

An illustration of a person's legs and feet from the knees down. They are wearing light blue socks and white sneakers with grey laces. The left shoe has a black star logo on the side. The background consists of numerous concentric, wavy lines in shades of maroon, pink, and brown, creating a tunnel-like or ripple effect around the feet.

# Step into someone else's shoes



Volume 105 Issue 3 March 2023

# In this issue...

04

Is GJHS accessible?  
**Roll a mile in someone else's shoes.**

06

Winter break recap  
**See what Tigers do while on break.**

08

Get to know the GJHS nurse  
**The inner-workings of Melissa McConnell's Job**

10

Bullying at GJHS  
**Read what its like to experience bullying.**

12

English or Not  
**What it's like for non-native English speakers.**

14

Home Sweet Home  
**GJHS twins find happiness in adoptive home.**

16

Step into the athletic trainer's shoes  
**Erin Galvan helps GJHS atheltes.**

18

Custodians keep GJHS clean  
**Meet the head custodian who keeps GJHS clean.**

20

Bus driving through town  
**See how the wheels go round for GJHS students.**

22

OPINION: Cafeteria Hell  
**Read Connor's experiences with the GJHS cafeteria.**

## Policy

The Orange & Black, a legally recognized public forum for student expression, is published four to six times a year by the digital publishing and news magazine class for students of Grand Junction High School. Expression made by students in the exercise of the freedom of speech or freedom of press is not an expression of District <sup>51</sup> school board policy. The views expressed in The Orange & Black do not necessarily represent the views of the entire staff, adviser, GJHS administration or the Mesa Valley School District administration. Board policy regarding student publications (JICE, JICE-R) is available in the journalism room or in the principal's office.

## Letters to the Editor

The Orange & Black welcomes and encourages letters to the editors. This is a chance to express your viewpoint on important issues. Letters should be limited to 250 words. They will be edited for space and legal considerations, but not for inaccuracies, grammar or spelling. Letters must contain information pertinent to the students of GJHS. The staff retains the right to not publish any letter not meeting these requirements. Unsigned letters will not be published. Please submit typed letters in person to Room 140-141 or via email or to steve.fox@d51schools.org

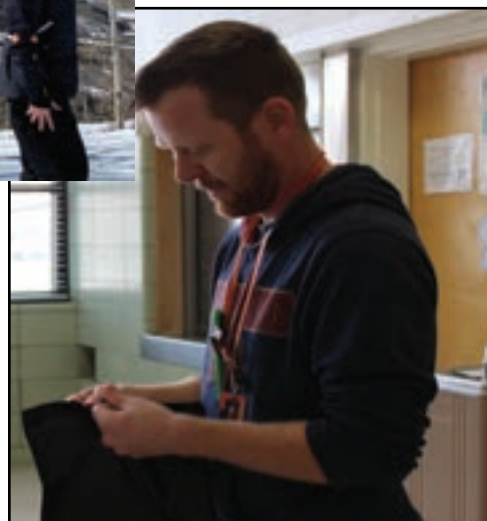
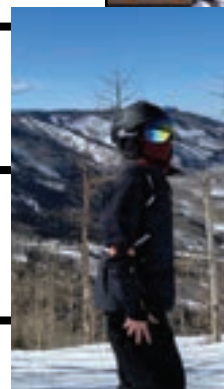
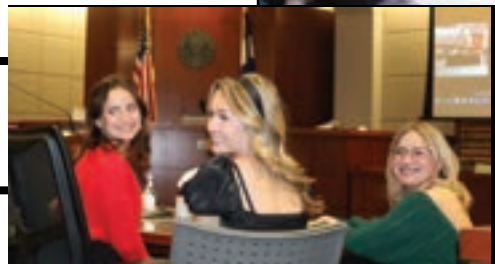
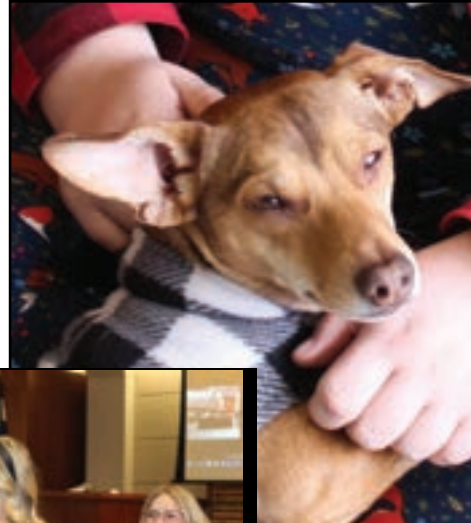
## Cost

Single copies free. Where available, additional copies of this paper are available for purchase for 50 cents each. Contact The Orange & Black for information. Taking more than one copy of this paper with the intent to prevent other individuals from reading this edition of the paper is prohibited (C.R.S. 18-4-19). Violators are subject to prosecution and penalty under C.R.S. 13-21-123.

## Contact

The Orange & Black, Grand Junction High School, 1400 N. Fifth St., Grand Junction, CO 81501.  
Phone: 970-254-6900.

Adviser e-mail:  
steve.fox@d51schools.org





# A Letter From the Editor

Everyone around GJHS is living their own story, dealing with things we may never know about. We all have our own narratives we are experiencing right now, and the outside world will never understand what it truly means to walk a mile in our shoes.

Going through the day looks different for every student. When you wake up, what you eat for breakfast, when and how you get to school, what class is 1st hour, if you like your teacher, and if you did that homework last night.

And that's only the first few hours.

The endless choices throughout the day combine to create who we are. Each person is living their choices, creating the unique individuals that we call friends, teachers, admin, officers, or classmates.

Only you know the inner workings of your story, how you take your coffee, what classes are the hardest,

and what you do to preserve your lucky jersey. Nobody knows how stressed you are about this newspaper being sent to print or the next big game.

Nobody knows how it feels to be you, to walk in your shoes. That's what makes us all unique. We Are us.

