

In support of 'Mental Health Awareness Month' the DMS Newspaper has decided to spread awareness of mental health, where it comes from, how it affects people, and why it is important.

## What is mental health? And why is it important?

Mental health includes our physical, emotional and social wellbeing. Mental health is important because it affects how we think, act and appear and your overall self-image .



### Ms. Mancuso:

*On mental health and being a health teacher.*

"Mental health is the foundation of greatness. A healthy mind is a healthy life.

Mental health is so important because it is forever changing/developing. It allows you to understand your past, determine your present and set the precedent for your future.

In my opinion, mental health impacts ALL parts of health. They say "mind over body" for a reason."

*Your mind matters!*  
- *Marinez Chambers*

### Why did you choose to teach health?

I chose to teach health because of the possible healthy impact the content can have on our learners. My intent is to teach healthy living that will hopefully carry on for the remainder of students' lives.

### What kinds of things do you cover?

We cover various topics, some of my personal favorites are: mental health, physical health, nutrition, and stress management. I love being a health teacher, it is very rewarding to educate the youth on a topic so relevant to their educational and personal development.

In this issue...

- Teacher interviews
- Student interviews
- School activities this year
- Big moments for kids in Donovan!
- Pi(e) day

# What affects your mental health?

Your mental health can be affected by anything, but mainly by your environment or past. Family, friends, and social media- aren't always a threat to your mental health, as they can also help improve it. Negative and positive comments, plus actions, play a big part of the cause and effect relationship between your mental health and daily encounters. What ever happened that day can affect how you view yourself as a person. Do you like yourself more or less? Comments affect you differently depending on your level of self confidence . If you have a lot of confidence, negative comments would mean nothing to you. If you already have a poor self-image, negative comments will affect your mental health negatively.

## Coping methods

Coping methods are used to ease stress and depression. There are different ways to cope. Some healthy, others unhealthy. Healthy coping methods usually involve listening to music, breathing exercises , reading, or going to therapy. Unhealthy methods involve any form of self-harm or anything that hurts someone else. They are considered unhealthy because coping methods are supposed to help you not harm you.

## How do you cope with stress?

Mr.DeBan:  
I try not to let anything get to me. I was also reassured I have people to rely on.

Ms. Jess:  
I like to take a deep breath and count to five.

Mrs.Kokoszki:  
Through writing is a way I cope; family and friends too.

## Depression

Depression is different for everyone who experiences it. Depression is a common and serious medical illness that negatively affects how you may feel and think. Everyone has different ways of coping (different methods and skills that work for them while they are trying to overcome this hard battle in their lives). People might be struggling with personal battles, and they might not know how to ask for help. It's very important to be mindful of others' feelings, for you never know what people may be struggling with.

## M.H SYMBOL

The green ribbon is worn to show colleagues, loved ones, or simply those you walk past that you care about their mental health.



# Donovan's got Talent

March 30th



Donovan's Got Talent was a show that'll go down in Donovan history! The show had the audience shaking their hips, singing along, and star struck in awe. From the special performance to the "turnt" DJ and the live crowd!

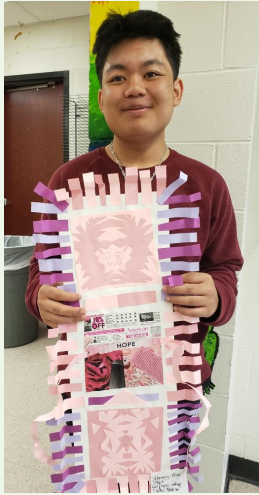
The food was delicious. We were served banana pudding, mac and cheese, greens, and fried chicken. Coming from someone who attended the talent show that meal right there had me going for thirds!





