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Principal's Message

Panther Family,

Thank you for your partnership during the first semester at Cypress Lake High School Center for the Arts! Our hardworking Panthers are to be commended on the way they are progressing through the school year. Students have been busy around campus with arts events, clubs, activities and athletics. We thank our students, parents, and community members for all their support. As we turn the corner and begin a new semester, we want to thank the students, staff and parents for their role in making the first two quarters successful.

Second semester is the time to finish strong. Academic focus is a priority. The spring can be a busy time with performances, sports, activities and testing. Use the Google Classroom along with monitoring FOCUS to see where assignments are posted to stay organized. Grades are posted and parents (and students!) can monitor them by using the Focus program. For information on how to sign up and passwords visit <https://lee.focusschoolsoftware.com/focus/>.

Panthers are planners!

The instructional calendar for next semester is posted [here](#).

The instructional calendar for the school year 2023-2024 is posted [here](#).

It is the season of reflection and warmth. We express our gratitude for your continued partnership this year. We wish all members of the Panther family good health throughout winter. This time of year brings a greater sense of belonging and a renewed perspective on all of the values that make Cypress Lake High School such a special place. Thank you for your part in that.

Angela Roles
Principal



To download a pdf version of this newsletter, go to
<http://www.academypublishing.com/schools/cypresslake/cypresslake.php>
Translation of the newsletter is available in Spanish and Creole. Contact the Main Office for details.

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Issue #1

The School Board of Lee County, Florida

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The School Board of Lee County, Florida, prohibits discrimination on the basis of age, color, disability, gender, national origin, marital status, religion, or sexual orientation.

Sunshine State Scholar



BIG congratulations go out to ZEKE DUBE-GARRETT. He is one of 3 students in the district selected to represent us at the SUNSHINE STATE SCHOLARS program in Orlando. Cypress is so proud of his hard work and dedication!

Each of the scholars, along with their parents, will travel to Orlando, May 2 - May 3, 2024, for an extraordinary two-day program. This year's program will bring 112 high school STEM scholars together to conduct a "think tank" on tough Florida challenges. **CLICK HERE** for more information on the Sunshine State Scholars program.

As a result of their STEM accomplishments, the School Board will recognize these students during a future School Board Meeting.

Congratulations to Zeke for representing Lee County Schools in exemplary fashion!

19th Annual Special Olympics

Kudos and a BIG Panther ROAR to Todd Dusenberry for his work to organize our annual Be A Buddy Special Olympics Day on Friday, December 8th. It was so amazing for our kids to feel the way they did; it is truly a special experience for the athlete and the buddy assisting them through each event. Principal Roles appreciates the teamwork from so many here to create this experience for our entire district! Cypress is a place like no other. Moments like this are so incredibly important to all of us right now!

Well done, Todd. Thank you for creating this moment for our kids (and adults!)



District Student

Athlete of the Month

We are so panther proud of Kasey Morisset! Kasey was selected for the first ever District Student Athlete of the Month. The video featuring her was posted on our school district's webpage. On Tuesday, October 3rd, Kasey was also selected as the student representative to serve as part of the school board action meeting.



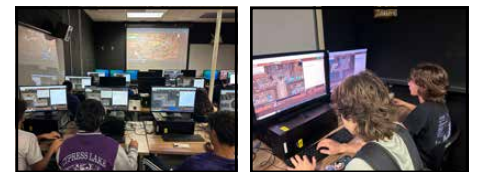
SAVE Promise Club



The Cypress Lake SAVE Promise Club delivered notes of kindness to Starbucks for World Kindness Day, Nov. 13. The SAVE Promise Club is a club focused on spreading positivity and non-violence within schools. This is the first year that Cypress Lake is offering the club. The club sponsor is Mrs. Shannon Knudsen. If students would like to join, use the google classroom code mcfhgh7.

Hour of Code

The CTE classes participated in the district's Hour of Code on December 6th. Students learned different coding styles, like HTML and JavaScript, through game play websites.



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Parents of Seniors...

FAFSA will open by December 31st. Getting this completed over winter break would be great! Remember you will be completing the 2024-2025 FAFSA if your student is starting college in the Fall and you'll be using your 2022 tax information. If your student is starting college in summer of 2024, you will also need to complete the 2023-2024 FAFSA using your 2021 taxes. Please e-mail Ms. Atkinson if you have any questions Ranaeaa@leeschools.net.

We have two FAFSA help days scheduled on campus during the day: **Thursday, January 25th and Thursday, February 22nd**. We also have one FAFSA evening scheduled for **Monday, January 22nd from 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm** in our school library. A sign-up sheet will go out to seniors about 2 weeks prior to these dates to sign up.