Each of us is an expert at our own story, but we never know what someone is living through, so it makes it all the more important that we give others a little bit of grace. You never know how much giving a small compliment may brighten someone's day, week, or year. It's so important, especially during one of the most stressful months of the school year, to be kind to others. With the passing of the annual Kindness Is Contagious week, we as Tigers are reminded to foster kindness within our hearts and spread the love around.

Stay kind Tigers. And look out for your peers.

-izzy cornelison



Alondra Sanchez  
Managing Editor



Hailey Shane  
Reporter



Becca Nedohon  
Online Editor



Izzy Cornelison  
Editor in Chief



Connor Kinser  
Reporter



Kate Davis  
Reporter

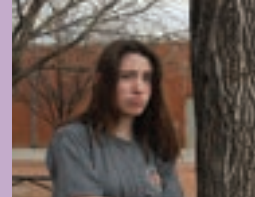


Eli Schultz  
Reporter



Kori Antonides  
Reporter

## Meet The Staff



Lila Mottram  
Reporter



Marie Calkins  
Reporter



Maddie Behrman  
Reporter



Mercedes Candland  
Reporter



Maddy Parkhurst  
Photo Editor



Serenity Schmidt  
Reporter



Miah Hines  
Promotion Director



Spencer Penkaty  
Reporter

## Corrections from Issue 2

A name was misspelled in the December issue: Senior Luiz Aguirre is a member of the boys soccer team.

The Orange & Black strives to produce a publication that is free of errors and also understands that is a lofty goal few achieve. Please contact Editor in Chief Izzy Cornelison by email at [icorneli@d5lschools.org](mailto:icorneli@d5lschools.org) with information regarding corrections in this edition.

**G**rand Junction High School prides itself on welcoming people from all walks of life, and providing education to prepare its students for secondary education or a promising career in our world.

However, we all know how old the building is - and having been built in 1956 doesn't guarantee an easily accessible building for everyone.

Of all the buildings on the entire campus, there are zero automatic doors. This poses a serious issue for people who use wheelchairs, canes, walkers, or adaptive equipment when trying to enter a building or class. Room to practice independence as much as possible is incredibly important, especially at a building preparing young people for their futures.

Not only is this vital for providing an inclusive environment to students, but staff and families as well. Sporting events, concerts and tours are all events that are advertised for all types of people, so why shouldn't they be accessible to everyone?

GJHS assistant principal Heather O'Brien had a similar experience at a CMU basketball game, while she was using a wheelchair post-surgery.

"There wasn't any safe place for me to be on the floor, so I went up a level and back behind the stairs to a landing. It was an open space, and I decided to sit there," said O'Brien. "It had thick bars blocking the view of the court, and I don't know if that landing was made for disabled people in wheelchairs, so I backed up from the railing, and it was like I was invisible."

Despite wearing a bright orange jacket and donning purple hair at the time, multiple people ignorantly stood in front of O'Brien at the game, blocking her view of the court.

"That happened multiple times, like different kids and adults. They didn't even notice, and it made me think about how many times I may have accidentally cut someone off or gotten impatient with someone," said O'Brien. "It definitely gave me a new perspective."

# Is GJHS accessible?

## Roll a mile in someone else's wheels

story by becca **nedohon**  
photo by hailey **shane** &  
marie **calkins**

There have been things done to accommodate students and staff in the main building. Students may check out the elevator key to access classes in the Upper U. However, this doesn't make school life simple for people with disabilities, or those who use adaptive equipment.

"I'm late to class a lot," said GJHS freshman Liam Dinelli, who uses a wheelchair. "The science buildings are the worst, though."

Due to the extremely uneven sidewalks and pavement that is particularly rough by the science buildings, Dinelli finds it difficult to make it to his classes on time.

"Sometimes my teachers mark me tardy, it depends though," said Dinelli.

The struggle doesn't end at 3:15, however. Because there are no ramps in either gyms, there are no decent places for people in wheelchairs to view basketball and volleyball games.

"I'm in front of the bleachers while everyone is standing, but once everyone sits down I have to move closer to the exits," Dinelli explained about his experience at high school sporting events. There are no safe spaces for Dinelli to sit and watch the game, while participating with the student section and being near his classmates.



**GJHS freshman Liam Dinelli depends on a wheelchair to get around campus. The area around the 400 building is especially difficult to navigate.**



# Make Every Lap Count!

## Orchard Mesa pool's temporary closure and its effects of the GJHS swim team

Despite the Orchard Mesa pool's temporary closure, the Grand Junction High School girls' swim team continued to stick with their passions and proceed with the sport.

The Orchard Mesa pool closed after the second week of girl's swim pre-season, which is in November, due to an issue with the boiler. This temporary closure was also an issue for the GJHS swim team since the OM pool was where they practiced, and they didn't have many other options of pools to practice at.

Fluctuating between practicing at the Fruita pool and CMU pool caused confusion in terms of scheduling and made it difficult to set up practices, and even more difficult to ensure everyone could show up to practices.

Swimmers on the team weren't the only ones confused with the change, this sudden switch was troublesome for parents, too. Scheduling around work times and practice made showing up to each practice a hassle.

Not to mention Fruita and CMU have their own needs for pool time.

"Coach Denise has done her best to get the team in for swim time at the end of every week," said GJHS sophomore swimmer Whitney Stortz. "Fruita has their own team who needs the pool and CMU has extracurriculars they need the pool for."

But even with this difficulty, the team showed up when they could and did the best they could during practices, meets, and at state finals. GJHS sophomore Whitney Stortz finished in fifth place at the Colorado state finals on Feb. 9 in the 100-yard freestyle.

"People were more motivated to swim when they could," said GJHS sophomore swimmer Zoe Plumb.

After roughly two months, the Orchard Mesa pool reopened.

Before this reopening, the team had already had meets during the time they were wavering between practicing at Fruita and practicing at CMU. With the struggle of scheduling and the sudden change, the team wasn't sure how well they'd do at said meets.

But, as Plumb mentioned, the struggles that came with the changes helped the team to grow stronger; the inconveniences that were caused in this confusion only increased these girls' motivations.

But even through their hard work at both meets and throughout the season, the

swim team barely gets much recognition in the school.