# Art Wall

Utica City School District Art Show

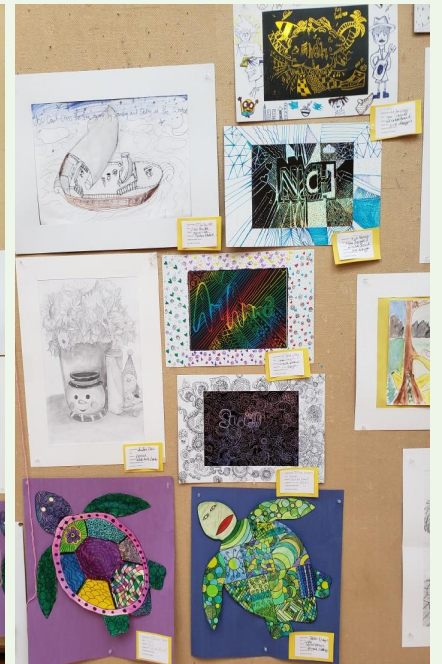


Congratulations to our DMS students whose work was featured in the district-wide art show. Their work is on display at the Utica Public Library!

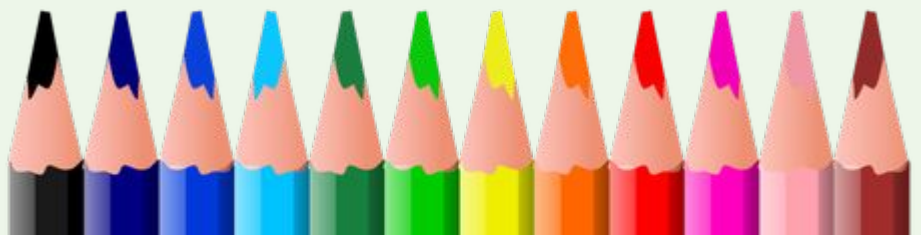
Ariell Bell-Mejas  
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 Ricardo Delgado  
 Kim Lynn Cu  
 Isabella Palmer  
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 Blessing Htoo  
 Amanda Ahmed  
 Raph Sulaipwo

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 Lillian Mosher-Joynt  
 Amalia Davis  
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 Madison Langdon  
 Harper Nappi

Katherine Figueroa  
 Sadiyo Osman  
 Arianna Lilley  
 Eh Doh Gay  
 Nich Neang  
 Jacob Khomych  
 Eh Nee Thaw Htoo  
 Susan Dee  
 Laila Truong



Showing off Amazing Art!





# FENIMORE FEATURES TWO OF OUR OWN

## ART MUSEUM



Lucas Luna and Vizana Srey will be acknowledged at an awards ceremony being held in June at Fenimore pictured above.

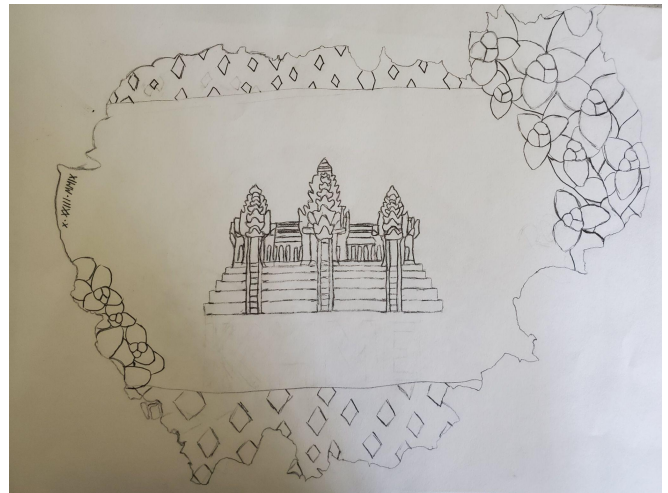
Two of our Donovan students will have their artwork featured at an exhibit in the Fenimore Art Museum.

There were over 300 submissions, with less than 40 selected for the museum. The works Lucas Luna and Vizana Srey created were both selected!

The exhibit is titled “Young at Art! Visions of Identity” and will be displayed at the Fenimore Art Museum from May 27th – July 23rd.



Untitled by Lucas Luna



Khmer Culture by Vizana Srey

## We are Donovan

Together, DMS students created a flag to represent our school that will be shown at the District Art show on May 6. Our flag will be displayed with those created by the other schools in the district.

