and our incredible staff. Poinciana's newspaper team has worked tediously from the beginning of the year to highlight the importance of our teachers, organizations, events, and achievements in our school paper. With a very small team of eight, our newspaper crew is overjoyed to share our pride for PHS with you.

Members of our team—as we proudly refer to as *family*—comprises a mix of sophomores, juniors, and seniors. PHS newspaper veterans include Paola Andujar, Susan Viera Norford, and Johvan Merilus. Working diligently with them are newspaper newcomers Doel Montes, Cheyenne Pero, Skylynn Deleon, Crystal Maldonado, and Haley Dornberger. We are proud of each of our teammates' personal goals and aspirations amidst their contributions to the school paper.

“The newspaper keeps students informed on what's going on in our school, and helps keep these things recorded as a part of PHS's history,” says Andujar, who is currently pursuing her third year as a part of our newspaper team.

We have adapted to having a small crew, which involves the hard work of each team member in order to keep up with deadlines. In this, collaboration is *key*.

Norford, a proud senior, states, “In communicating, you get different perspectives on things, which helps create fresh ideas and keeps the ball rolling.”

Now, what does writing for the school paper mean to our assiduous team?

Johvan Merilus, our spontaneous sports editor, explains, “Growing up, I've always been a really good writer, and I've always been complimented on that. I wanted to be a journalist and work for ESPN, therefore it was kind of a step in that direction.”

Merilus has brought a comical and lively energy to our crew, making great efforts in producing eloquent articles on Poinciana High School's athletics teams.

“Writing has always been an avid passion of mine, one of which I hope to pursue through time,” says Cheyenne on her first year with the newspaper team. “Being granted the ability to share my writing with peers and shed light on the incredible things happening in our school... contributing to the school newspaper feels like an honor.”

When asked about the team, our advisor, Ms. Kirkpatrick shares: “I love the enthusiasm that the entire team brings. They act like one big family, like a bunch of siblings. You don't always get along, but you get it done and done together. I love the energy and am very excited for what this year with them will bring.”

We are thrilled to produce prideful, important, and proficient news for our peers, and look forward to the many events to come. Thank you for your support!

-Newspaper Staff