"It doesn't always feel like we represent the school, but I do feel like we represent GJHS more this year than we did last year because there's more involvement and more people on the team," said Plumb. "But swim still goes under peoples' noses and is kind of ignored."

"It's like we represent the school at meets, but at school we aren't recognized for representing the school," Stortz said.

Though the swim season ended in February, there are still ways to help our swim team feel more represented.

"It would be a lot to ask for people to support us as much as they support football and basketball, but showing up to our meets in town really means a lot," stated GJHS swimmer Kyla Hart. "And even just asking how meets went if you know someone who's on the team is great."

State for girls' swim was Feb. 8-11 at Adams 12 Veterans Memorial Aquatic Center, and four girls from GJHS qualified. Sophomore Kylee Mull qualified for the 100-yard breaststroke, senior Olivia Langer and freshman Emily Hardin qualified for the 50 freestyle, senior Abby Price qualified for the 50 freestyle, 100 freestyle, 100 backstroke, and 100 backstroke, and Stortz qualified for every individual event except for the 500 freestyle.

### Whitney Stortz swimming her way through state.



story by lila mottram  
photo submitted by  
the swim team

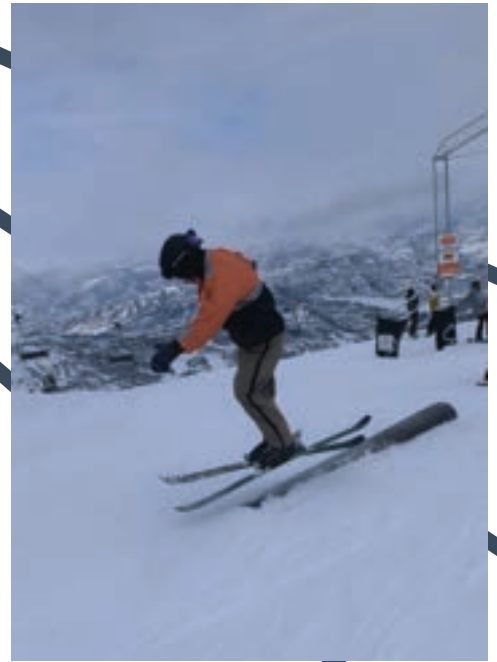
# Winter

Get to know senior Trigg Colwell and junior Jamison Whiteford.



When asked about what he enjoys most about skiing, Colwell said...

“I really like the community, it’s something to do with my friends.”



Colwell would describe his winter break as...

“A lot of skiing”

# Break recap

“I learned to ski with my friends, so having fun with friends and learning tricks is my favorite part of it - they make it fun.”

Whiteford would describe his winter break as...

“Eventful”

Jamison Whiteford staying warm with his skiing gear on the top of the mountain.





# Get to know Grand Junction High School's nurse

## The inner-workings of Melissa McConnell's Job

by marie **calkins** & hailey **shane**  
photo by marie **calkins**

Grand Junction High School's nurse does much more than most people assume. Melissa McConnell doesn't just supervise sick kids on a cot. McConnell's job can be complicated.

"Yes, I like being a nurse, and no, I don't like being a nurse. There are days when this job kind of sucks. You guys throw some stuff at me that is pretty heartbreaking sometimes. There are other days when I really like being a nurse and feel like I can help someone," McConnell said.

In terms of the job itself, McConnell is busy. She writes care plans, manages how teachers tend to kids with medical needs and chronic health conditions, has school counselors here at GJHS craft 504 plans (which are accommodations for certain students), and manages things such as diabetic issues.

To sum it up, McConnell said, "I help with more of those chronic health concerns or emergent health needs."

While she does that, she also has to take many safety precautions for the students' protection and themselves.

"We are constantly tearing that health office apart trying to clean areas the custodians don't get to, try to manage illnesses. We're always washing our hands and sterilizing, we mask when illnesses are high, and we always wear gloves if we're dealing with bodily fluids, even tears, and spit," McConnell said, explaining that it can often be gruesome.

During her downtime, she tries to get to know the students on a deeper level.

"I kind of try to kick Melinda (previous GJHS health assistant) out of the health office so I can see the kids because then I can see you and get to know you when I remember you more," McConnell said.

You can see McConnell in her office, located downstairs right across from the elevator, and the health office to the left of the stairs near the commons.

"She makes things fun, we like to joke around with each other. She's helped me since around middle



**GJHS nurse Melissa McConnell helps take care of the needs of students every day.**

school, I think," said GJHS sophomore Michael (whose last name was chosen to not be disclosed).

She has insight into how kids cope and handle hard things in life. McConnell says it's rare that kids actually "fake sick." She really feels that most kids don't seek attention when they fake sickness, and it's more of seeking connection.

McConnell said, "When you guys get to this age, sometimes versus saying 'I'm really nervous and I'm really upset' it's a lot easier to say 'My head hurts' or 'My stomach hurts,' so that you can just have a moment away and kind of regroup."

McConnell chose to nurse because it was the best option for her at the time. Something students and people often don't know about her is that she's enthusiastic about art. She was majoring in art before deciding on nursing.

"I wanted to eat regularly, I didn't want to be a starving artist even though it was a huge passion of mine," said McConnell.

Despite the challenge, McConnell likes her job. She likes working with students and getting to know many personalities.



# Winter Formal 2023

GJHS holds the Blizzard Ball on February 18



Lilly Goldberg, Allison Guddat, and Ada Pinger, joined by friends, having a ball at the blizard ball.



Zoie Whitesides, Jaida Whitesides, Kylee Jones, Joseph Salazar, and Eddison Dean, dancing it up on Feb. 18 in the main gymnasium.

photos by hailey **shane** & marie **calkins**

Jenna Lane, Rylan Sanderson, Hayden Holt, Samiyah Adams, Jaxon Clark, Tynley Walker, and Taya Foust, joined by friends, enjoying the dance.



Mariah Dexter, Eva Tiberio, and Bailey Salazar sparkling in their dresses and dancing the night away.