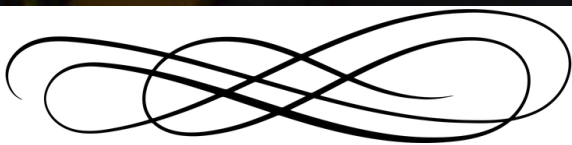
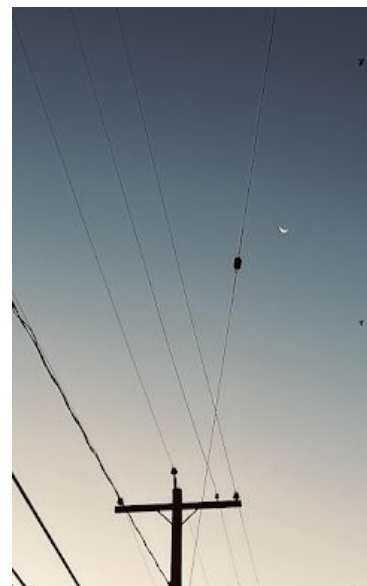
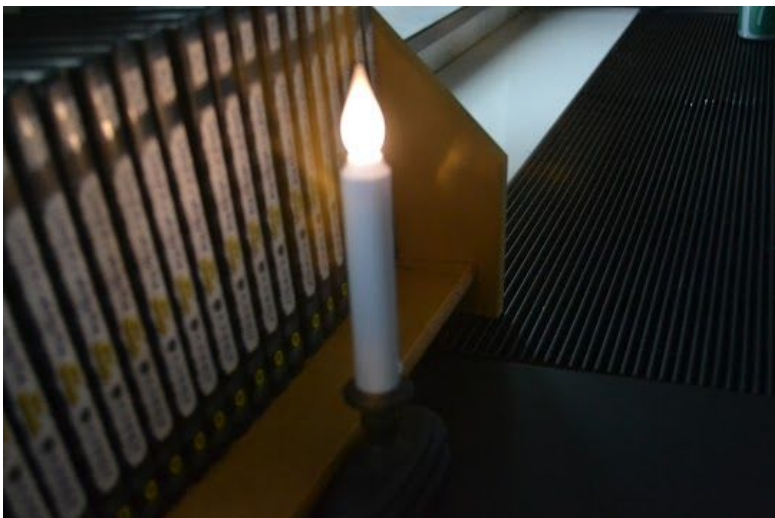
According to Mrs. Pasqualicchio, “students were asked to create a design that represents them and to add a positive word they associate with our school. Some drew, some wrote a lot. Individually they are ok, but all together in the larger flag, they really work well together.”





# Photography Club's Favorite Shots

We asked the Photography Club, run by Mrs. Pedulla, to share some of their favorite pictures from this year.





# Drama Club Reprises High School Musical Jr.

Donovan Drama club students visited The Pines at Utica Center for Health & Rehabilitation after residents asked for a local school to come perform for them. This was the first time schools were allowed to visit since the Pandemic. Students performed the musical numbers from their winter performance of Disney's High School Musical Jr.. One of the residents mentioned she was a retired Music teacher and that this was a nice treat.



The choreography created by Elizabeth Wronka looked amazing in the auditorium and at the performance at The Pines. Thank you for working so hard with the Drama Club to create the dances that bring the songs to life!



"Going to The Pines was an awesome experience because we got to do something that was meaningful to the residents. It was rewarding to see the smiles on their faces when we were done. I am looking forward to going again next year!"  
-Melody Emmons



## Mr. Deban's Thoughts on the Baseball Team:

The 2023 DMS baseball team so far has had its up and downs, but has grown and learned tremendously. Returning players Jems Santana, Justice Pearson, Wyatt Robinson, Carlwin Cepeda, and Eliel Guzman serve as the backbone of the Raiders. Newcomers Josh Montanez, Kole Robinson, Luis De La Cruz, Zayviere Liggins, Jency Estrella, Moises Rumaldo, John Batista, and Jayden Gonzalez round out the roster. What the Raiders lack in experience they more than make up for in energy and love of the game. **From day 1, to now, they have made more progress than any team I have coached** in the past, and I look forward to the future of Utica Baseball.