The Wicked Walk

Members of our orchestra department participated in the Wicked Walk at the Sidney Berne Davis Center for Halloween. We partnered with NFMHS and played for a total of 4.5 hours over two days. It was a LOT of work, but fun! Thank you to those who came out to support us!

MUSICIANS

Gianna Bowser,
Jadon Fisk,
Angela Flores-Perez, Estrella Flores-Perez,
Amy Grochowski,



Anna Jones, Jaden Jones, Benjamin Manekin, Isabella Moon, Evelyn Mufalli, Olivia Mufalli, Kaeden Musich, Breanna Pawlak, Lewis Sigfrids, Iris Williams, and Jason Zarate-Vazquez

Senior Scholarships...

Please remember to look at the SCHOLARSHIP SECTION of your SENIORS Google Classroom to look for available scholarship applications.

Some local scholarship deadlines –
Lee County Red Sox Scholarship –
DUE January 12th

<https://www.redsoxfoundation.org/leecountyscholarship/#:~:text=In%20Spring%202024%2C%20the%20Lee-Cape%20Coral%20High%20School>

The Collaboratory Program –
DUE January 12th

<https://collaboratory.org/more/our-scholarships-program/>

Collier Community Foundation –
DUE February 6th

<https://colliercf.org/scholarships/apply-for-scholarships/>



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What To Do

AFTER Graduation?

Helping our students find the right path post-graduation is important and Ms. Atkinson is helping our kids figure it out! The 2nd week of November, she took 30 students to tour FSW, another group of seniors to tour FMTC, and on Nov 16th, she invited FSW to come to our campus for our annual FSW Decision Day. 70 seniors were accepted to FSW in ONE DAY!! Amazing things are happening at Cypress Lake.



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Panther JROTC News

Our Panther Robotics Teams competed in the Best in Southwest Robotics VRC competition in Naples, FL; one team placed 9th overall in the competition. Way to go!

Panther Marksmanship Team conducted try-outs; 14 Cadets qualified for the team and prepared to compete in the south zone competition and Mariner Invitational.

The Cypress Lake HS JROTC Female Raider Team attended the National Raider competition at Fort Knox, KY from November 2nd-6th. They competed in the master's level. All teams competed in five events. The Physical Team Test, Cross Country Rescue, Gauntlet, 5K run, and Rope Bridge. Master's and All Services categories also conducted the Ultimate Raider challenge. Please congratulate them when you see them.

The Raiders are Moriah Anderson, Layla Salamone, Leah Blackwell, Karynna Santiago, Anya Mencarelli, Neveah Gonzalez, Catalina Gardner, Isabella Gardner, Christina Joseph, Kailany Klabunde, Eva Ebert, and Herimone Portillo.

CLHS JROTC Cadets proudly and respectfully participated in Veteran's Day events across the community at the Landings Veterans Club, Legends Veterans Recognition Ceremony, Bridgetown Veterans Club with Fort Myers Mayor Ken Anderson and Mission BBQ in Fort Myers.

World War II Vet Turns 100 Years Old!

CLHS JROTC was honored to participate in the 100th Birthday Celebration and Community Parade for World War II Army Veteran, Sergeant Rodney Fodor, who served in the Pacific during WWII. He and his family live around the corner from Cypress Lake High School where he remains active in the community and with his family. Many thanks to the Community Cooperative for organizing this special recognition and affording the opportunity for our students to participate.



Panther Theatre Company

Our Panther Theatre Company participated in the SWFL Theatrical Society One-Act Festival and the Individual Event Festival. Ms. Crussard is so proud to report that our entire Theatre Department earned a Superior rating in at least one of their events. Not a single Theatre student came home without a Superior ribbon. That is quite an achievement!

- In total we brought home ribbons in
- 32 Individual Events:
- 26 Superior Events
- 6 Excellent Events
- 3 Best in Rooms for Large Group Musical, Duet Musical, Student-Directed Scene
- 1 Scholarship winner (Marianna Young)
- 121 Superior Ribbons
- 8 Excellent Ribbons

And Kalyssa Kennelly earned Stand-Out cast member for Student-Directing our One-Act, *The Insanity of Mary Girard*, which also earned a Superior rating. Please join us in congratulating our 100% Superior Theatre Department. They worked so hard and deserve all the praise!

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Look at Me Now!

The 16th album from The A Cappella Group has arrived. We hope you will check it out. It has two original songs. "Stars on the Ceiling" by Kristin Noble is track three. It is about her dealing with ending one chapter of her life and moving on to the next phase in college, away from

home. "Amateur" by Jasmine Cosby is a very catchy tune wrapping in lyrics about a boy who does her wrong. That theme has worked well for Taylor Swift and Olivia Rodrigo, and I think works very well for Jasmine as well.