**MYAV**  
**EXPERTS**  
**MYAVEXPERT.COM**  
**970.242.3900**

# Bullying at GJHS

## What's it like to experience bullying at Grand Junction High School?

story by hailey **shane**  
graphic by alondra **sanchez**

**B**ullying is seen as an important issue at Grand Junction High School.

GJHS student handbook directly quotes "GJHS has a zero tolerance policy for any acts of bullying, cyberbullying, cyber threats, harassment, intimidation and/or violence."

Many students don't abide by those set rules. Bullying is still a frequent issue. However most of it is general conflict.

GJHS Dean of students Thomas Lefebvre said, "Most of what comes into the office is peer conflict."

"Anytime that a student reports that there is bullying, conflict of any kind, problems in a class, and parent calls concerned about something," he said. "We have myself, the assistant principal and the principal, we investigate and look into those things."

Many students have been bullied at GJHS and these two were willing to share their stories.

GJHS senior Johanna LaDuke receives many forms of classic bullying like name calling, being pushed in the hall, and the silent treatment.

Some bullies can even be friends and people who you would never expect.

GJHS senior Emily Carter has experienced one of her old friends who got the rest of her friend group to completely turn against her.

"I was definitely very sad but eventually got over it, but I still work with that old friend, I've just learned to ignore them," Carter said.

Bullying can happen just about anywhere but for these two students it mostly happened in school.

LaDuke thinks it's very important that teachers are

looking out for bullying, making those connections with students, and checking in with kids once in a while.

"I know it's hard for some teachers. I think just watching out for it and once in a while in class they could have the class write down something anonymously, sure that's not going to tell you who it is, but at least you are watching out for it," LaDuke said.

Bullying can be of any kind of repeated peer aggression, whether it's in school or online.

It's very important to understand the hidden causes that increase the chance of people being the bully.

What drives someone to be a bully in the first place?

"I think some people have hard family lives so they have that kind of anger and they don't know how to deal with it so they take it out on other people," said Carter.

"I think bullying mostly happens because either not a good home life or some people don't get the attention

that they need from their parents," said LaDuke.

It's hard to say if bullies can change their behavior or not, some do and some don't.

"I think it depends on the person, because I think some do and they grow up and when they go into the real world they realize they are hurting someone," LaDuke said.

"Sometimes I think they can outgrow it because they grow up and become different and some don't but I think it just depends," Carter said.

Bullying can manifest itself in many forms. Making sure you talk to someone you trust and help others in the same situation are the most important things you can do.





# Who is Norbert?

Meet a service dog that roams the GJHS halls and captures hearts.

story by marie calkins

photos by maddy parkhurst



Grand Junction High School has a service dog on campus. His name is Norbert. He services GJHS teacher Cheyanne Gentry.

Norbert is a small dog with a big heart. He's just over one year old. Norbert got his name from the classic series "Harry Potter", after the character Hagrid's dragon. Gentry said after her second interaction with him she knew his name already. "He came right up to me and sat in my lap and popped his head up and looked at me, and the line from the book that says 'Hagrid sang when it hatched - Oh look, he knows his mummy. - popped in my head. So that's where he got his name," Gentry explained.

Here at school, Norbert is relatively popular. He has many friends throughout the school. Including many people in the attendance office, counseling office, and Gentry's classes. Gentry said many people who don't even know Norbert or her will come to visit with him in her classroom, room 224.

"I have kids who I don't know come stand in the doorway. They'll ask to visit with him, and he immediately walks over to them and look at me for the

'Okay' command and he'll curl up in their lap," Gentry said, noting that she can see the relief on the kids' faces every time.

Norbert starts his day excited and ready to go to work.

"When we get here, he's so excited," Gentry said. "We put his vest on and his leash, he knows right where to go. Comes around

the building, up the stairs, and looks at me like, 'Where are my kids?'"

Norbert has a pretty solid routine for each day. He starts with his greetings and then is on duty until lunchtime. Before lunch is his time to pay attention to his owner and surroundings from his carrier or bed. During lunch, he's off work, and he can socialize and take a walk. In the afternoon he's back on duty except for sixth hour, when he gets to hang out and play. Sixth hour is when GJHS sophomore Janae Collins-Redd is in Gentry's class. According to Gentry; Collins-Redd and Norbert have a special bond, he can't focus on work when she's around.

Collins-Redd and Norbert started building their bond over the summer after he was recently adopted. They've become over closer since then; she's definitely his favorite. Collins-Redd also finds Norbert favorable.

"He can tell when a person isn't feeling good. It's natural for him to help with that...He helps emotional support, not just with Gentry, but with everyone...He can sense people's feelings...He has certain favorites, but he comforts everyone," explained Collins-Redd.

Gentry and Norbert have a very good bond. She speaks very highly of him, saying that he saved her and helped her find her joy.

"He is so happy, life is good, I can be happy again. The more time goes on, he just heals me," Gentry said. "I can almost physically feel the tears in my heart healing. He makes me not be afraid anymore. He has literally saved my sanity and my heart."

Norbert was rescued from Harmony Animal Shelter and Sanctuary here in Grand Junction. He has gotten almost completely through all required service training and will be returning for more later this year. Norbert, as of now, is technically a "service dog in training." He became a service dog for Gentry because of personal reasons, providing her extra support at work.

Gentry would also like to give a "shout-out" to District 51 for being so supportive and willing to make this happen for her and Norbert.

Norbert not only helps Gentry but also makes and has friends all around the school.



**GJHS teacher Cheyanne Gentry with her service dog, Norbert.**

# English or not

Talking with friends is taken for granted everyday, but what is it like coming from a non-English speaking background?

story and picture by eli **schultz** & spencer **penkaty**

A good portion of students at GJHS can confidently say that they have no problem conversing with their peers and teachers, but what is it like for people who are not originally from the United States?

Aaron Gomez, a freshman at Grand Junction High School, is originally from Puerto Rico which is a U.S. territory in the Caribbean Islands where Spanish is the primary language.

Gomez said that “the original hardships moving away from Puerto Rico was the culture shock of no longer being on a small Spanish speaking island. No longer being surrounded by his family back in Puerto Rico, he was in the United States.