# What are teachers doing during summer vacation?

Visiting Family  
Hanging out with their children  
Searching for Taylor Swift tickets  
Home improvement projects  
Summer job (working)  
Reading

# What are students doing during summer vacation?

Drawing  
Going outside with friends  
Stay up late to play video games  
Going to Chicago  
Going to Dominican Republic  
Going Swimming  
Playing soccer  
Getting fit  
Relaxing  
Going fishing  
Going to Florida  
Reading  
Summer job(working)  
Camping



By Marinez Chambers

We sat down and interviewed Mrs. Kokoszki and here is what we learned about her.

We asked Mrs. K what subject she teaches and she replied " I teach english." The Spectators went on to ask questions like " what environment do you work best in?, what have you learned from students?, and do you have some advice to students from you?" Getting responses from her point of view, personal preference and experience, we discovered that she likes to work in an "environment where I can demonstrate my creativity and engage with my students in a positive way". She also said, "Students have taught me alot about how young minds work which helps me to better understand how to engage them in learning". When we asked her for some advice for students from an adult who has gone to school and graduated, this was the advice she provided, "Always put your education first because it is something that can never be taken away from you." This advice was very helpful and a memorable quote; especially since it encourages us to go to college, try hard in school to graduate, and become something in life.

With the next few questions we decided to dig a little deeper into Mrs. K's life and ask her about her middle school experience. She told us about it. " I went to a rural middle school which was grade 7-12 in one building and I always missed the diversity that we get here at Donovan. Middle school was rough for me so I try to keep that in mind when dealing with middle schoolers now". This information intrigued us more, especially with the last sentence, so we asked, "how did middle school being rough affect you?" She informed us that she was a sensitive person when she was younger. At 12 and 13 years of age a lot of people picked on her and the way that her middle school experience affected her made her a "stronger and a kinder person".

We asked her more questions. These ones focus on students. "What do you think helps students learn best?" She replied, "Students need a passion, project based learning, and choice in their learning to really engage." Loving her response, we asked what she enjoyed doing with her students and she said " I enjoy doing the end of the year novel and the beginning of the year". We are very familiar with these novels she brought up since we read and loved them. Those novels she hinted at were *The Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Old School* and *A Long Walk to Water*.

Watch the interview.



Thank you to Mr. Colone for filming and setting up the QR code to link readers to the video!

Remembering our mental health appreciation project we also asked "what helps you cope with stress?" And she said "Through writing is a way that I cope, and talking to family and friends". We interviewed a couple of more teachers with this same question and had gotten almost the same response. We can definitely conclude that family and friends play a big part in our lives especially when it comes to comfort.

Students wanted to know more about high school so we asked what to expect. She gave us some motherly advice when she said, "When you get to high school you're gonna be held accountable for what you do there. It will affect your high school experience and college experience so make good choices, work up to your capabilities and take ownership of yourself and choices". We also asked about her college experience and some pros and cons about it. "College was very different from high school and I found it to be easier because I was so driven in high school and had such a structured plan for success that I carried it with me in college. College had a lot more activities to do. I joined the step team and I got to study abroad in London. I could not afford college. I got hardly any help for college financially, so I had to take out loans. A downside [to college] would be the cost." she said. Even though the cost for college is expensive, we know that your education is important and worth the cost. Athletes, kids in clubs, and students with high grades can get scholarships that cover a lot of the cost and help get you into colleges.

This interview with Mrs. K was definitely a favorite. We learned so much about school and things that'll prepare us for the future.

## Mr. Deban

### By Marinez Chambers

We interviewed Mr. Deban and here's what he learned.

This interview focused on Mr. Deban's after school activities as a coach.