The cover art by TAG alum Annie Vardanyan brilliantly takes 21 faces of the group to form a unified face of the group.

If you are a big TAG fan, you can get the album on BandCamp and see all the information about who is singing each solo, the arranger, vocal percussion etc. All the lyrics of all songs are also on BandCamp.

Senior Superlatives

Congrats to our 2024 Senior Superlative winners! The winners will be featured in this year's yearbook! If you haven't purchased one yet, it's not too late. You may contact Ms. Atkinson at RanaeAA@leeschools.net.



Broadway Star of the Future Awards!

We are super excited and proud to share that *Holiday Inn* has been nominated for 8 Broadway Star of the Future awards. As nominees, we will be invited to attend and possibly perform at the Tonys-style awards ceremony in Tampa this May. Aubrey Barnhouse is also in the running to move on to the next round where she could qualify to compete for a Jimmy Award in NYC (very big opportunity for her).

Congratulations to everyone. It was a wonderful show, and we are so proud of all our panthers.

- Outstanding Musical
- Outstanding Director-Carmen Crussard
- Outstanding Choreographer-Nancy Burnham
- Outstanding Performer in a Leading Role-Aubrey Barnhouse
- Outstanding Performer in a Supporting Role-Marianna Young
- Outstanding Dancer in a Musical-Cayden Pacheco
- Outstanding Technical Achievement-Costume Design
- Outstanding Technical Achievement-Hair/Makeup Design



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WRITTEN BY THE STUDENTS

Teacher Interview

By Sarah Velencia

My name is Ms. Torza I teach honors geometry, AICE math, and AP calculus AB. I teach grades 9-12. I've always wanted to teach math. I started out here teaching only geometry, but when they asked me to take on AICE math and AP calc, I decided I was up for the challenge. This is my third-year teaching at Cypress, but I also taught in Alabama and Louisiana before coming here. My favorite part of being at Cypress is the administration I get to work for. They've always been very supportive of our achievements, and they allow me to teach my classroom freely in the way I best see fit. If you're looking for classes to be a part of, I'd recommend trying something



new, or something you may be interested in. I personally think anything my next door neighbor Ms. Camp teaches is a great option; kids seem to have fun and learn a lot in her classes.

Junior Student Interview

By Sarah Velencia



My name Is Bennett Wilcoxson. I am a Junior here at Cypress. I am in 2 honors classes this year and continuing my journey in the Theater company. I think my favorite part about being in the department is doing the compliment circles; it really brings us all closer together.

I am not currently on any sports teams. My advice for the rising students at Cypress is to just live and enjoy the moment. You should also invest in a planner. I find them useful. If I could recommend any classes I would say take any theater classes; I've learned so much not just about theater, but about life.

Freshman Interview

By Sarah Velencia



Lydia Schuller is a 15-year-old freshman at Cypress Lake High. She is starting out her high school career by challenging herself with 3 accelerated classes in her roster, Honors Biology, Honors Geometry, and AICE English General Paper. She was accepted into our

theater program over the summer, and since then she has acted, sang, danced, and worked behind the scenes on multiple productions from the Center for the Arts. She goes above and beyond expectations for a freshman. She says that even though she has no specific favorite from her current high school memories, she cherishes the ones she's made within the theater department. She is not currently playing any sports for Cypress, but she says that may change in the future. When asked how high school compares to middle school, she said she considers it to be much better than her middle school experience because there is so much freedom and opportunities to take classes she is interested in. She recommends Ms. Crussard as a teacher because even though she spends 3 hours of her life with her every day, she says she thoroughly enjoys each one of them. Along with this, she recommends the theater classes here at Cypress and her AICE General Paper class. Lydia is also looking forward to the classes she will take next year. Overall, she says she enjoys being a freshman at Cypress and is having a lot of fun in her first year in high school. Good luck Lydia on your high school journey!

Teacher Interview

By Araksay Avila-Martinez

Mrs. Christina Johnson is one of our math teachers here at Cypress Lake High who specializes in Probability and Statistics, along with Algebra 2 Honors.

Mrs. Johnson loved education and the idea of teaching. Being a teacher had always been something she was fond of becoming. Though at some point, like many little girls, she wanted to become a veterinarian, which later changed to pediatrics. But, even so, her love for education towered above all else. With the influence from teachers of her own, she grew to find it even more interesting and led her to the path she is on currently.

Mrs. Johnson has now been teaching for 28 years, 5 of which are here at Cypress. CLHS is the school in which she says she loves their school pride and where the people, faculty, and staff members are a joy to be around.