“There are almost no Puerto Ricans [in Colorado],” said Gomez

A 2021 population count from the United States Census gives a population of 3.26 million Puerto Ricans compared to the United States total population of 331.9 million people. Gomez only knows a few Puerto Ricans in Colorado.

That same culture shock that happened to Gomez also happened to German teacher Ralph Wahlers at Grand Junction High school when he moved to the United States.

Wahlers said, “When you’re in sixth grade and you’re the kid who’s, you know the smallest kid in his class and he speaks funny and he carries a violin, you were just a target for abuse.”

Wahlers also said, “I was lucky I had two parents. I had a dad that spoke English and I had a



**GJHS freshmen Aaron Gomez is originally from Puerto Rico, where he learned to speak Spanish before moving to Colorado.**

mother who was very much behind education and wanted us to be very educated, so school was very important and we knew that.”

Not everyone has the same chance with their parents being able to speak English. Wahlers talked about a friend he had who came to America at the age of 16, not being able to speak any English at all.

“When you are 5 or 6 years old it’s easy to pick up a language. When you’re older, say you come to the United States as a 16-year-old, that’s difficult because you don’t have an English background. I went to highschool with a kid who was very brilliant... he came to the states when he was 16 or 17, he didn’t speak a lick of English, he had to learn from scratch” said Wahlers.

GJHS teacher Cheyenne Gentry

works to integrate people from different countries and backgrounds into the United States. District 51 helps with integration by providing non-english speakers with translators.

GJHS teacher Cheyenne Gentry works with kids integrating into the United States and rarely works with kids who are currently in other countries. She has kids from Vietnam, Columbia, the Philippines, Japan, China, and Afghanistan. Some of which are languages that are difficult to communicate in.

Both Wahlers and Gentry agreed that the best thing for anyone integrating into a new country - particularly learning a new language - is to surround yourself as much as you can with the language.





The new GJHS building is particularly close to the neighboring houses on 7th Street.

# Neighbors of the new GJHS

## Shadow of the new \$145 million school building looms large

story and photo by mercedes **candland** & serenity **schmidt**

**T**he neighboring businesses close to the new Grand Junction High School seem to have good opinions about the placement of the new building.

The placement of the new GJHS is not as close to a lot of the businesses in the area. A large number of the local fast food businesses get a lot of customers because of students' lunch time, and with the school moving, those businesses don't seem to think that they will be affected when the new building is finished.

When asked if they thought the new GJHS will affect their business, a Dairy Queen employee said, "I don't think so. It's right there [the school] so we'll have more kids come anyway."

There are also some students who have an opinion on the location of the new building.

"I like the school we're in now because it has a lot of memories and there's a lot of interesting things here, but the new school would be fun to attend," said GJHS junior Juliette Berry.

Students seem to be enjoying

the idea of a new school.

"I see the plans every once in a while and it's super cool. The new theater, the new commons, it's just going to be really cool. I just hope there can be some decorations up," said freshman, Lily Goldberg.

Hopefully the new school doesn't change any of the businesses or people's housing situations. It seems that people are looking forward to the new school and overall don't mind all these changes.

# Home sweet

## GJHS twins find happiness in new adoptive home

by izzy **cornelison**

photos provided by the scott family

**G**JHS sophomores Elli and Sophia Scott became official members of the Scott family just days before Christmas.

The process was long, starting on Sept. 20, 2020, when the twins were removed from their biological parents and placed in foster care. Their first stop was into a Kinship home, which is a temporary residence with someone who had an existing relationship with the children.

We knew them before so it wasn't as scary going into the home. However, we soon realized it wasn't the picture-perfect family we had thought it was. It wasn't the best house for sure, but it wasn't awful either," said Elli Scott.

From there they were moved to the Scotts, where they quickly found their permanent home.

"We negotiated [with the Department of Human Services] for basically all of last year.

And when it finally went through my mom told us at dinner, and I just started sobbing, we were all sobbing," said Elli Scott. "But as it got closer to the day, it started to feel less real, and I was having a lot of mixed emotions because I was changing my last name and I felt like that old me was dying."

Sophia Scott felt differently about her name change.

"My old last name just made me really in my past, and having this new name really allowed me to



**GJHS sophomores Sophia and Elli Scott smile with their siblings.**

have a change in my life and to be in control," said Sophia Scott.

On Dec. 13, 2022, at the Mesa County Courthouse, the twins were officially Scotts.

"When the day came, the morning was really hard but I just talked to my family and they all supported me. And then we went to the courthouse and the whole yearbook was there and a lot of people showed up," said Elli Scott, who transferred to GJHS midway through her freshman year after starting at Palisade.

"I got to the courthouse and it was funny because we were like the only ones there at first, but then a bunch of people from our school showed up and a bunch of supporters, my whole crew



# home

showed up, and it was just really great to have everyone there,” said Sophia Scott.

The twins have been together throughout their journey, but they haven’t always been as close as they are today.

“[Our relationship] was really bad when we first went into foster care, because I blamed her for having that happen to us because she’s the one that [spoke out], and obviously it’s a good thing that it happened but back then I felt like it was the worst thing that could ever happen to me, and that I would’ve rather just stayed in that abusive household,” said Elli Scott. “But when we moved into the home we’re in now our mom helped bring us closer together.”

According to U.S. Adoption statistics, around 135,000 kids are adopted every year. And of

those around 59% are from foster care. According to sources at DHS, as of February 4th, 2022, the total number of out of home care kids in Mesa County is 195. This number includes kids who are currently in foster care, group homes, or other out of home placements but does not account for kids who have been officially adopted

The Scotts are not the only kids who have gone through this, and they share what they wish people knew about foster care and adoption.

“The labels and stereotypes around how you grow up in the system aren’t true,” said Sophia Scott.

“I wish they knew that I was going through a hard time. Like teachers are so hard on you when you don’t get something in on time or you’re late to school, but they just don’t know the situation you are in. And like friends when you don’t hang out with them, I wish they understood more that I was moving houses and I was going through a lot with my birth parents,” said Elli Scott.

**Sophia (left) and Elli Scott (right) sit on either side of their sister, GJHS junior Savannah Scott, in the courtroom.**



**G**rand Junction High School head athletic trainer Erin Glavan has been in the position for 17 years.

Glavan's main focus is giving treatment to student athletes and monitoring athletic events. She went to college at Colorado Mesa University for athletic training and teaching.