The Spectators- "We know you coach football, girls basketball, and baseball. Did you play any of these sports growing up?"

Mr. Deban says he played all three of these as well as hockey.

We asked him a couple of questions about his baseball team, "how would you describe the team?", "do middle school sports differ from high school sports?" and, "do kids on your lacrosse team play different positions depending on their stamina?" Mr. Deban answered all of these questions with confidence stating that his lacrosse team is "a very fun and loving bunch". From his point of view, middle school and high school sports do differ in a way. He explained this by saying "middle school sports are a lot slower than high school and there is a language barrier. Middle school is sort of an introduction". Mr. Deban did answer our question about how stamina plays a big part in what position you play and why. "Yes, lesser stamina doesn't run as much so we give them different positions that don't make them look bad or make a mistake".

Moving forward, we asked questions about the girls basketball team this year. "We had a lot of success, had a lot of good times a lot of kids ended up loving playing sports and new friendships were made." "Who are you looking forward to seeing again next year?" "I look forward to seeing every 7th grader back. They all did a great job!", he complimented.

Wanting to know about physical and athletic abilities on the team we asked, "How would you contrast the taller girls on the basketball team to the shorter ones?" He said, "The shorter ones are usually faster so I keep them away from the hoop to cover more ground. The taller ones I keep close to the rim because the opposing team would have to shoot over them". "Who were some of the fastest players on your team?" "Dakota Zyla, Morgan Magistro, and Raiyah Patterson. Raiyah is a freak athlete. She won the long jump. She beat 17-18 year olds by a foot." We asked, "Who were the best hoopsters on the team?" "The three 7th graders: Layla Colon, Raiyah Patterson, and Morgan Magistro". Leaning in to learn more about the team's best defense we learned that "The best defense was Daniela Cardona. She was very tall and very fast".

We asked Mr. Deban about his football team, "How was the football season this year?" "This football season we went 5 and 2. We lost 2 games. The program is really starting to build up again— especially after covid. I'm excited for football season next year! I'm looking forward to seeing the returners. We lost two coaches so we gotta replace them, but we'll make it work!" We asked Mr. Deban what his favorite moment this year was on the field with his team and here's what he said, "The game Donovan had against Whitesboro. We had a great crowd that game. Even though we lost, it was a good learning moment. We had a hyped crowd too!" Even though it wasn't intended, this response taught us that lessons can be learned anywhere. Learning is an everyday thing even in moments like this where the team lost but still walked away encouraged. What a way to think about something. Make a loss a victory!



### Fun Facts!

Mr. Deban hasn't always wanted to be a teacher, he actually went to college for television!

He has worked for ABC, PBS, and the Discovery Channel, and has met and made documentaries for serial killers. He interviewed Arthur Shawcross and Juana Barraza.

*'From a teachers point of view what do you think helps students learn best?'*

- Spectators

Mr. Deban says that "By showing you care, by having a passion they can pick up on it and show some replication."



## Mr. Anweiler

Daryanna Rivera Mejias

We sat down with Mr. Anweiler and asked him some questions. Here is what he had to say:

We asked why he became a teacher and he said, "Kids are the future, they will be the leaders of our world and it is important to learn life skills throughout the rest of our lives". He also said he chose social studies because he has always loved history and feels it's one massive story that never ends and tells us why the world is how it is today.

Mr. Anweiler feels his methods for teaching help his students learn because he helps them get ready for the real world by incorporating communication skills into a lot of his lessons.

If Mr. Anweiler could only teach students one lesson it would be the story of the area we live in, Utica, the Mohawk Valley, and explain how important it is for the history of the U.S.

One lesson Mr. Anweiler feels the students have taught him is that you never know what's gonna happen when walking into school. That's something he loves about his job.



Some advice Mr. Anweiler has for students is to think before you speak, for you never know how your words may affect others.

Some of the things he does for fun are hiking, camping, and hanging out with friends. Some fun facts about Mr. Anweiler are that he can wiggle his ears on demand, and he has climbed the highest mountain in the lowest 48.

