

STUDENT SERVICES NEWSLETTER

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Poetry in Motion

JHS Senior Jordan Fletcher once again this year captured the title of JHS Poet Laureate for his performance in the April Poetry Slam. Jordan, center, is pictured with Andy Mitchell, left, local poet and owner of Our Town Bookstore, and JHS Assistant Principal Tim Chipman, right. Congratulations to all nine student poets who competed in the NEHS-sponsored Poetry Slam!

Events

- ◆ Finals start on Monday 5/22
- ◆ Baccalaureate on Thursday 5/25
- ◆ Graduation on Friday 5/26

We are Jacksonville High School, a community of learners who develop college and career ready individuals.



National Decision Day

Monday, May 1st was National Decision Day, a day to celebrate seniors and their future plans. The seniors were encouraged to wear shirts to show where they were planning to go to college, into the military or workforce. Congratulations to the class of 2017!



Words of Wisdom

Advanced age may not actually lead to wisdom but the passage of time may lend itself to more opportunity for reflection. For Illinois College student Blaire Long, JHS '16 and MacMurray College student Kadie Ellner, both employed at Cedarhurst Assisted Living in Jacksonville, garnering words of wisdom from residents proved to be enlightening. Earlier this month Blaire and Kadie shared the compiled words of wisdom with JHS students. Here are some of our favorite lines:

- Don't let high school be the last book you read. - Bill, age 90
- Always spend time with your family. -Joyce, age 83
- Read the daily paper and always be kind. -Johanna, age 79
- Stay in school and study hard. -John, age 93

Perhaps most poignantly, Floyd, age 90, offered this: Expect the unexpected.



13 REASONS WHY TALKING POINTS

- 13 Reasons Why is a fictional story based on a widely known novel and is meant to be a cautionary tale.
- You may have similar experiences and thoughts as some of the characters in 13RW. People often identify with characters they see on TV or in movies. However, it is important to remember that there are healthy ways to cope with the topics covered in 13RW and acting on suicidal thoughts is not one of them.
- If you have watched the show and feel like you need support or someone to talk to reach out. Talk with a friend, family member, a counselor, or therapist. There is always someone who will listen.
- Suicide is not a common response to life's challenges or adversity. The vast majority of people who experience bullying, the death of a friend, or any other adversity described in 13RW do not die by suicide. In fact, most reach out, talk to others and seek help or find other productive ways of coping. They go on to lead healthy, normal lives.
- Suicide is never a heroic or romantic act. Hannah's suicide (although fictional) is a cautionary tale, not meant to appear heroic and should be viewed as a tragedy.
- It is important to know that, in spite of the portrayal of a serious treatment failure in 13RW, there are many treatment options for life challenges, distress and mental illness. Treatment works.
- Suicide affects everyone and everyone can do something to help if they see or hear warning signs that someone is at risk of suicide.
- Talking openly and honestly about emotional distress and suicide is ok. It will not make someone more suicidal or put the idea of suicide in their mind. If you are concerned about someone, ask them about it.
- Knowing how to acknowledge and respond to someone who shares their thoughts of emotional distress or suicide with you is important. Don't judge them or their thoughts. Listen. Be caring and kind. Offer to stay with them. Offer to go with them to get help or to contact a crisis line.
- How the guidance counselor in 13RW responds to Hannah's thoughts of suicide is not appropriate and not typical of most counselors. School counselors are professionals and a trustworthy source for help. If your experience with a school counselor is unhelpful, seek other sources of support such as a crisis line.
- While not everyone will know what to say or have a helpful reaction, there are people who do, so keep trying to find someone who will help you. If someone tells you they are suicidal, take them seriously and get help.
- When you die you do not get to make a movie or talk to people any more. Leaving messages from beyond the grave is a dramatization produced in Hollywood and is not possible in real life.
- Memorializing someone who died by suicide is not a recommended practice. Decorating someone's locker who died by suicide and/or taking selfies in front of such a memorial is not appropriate and does not honor the life of the person who died by suicide.
- Hannah's tapes blame others for her suicide. Suicide is never the fault of survivors of suicide loss. There are resources and support groups for suicide loss survivors.

If you're struggling with thoughts of suicide...

- Text "START" to 741741
- Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Talking points by:



Mental Health Awareness Month

May is designated as Mental Health Awareness Month. Mental health is not always an easy topic to broach and discuss mainly because it is not like a physical ailment that can be visually seen like a broken bone.

There is a stigma that comes with a mental health label unlike being diagnosed with diabetes or asthma. When someone has a medical disease, such as cancer, we not only expect but encourage them to seek medical treatment right away. We make sure to provide accommodations for them and support them in any way that we can.

Unfortunately, the same is not true for someone experiencing mental health issues. People will often tell them to stop thinking or feeling that way. They might even tell them to just snap out of it or to pick themselves up and dust themselves off. Some will say to pull up their boot straps and just try harder to not have those feelings.

The truth of the matter is that mental health is a disease and needs treatment like any other medical issue. The brain is not separate from the body. Some mental health disorders are hereditary and some are just the way the person's brain is wired. Other mental health issues are situational and can sometimes not only be treated but can also be cured. In most cases, doctors will prescribe medication, counseling, and/or both. What the patient needs to know is that there can be relief from mental health issues just like relief from physical medical issues.

There are things that people can do to increase quality of life and decrease mental health symptoms. For example: exercise, healthy diets, adequate sleep, rest and relaxation, fresh air and sunshine, and having a good family and social support system.

The Morgan Scott Suicide Prevention Coalition will host two trainings during the month of May in support of Mental Health Awareness Month. The first training is for junior high and high school aged students. It will take place on May 10, 2017 at 4:30 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. at the Central Christian Church in Jacksonville. The topic will be about Suicide Prevention and Awareness. The second training will be held at the Central Christian Church in Jacksonville on May 16, 2017, at 4:00 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. The workshop is entitled "A Celebration of Life". This workshop is for anyone interested in celebrating the loss of someone due to suicide. Both sessions will provide the attendees with information and supports in regards to mental health issues.



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Operation Safe Prom and Graduation

What an exciting time of the year when prom and graduation is near! Girls in their dresses with professional makeup, hair and nails. It is a Cinderella night. The guys in their tuxes, looking like prince charming, and arriving in style in their limo. A fancy restaurant and ballroom dancing makes the entire night feel like a fairy tale. Juniors are talking about becoming seniors and seniors are talking about graduation and future plans. Life is a wonderful as life can be. Shortly, these fine men and women will be putting on their cap and gown and crossing the stage to receive their diploma. The feelings of pride and sense of accomplishment will fill their being. We hope this is the case. We want the happily ever after fairy tale dream story for each and every one of them. The truth is that we say our prayers every prom and graduation that we won't lose a soul to a drunk driving accident, or a drug overdose, or alcohol poisoning. We breathe a sigh of relief after every prom and graduation that no tragedy befalls our community. Mrs. Jeannette Barlow works hard every year to solicit for prizes, food, and fun at the after prom. All prom attendees and their guests are welcome to attend. Crimson Courage asks you to make the pledge to and join operation safe prom and graduation. Instead of going to a party, attend prom and after prom. After graduation, spend the time with your family and friends that have supported you and your education over the years. Choose not to party. Choose to be safe and make your life a "happy ever after" dream come true!