Some struggles she faces throughout the year are making sure she has enough supplies, like athletic tape and first aid gear, and being at the right place at the right time for so many different sports and activities.

"I had a few injuries in high school and wanted to help athletes," Glavan said.

In high school, Glavan played soccer and basketball. When she got to college, she wanted to stay involved with athletics in her own way

"I work with students, and make sure they are healthy and staying on the field or court," said Glavan.

Glavan most commonly works with ankle injuries because they are a risk for almost every sport. She's there to help for any injuries that may happen at practice or during competition at home, as well as GJHS events vs Fruita Monument High School.

Some students majoring in athletic training at CMU intern and work alongside

Glavan to see what she sees on a daily basis and how to control situations as much as she can.

"Erin has helped me multiple times throughout my high school sports. She is very kind and selfless," said GJHS sophomore Maycie Child, who plays girls basketball and softball.

Glavan has to keep a record of injuries and treatments that she provides care for.

Glavan enjoys working with high school students because they keep things interesting and fun. She also loves supporting and seeing Tiger teams compete and see athletes grow.



Erin Glavan helps GJHS basketball Hayden Barnell during a recent home game.



# GJHS Theater Tech

## Students work behind the scenes on school productions

story by serenity **schmidt**

The GJHS theater tech students have a lot of responsibilities that most people wouldn't expect.

The program requires a lot of time and hard work. According to GJHS senior Lillian Blanchard, a lot of people don't expect all of the hard work that is needed for this program.

"We do costume design, set design, props, lighting, sound, and if we're filming the show it would be on us usually. But designing, building the set, and props is our biggest thing," said Blanchard.

The theater tech program is also working on the upcoming

spring musical, *Treasure Island*. Theater tech usually meet during the actors and actresses' rehearsals, but they do their own thing. They work on multiple things that correlate to the upcoming play or musical.

"Right now we're working on our ship and our inn as well," said GJHS freshmen Carmen Barrientos.

The theater tech staff will be very busy these next few weeks. The performances of *Treasure Island* will be performed on March 3, 4, 10, and 11 at 7 p.m., and two matinees on March 4 and 11 at 1 p.m.



**Theater tech staff work on painting set materials for *Treasure Island*.**



## Your Community Bank For Now & Your Future

### We're People Banking With People





# Custodians keep GJHS clean

**Garrison is the head day-time custodian for the Tigers**

story and pictures by kori **antonides**

**GJHS head custodian Jason Garrison is often seen cleaning around the school.**

One of the ways Grand Junction High School stays safe and open is because of its custodial staff. We have six total custodians. Five of the six work the night shift after school. Jason Garrison is the day shift custodian.

Garrison is the head custodian at Grand Junction High school. Garrison has worked at the school since Aug. 20, 2022, and as a school alumni he knows the building well.

Garrison explained days working for Grand Junction High School as, "Putting 1,700 people's needs before your own."

With that said he said he feels very appreciated especially with all the help from the students from Michael Meyer's class. Meyer is one of the special education teachers at Grand Junction High School, his students help with recycling, wiping down tables in the library, cleaning windows, and many more.

Garrison said he "couldn't do this job as well without the help of Mr. Meyer's class."

Garrison has many interests outside of work. He likes watching movies and spending time with his family. He also enjoys watching ice hockey.

Garrison has worked other jobs in the D51 school district for the past 9 years. An example of a job he has worked in the D51 school district is as the groundskeeper

for Grand Junction High School.

He has also worked jobs outside of the school district such as working as a restaurant manager.

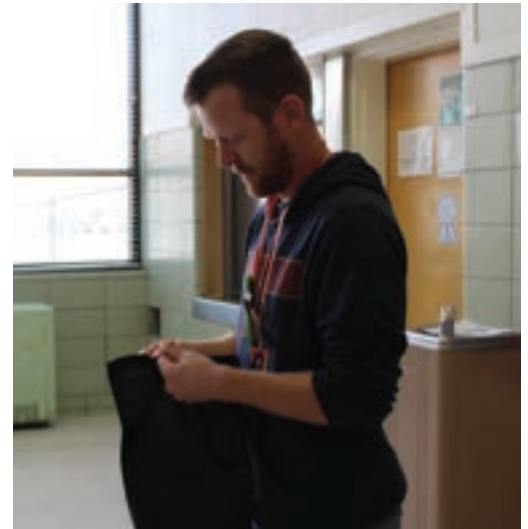
According to many people around the school, Garrison is an amazing person to work with. He is always on top of all of his jobs and people around the school never have to worry about something being cleaned up.

"We never have to worry about trash overflowing after lunch," said GJHS library secretary Sara Peterson.

Peterson has worked at the school for a year and she enjoys working with Garrison.

You can find him around the school taking out the trash, setting up mouse traps, cleaning floors and bathrooms, and many more jobs.

Garrison graduated from Grand Junction High School in 2003. He was classmates at GJHS with art teacher Sean Henry and math teacher Brandon Gregg.





# Security on campus

School resource officers keep our campus safe

photo by tuck allen

story by maddy parkhurst



GJHS security keeping students safe during a protest held on Jan. 20, 2023.

One of the many ways students on the Grand Junction High School campus is through the School Resource Officer.

There are two police officers on campus. There are mainly more officers on campus when a school threat is called in. GJHS students can contact an SRO by going down to the office and asking to speak with one of the officers.

There are two different types of officers on campus. There are the SROs in blue uniforms and they work for the Grand Junction Police Department. There are also the grey uniforms. These officers are security officers that the school district provides.

Tyson Olsen said, “We kinda take a back seat to what happens for school consequences or school punishment, were more for the actual Colorado state law or local laws.”

Olsen has been an SRO for over a year, and in total a police officer for nine years.

Both the SRO’s and security officers are post certified through the same academy training. Security officers are not able to make any criminal charges, they can

however help enforce school policies with punishments regarding students actions.