## Ms. Marashian- ELA, ENL, and Lab Teacher

By Jastina Santiago



Why did you choose to teach English?  
I've been a reader all my life. I love books, reading, and grammar.

What have you learned from students?  
Think positively first, and always look for the good.

How was your own middle school experience?  
It started off awful, but 8th grade was so much better.

Do you have any advice for students?  
Always stay true to who you are, even if it's not popular.  
Any high school advice for the 8th graders?  
Find friends who will support you.

What was college like?  
I loved college. I took as many classes as I could.

How did you afford college?  
Loans and scholarships. My parents helped me a lot. I'm lucky.

How long have you been working in this position?  
About 8 years.

Have you always wanted to work in this position or was there another job you wanted? If so, what was it?  
I've worked in human services, as a secretary, and in publishing, but this is what I really want to do.

What kind of music do you listen to?  
Anything before the 2000s.

Describe yourself in 3 words.  
Awkward, intelligent, happy

## Assistant Principal Pecheone

By David Amici



The first question I asked was if there will be any major changes next year. She replied with the fact she has no idea about any changes for next year.

I also asked her how many kids she sees in 106 in an average day. Ms. Pecheone claims she sees 15-20 kids a day.

Ms. Pecheone “loves working at Donovan.” I asked why she became a vice principal and she claimed that she wanted an opportunity to meet students and work with teachers.

I asked her if she is aiming to become a principal one day, but she said “no, the principal role usually does not work with students and that is what I want to do”.

**New Faces in 106**

## Miss Jess

By Daryanna Rivera- Mejias

We sat down and interviewed Miss Jess and we learned:

Miss Jess used to go to Donovan Middle School as a student. Before joining us here at DMS Miss Jess worked as a preschool teacher. Her dream has always been to work within a school, the position never mattered. She just wanted to work in a school.

One of her favorite parts of her job is that she is able to build relationships with students and staff. She says she enjoys her job and likes to describe it as “organized chaos”. We asked her if it was more difficult joining our school in the middle of the year to which she said yes, “because I had to figure out where everything was from the last working person, and I felt like a substitute, until a week or two after working here”.

A typical work day for Miss Jess starts off by finishing leftover work from the previous day, address changing if needed, and helping other staff complete work.



Some advice Miss Jess has for students for college is to try your hardest to stay on top of work. Some other advice for school and college is that you have many amazing teachers and support staff to help mold you into young educated people to prepare you for the future. So be very appreciative just as she is from her time being a student here.

Fun fact about Miss Jess: she went to highschool and college with Miss Mancuso and Miss Mancuso’s twin sister.



## An Interview with Ms. Scalise

When we here at The Spectator heard that our new counselor has made a big impact in her short time here, we knew we had to ask her some questions.



Where did you work before you joined us at DMS?

I am proud to have worked for the UCSD since 2003 between Proctor and Donovan schools!

What is a typical day like for you?

Up early, busy busy at DMS, play with pups, food, family and rest!

What is your favorite part of your job?

Sharing life and love with students!

What is something you wish students knew? (Or a piece of advice for students.)

Ask for help, accept help, and help others! These are the things that keep us connected!

What do you do to help combat stress?

Enjoy nature, animals, yoga, prayer, gratitude!

Are there any random facts about you that students might be surprised to hear?

I lived in 5 states and 8 cities, think I was a medicine woman in another life, would love to learn the Bosnian or Arabic language, believe in angels and aliens.

## An Interview with Ms. Peters

By Christaliz Vasquez Cruz

Why did you decide to work at DMS?

I was looking to still be a part of Utica and work with a diverse population.

What was your job before working at DMS?

House of Good Shepherd Foster Care

How do you feel about your job and about working with middle schoolers?

I love it! There are some days where it's so busy I don't even get to eat my lunch!

What does a typical work day look like?

It usually starts with a student or two having a difficult morning. Some students need counseling, some who need check-ins, and I talk with parents.

Is there any advice you have for students?