Through College Board, the following Cypress Lake students have been awarded the National Hispanic Recognition Award: Alisyia Delgado and Evelyn Mufalli.

The following Cypress Lake students have been awarded the National African American Recognition Award: Mali Dennis and Naya James.

The following Cypress Lake student has been awarded the National Indigenous Award: Naya James.

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SPECIFIC AWARD.**



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Band Student Interview

By Cooper Vandermeer

Caitlyn Holmes is a ninth grader originally from Estonia, a beautiful country in Europe. She is currently enrolled in Biology and Geometry honors classes. On top of those two high stake classes, she is a part of the Center for the Arts concert band! She expressed that her favorite memories at this school are setting up instruments with her bandmates. She mentioned those moments were a core part of strengthening her bond with her friends which led to better teamwork with her musical counterparts. When asked to recommend a class, she chose band! She stated that Mr. Webb was a very caring teacher who paid attention to her learning and future.

Penny's Perspective

Each issue Penny will tackle YOUR questions and help you solve any of life's problems. Simply submit your question on the grade level google classroom where you see Penny's picture.



Q: What should you do when you feel like the whole world is slamming into you all because of one person?

A: If that is how you feel I think you should evaluate whether that's someone you want in your life. If someone can have that much of an impact on you as one person, good or bad, that's probably not good. Hypothetically, if you're only happy when you're around them, what are you going to do when they aren't there? And if they make you so upset it kills your mood for the rest of the day, why would you continue to be around someone who makes you feel that way?

Q: What is the best way to be successful in high school?

A: I would say that the best way to be successful is to be involved and create good habits. I find the best habits to be created through routine. You could wake up at a set time in the morning, complete your homework at specific times after school to save time for yourself, make sure you have days to work on what you need to, etc. (side note: always take extra credit; it's worth it). Being involved can look good on college applications because it shows you are willing to put in extra effort for your school. Along with that, you can learn a lot and even make some new friends!

Q: How do I ask my girlfriend what her favorite animal is without being suspicious? I want to get her something for Christmas.

A: You could ask her to play a get to know you game like 20 questions or something along those lines. You could also learn other stuff about her for later holidays with a game like that. I also think that you could ask her straight up mixed in with other questions too. What is her favorite color or favorite food, for example. This would allow you to play the questions off as you just being curious or getting to know her.

Q: Should I apply to college as a Junior?

A: Unfortunately, you can only apply to college as a Senior. However, if you have the credits, you have other options you may speak to your counselor about. You could also apply to Dual enrollment for senior year if you wanted to get a feeling for what college would be like.

Q: How do I balance sports and a job as a senior?

A: Honestly, it depends on the sport. If you have a sport or sports that require a lot of time and attendance that could be difficult on your schedule. However, I think that being very specific with your job about your hours and taking the sports' times into account, it should be easier than adapting the other way around. If you already have the job and are doing the sport, I would discuss your hours with your manager.

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To Addressee or Current Resident

End of Fall Season Athletic News

- Girls' golfer Emma Erfourth competed at the LCAC tournament and placed 25th.
- Boys' and girls' swim teams competed at districts, and many were able to shave time off their personal bests!
 - Our girls 400m relay team was placed on the regional advancing sheet as 1 of 2 alternate teams.
- Boys and girls Cross Country competed in LCACs at the Cape Coral Sports Complex and ran great races. Several of our runners were able to cut down on their personal best times!
- Boys' bowling placed 5th in the district and LCAC!!
- Girls bowling finished in 2nd place at LCACs and 3rd place at districts.
 - Our girls' team sent 2 to **STATES!!!!** **Cole Kennedy** and **Mackenzey Stouffer** should be congratulated on this achievement!
- Boys Golf finished in 5th place as a team at the district tournament.
 - We are also proud that **Jamie Lowry** tied for 4th place out of 43 golfers to advance as an individual to the **regional** tournament!

Cross-country

The cross-country team traveled to GT Bray Park in Bradenton on November 1st for their District meet. Although they aren't advancing to Regionals, everyone did an awesome job! Our top boy was Eli Clemens who finished the 5K race with time of 19:42.90, and our top girl was Mya Jenkinson with a time of 27:38.73.

Many cross-country teams plateau mid-season and don't keep seeing personal records like we saw every meet. Our team was mostly underclassmen, so Coach Williamson is very excited to see their progression next year. Thanks for your support this season! The team is small, so if you have any students who'd be interested in joining the team, please let her know.



Pictured left to right.

- Jace Jenkinson
- Mya Jenkinson
- Valeska Perez
- Jacob Thomas
- Eli Clemens
- Gavin Varnado
- Robert Ellsworth (isn't attending Districts but is on the team)
- Nolan McKinnon
- Coach Williamson



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