“The most interesting part about my job is probably getting to hang out and walk around the school, kinda popping into classes and talking with the kids,” said Olsen

Students are able to see SRO’s and security officers walking the halls of GJHS. Both of these different types of officers try to make the students enjoy being around them. They try to help the students feel safe and protected around the school.

Some students feel as though the officers are able to comfort you in a serious situation and make you feel less stressed out. One student made a comment about how the officer made the situation a little more durable.

“I think that they do a good job at comforting kids when they need it,” said sophomore Gracie Hampton.

There are 4 SRO’s through the Grand Junction Police Department that go to 30 schools in the city limits. This even includes charter and private schools. There are also SRO’s from the Mesa County Sheriff’s Office who go to some of those schools.

# Bus driving through town

The wheels on the bus go round and round

story and photos by maddy **parkhurst** & kate **davis**  
graphic by alondra **sanchez**

Buses begin to arrive on Tiger Way at GJHS around 7:40 in the morning, funneling students on and off nine yellow buses five days a week.

The bus company that GJHS uses is Student Transportation of America. STA has been in business for 26 years, founded in 1997 in New Jersey. There are over 16,000 buses running for this company in America and work for over 325 districts. Some students can have a

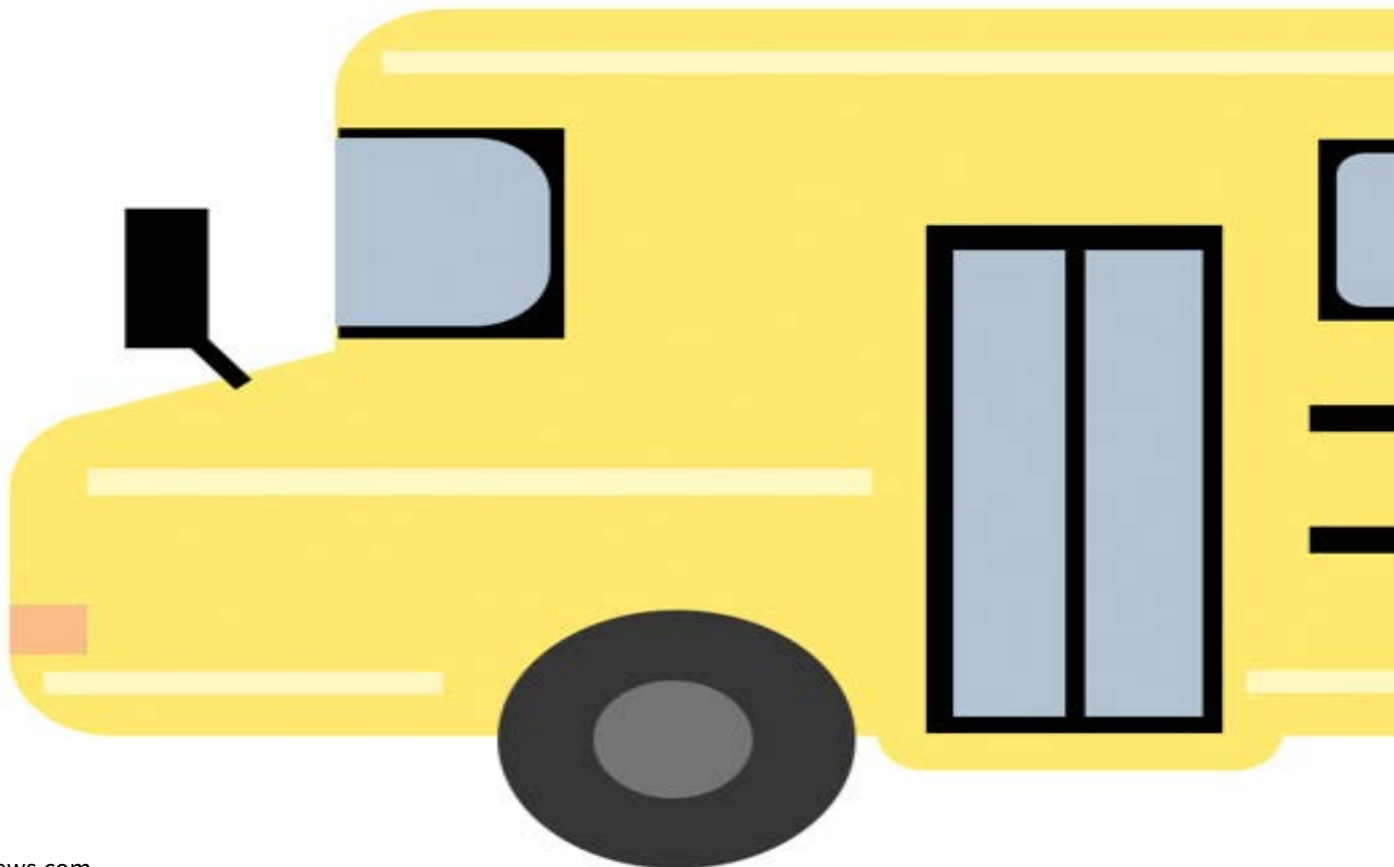
short 15-minute bus ride while others have a 45-minute bus ride.

Don White is a bus driver for STA. He's been driving a bus for 5 years. He drives preschool to 12th grade. His main route is in Fruita. He is also a part-time pastor.

"The strangest thing that ever happened to me is I watched an accident happen in front of me. They dodge around the front of my bus, and slide into the lane beside me and almost got hit by another car," White said.

Bus crashes are a concern, but statistically a rare one. Although there are 63,000 bus crashes on average a year in the United States, there are over 9 billion bus trips taken per year meaning there is only a 1 percent chance of a crash.

Dealing with rude passengers is another difficulty for bus drivers. White uses a method of setting expectations high that generally keeps his passengers respectful.





District 51 not only uses buses for transportation to and from school but also for field trips and sports activities. This allows schools to have different events when it isn't within walking distance from the school.

"I like the female bus driver. She's amazing and really fun to talk to in the afternoon," GJHS junior Sydney Bennet said. Bennet rides the bus to Western Colorado Community College in the morning.