Learn how to love yourself. If you feel good about yourself and you spread that goodness to others, you tend to be more happy and successful.

What was college like?

I enjoyed college, but it was a lot of hard work and challenging. One aspect I really liked about college was you got to pick classes that interest you. There was definitely a lot of work, a lot of papers, but the feeling of walking across the stage is just amazing.



Was this your dream job if not, what was?

Yeah, I always wanted to work with kids. I like helping others; helping students and their families is just so good.

What do you like to do for fun?

I love to be outside. Especially hiking. I like to play sports with my boys, mostly baseball and football. I like to read too.

Do you have any pets?

I do! I have a dog named Fenway, a golden retriever! I'm getting another golden retriever named Tessie!! And I have a cat!

Are there any interesting facts about you that might be surprising?

I named my children after the television show Supernatural.

I played Cinderella in high school when my drama club did Cinderella the Musical.

# Lets go raiders!

Moments from the 2022-2023 school year.

Student council



Pi Day



Snapshot from the winter dance.



District Art Show



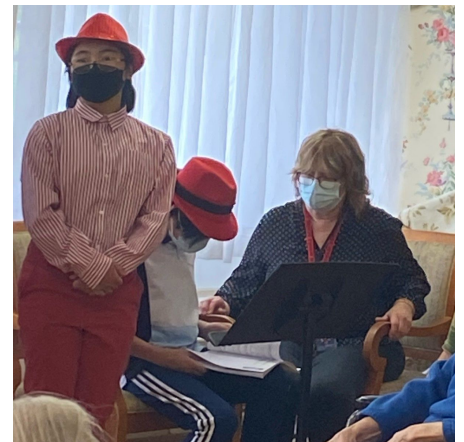
Football

## Donovan Fashion

Donovan this year was a blast! From watching some of our favorite teachers get pied in the face to the talent show that was exciting to watch. We've also done a lot of things to show our appreciation for other things such as Black History Month Club, our mental health month school wide project, and helping students in need with the school pantry. This is what we like to call true Donovan fashion. Can't wait for next year! Let's Go Raiders!



Mental Health Awareness Day!



Drama club

## DMS



Freedom Writers



# Student Voices

## What is your favorite memory from this year?

Making the friends that I have now.

Going to the playground after school.

My soccer team.

Getting a prize from Mr. Singleton.

My social studies class.

The semi formal and the winter dance.

Marquice freestyling.

Ms. O'Herien dressing up as Rainbow Dash.

Pi Day

## How do you feel about your peers ?

*I love them and they are the reason why I look forward to school - Shi Shi Htoo*

## What do you like most about your sports teammates ?

*They are funny and kind plus the coaches are great! - Shi Shi Htoo*

## What's your favorite school subject?

*Math- Shi Shi Htoo*

## Would you describe yourself as shy or outgoing?

*I'm a very anxious and shy person, but I open up when I know you -Jastina Santiago*

## Who is the staff member who helped you the most during your time at DMS?

Ms. Hyde

Mr. Zaleski

Mr. Elliott

Mr. Garrett

Ms. O'Herien

Ms. Edick

Mrs. Conner

Ms. Roundtree

Mrs. Tessmer

Ms. Linda

Mr. Mullen

Marvin

Ms. Beach

Mr. Singleton

Mrs. Mihajlavic

Ms. Broadbent

Mrs. Wherle

Cafeteria Staff

Mr. Deban

Ms. Colon

Mrs. Simons

Mrs. Wronka

Mrs. Egresitis

Ms. Peters

## Advice to Future 8th Graders From This Year's 8th Graders

Try your best and focus on your work.

Be on time.

Don't stress too much, just try your best and be happy. Your mental health come first.

Don't let anyone pressure you to do bad things.

Just do your work even if you want to talk to friends or go on your phone.

Be polite and don't goof around.

If you have a problem, don't ignore it, inform teachers.

# WE ARE DONOVAN



## Spectator Staff:

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Club Advisor: Ms. O'Herien

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