GJHS uses buses to transport students to WCCC and the Career Center. This allows students to take classes there for half of the day. There is a morning bus and afternoon bus that transports students. In the morning there are fewer kids than in the afternoon.

"I really like my job. I really enjoy interacting with the students, which is probably my favorite thing. I would say I'm really people-oriented so interacting with the kids is nice, it's the best part of my job," White said.

White enjoys having the kids on his bus because he feels like a trusted adult and that kids can come talk to



**GJHS students board buses after school on a sunny day. Buses line up on Tiger Way each morning and afternoon.**

him when needed. He enjoys hearing about their day or other stuff they do outside of school.

On the bus there are expectations and rules. Some might include not eating and not causing distractions for the bus driver. White tries to set up high expectations and teach his kids the rules to help avoid trouble. Some of the consequences that kids may face is being written up or suspended from riding the bus.



# OPINION: Cafeteria Hell

story by connor **kinser**

pictures by connor **kinser** & eli **schultz**

One of the staples of any good high school is lunch.

The mid-day break from classes provides us the chance to hang out with friends. But most importantly, we get to eat food.

For most, food is a good thing. Some people don't know this but without it you will die and dying is not good. But with the food the school serves I think not eating might be a better option for your health.

Some of the food in the cafeteria looks like it's from an extinct animal and they forgot to refrigerate it. I'm not saying this to be mean either. I used to eat the school lunch.

"The food I ate was OK, not always the worst thing in the world, but there were some days where I wouldn't eat at all," said a GJHS student who asked to remain anonymous.

I compete in wrestling, cross country and track. What I eat can affect how practices and competitions will go. If I have a good meal then my stomach won't hurt and I have plenty of energy. If I have a bad meal then my stomach will hurt and my energy will be low. Thus my food dictates how hard my practice and competition is.

For some students this could be the only meal they get for the day. So having a good healthy lunch should be a necessity. I understand that the cafeteria staff have no control over this. They have to just make the food they are given. But as seen in the images above you can

see what appears to be a hot dog with something that looks like snot.

Some students have even compared the food to tasting like cardboard.

The cafeteria staff are not the nicest people either. Whenever I



walk into the cafeteria to get my food they look at me like I just said something offensive. I have tried to be nice by saying "Hi" or asking them how their day is going but most of the time I get a mean response.

Every time another student or I go in there, they are glaring daggers back at us.

"I personally don't feel respected by them, and the way they treat me. I feel as though they don't enjoy working there," said another GJHS student who asked to remain anonymous.

One of the best experiences at a restaurant in my opinion is getting to meet the server and learn their personality. This could also apply to school lunch. If you have a bad restaurant server you only have to deal with them once. But with the bad cafeteria staff you interact with them daily.

When writing this piece about the kitchen staff, I was wondering if maybe I was being mean. If I was taking this too far. But when I went out to talk with students I found that they have some stronger opinions than me. They asked to be anonymous for their protection.

"I'll walk in and they're just screaming at somebody," I was told by one student. "They get annoyed really easily."

Now I understand that what I said above can be seen as heartless but it's my truth. I care about what I eat. But when my meal is awful like this it can be kind of depressing. I might be tired for the rest of the school day or even grumpy. The point being is what you eat dictates how you feel physically and mentally.

One solution for this is to have similar food to another school in Grand Junction: Holy Family Catholic School. Their online menu sounds a lot better than our current one. Instead of Mexican Spaghetti they Have Sweet & Sour Chicken Fried Rice for one meal. After all, happy chefs make happy meals.







# THE IMPORTANCE OF UNDERSTANDING MENTAL HEALTH

Students talk about their well being

story and photo by connor **kinser**

**P**hysical health has been seen as more important than mental health throughout history.

But often adults don't see or understand the impact of mental health on today's students.

For most people they just don't know how poor mental health starts. It can be from childhood abuse, trauma and neglect. It can start at any time under the right circumstances.

"Well I think it started in third grade. I moved to a town and I started at a brand new elementary school, and I was different from the other kids. I was in the gifted programs so that made me an easy target, GJHS senior Emily Black said. "So I started going to therapy because of being bullied and it started then,"

Having mental health problems can have a huge impact on school work. It is hard to stay focused on work when you have the memory of your problems stabbing you in the back. It can also just make doing easy things really draining, like figuring out some math problems can be taxing if you're having problems with your mental health.

"It's made school really hard. I'm still like a gifted kid. I take AP classes and stuff. [But] If I'm feeling really sad one day and anxious it makes school work really hard to get done. And I just kinda want to stay away from some people and avoid them for the day," Black said.

Having mental health problems can also affect your personal relationships. One may find that it is hard to have the energy to interact with someone.

"I've become very distant from people. I'll ignore them. Sometimes I'll be too dependent," Black said.

But there are also many good ways to cope with mental problems. Whether it is talking to someone about it or just finding something you enjoy there are ways to get around it.

"Being in choir and band has been a good way of coping. Being active is an amazing way to cope. I started exercising and my mental health has become a lot better," said Black

One way of helping with mental health is to just talk to someone about it. While it may be a hard thing to do, if you do it, it can be a very good way to help.

"Get help even if you think you're a little sad sometimes there's no reason to not get help," said Black.

**If you or someone you know is struggling with mental health:**

Safe2Tell:

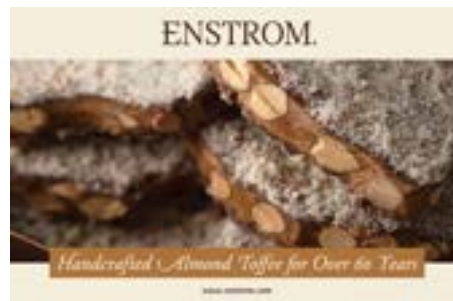
CALL 1-877-542-7233

Colorado Crisis services:

CALL 1-844-493-8255

Crisis text line: TEXT 741741

# Thank You to our Sponsors!



The American democracy depends on a free and objective press. Orange & Black sponsors help enable GJHS student journalism that has been operating since 1918.  
To support the O&B, contact promotions manager Miah Hines: [mhines@d51schools.org](mailto:mhines@d51schools.org).