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Eighth Graders Respond to Shadow Days

By Radhika Srivastava
and Reshini Premaratne

MLWGS Shadow Days, an annual tradition in which prospective students visit the school for a day, took place on March 23-March 26. Students from Chesterfield, Charles City, Goochland, Hopewell, King and Queen, New Kent, Petersburg, Powhatan, Prince George, Richmond, Hanover and Henrico attended.

“It provides an opportunity for students to see themselves here,” says Dr. Jeff McGee, Director, “we want students to be able to come in and feel the student-teacher interaction.”

Prospective students cite several reasons that make MLWGS an attractive option for their high school career

“I like the classes and the independence offered here,” says Gabe Wilkes, an accepted student from Richmond City.

“I really liked the way Maggie Walker sets up their lunch block so people can watch clubs perform, socialize, or meet with a teacher,” says Knaide Green from Henrico.

“I liked it wasn’t so big compared to some high schools, so it isn’t going to be completely weird leaving my small school,” says Jessica Thorne, a Richmond City constituent.

“ It expedites the process of identifying the children that will come here. We want students to be able to come in and feel the student-teacher interaction. ”

During the day, shadow leaders, sophomores chosen for the position based on teacher recommendations, led their students on a tour of the school and a multitude of classes.



Emily Slaughter ('17), left, and Jessica Kong ('17) serve as shadow leaders for students visiting from their counties. Photo by Reshini Premaratne.

“I really enjoyed being a shadow leader,” says Jessica Kong ('17). “My favorite memory was taking them to gym to have them experience the freshmen teaching an interesting dance routine to their class.”

However, one shadow leader provided a critique of the shadow process.

“Part of the experience of shadowing is to see which classes you might be interested in taking in the future. However, with restricted schedules, that vital aspect is all but removed,” says Parth Kotak ('17).

MLWGS implemented a new policy this year that allowed waitlisted students to participate in regular Shadow Days as well.

“I like the idea, even though I am on the waitlist,” says Richard Bishop, a waitlisted student from Prince George. “It is kind of inspirational.”

“I think it is an awesome idea to have the ability to see the school,” says Christian Roessler, who is also on the waitlist.

The administration’s motivation behind implementing such a policy was to make the process of enrollment for previously waitlisted students more efficient.

“It expedites the process of identifying the children that will come here,” says Dr. McGee.

While shadow days are specifically geared towards providing a unique opportunity to shadows, they also allow shadow leaders insight into the mission of our school.

“Everybody at our school is sort of an ambassador on shadow day, but it felt good to have a more direct hand in presenting our school to the shadows,” says Ryan Buscaglia ('17).

Overall students appreciated the experience of Shadow Days as it will help in choosing the right high school.

“It was a little bit intimidating, and that made me shy away from some questions at first, but by the end, it was more relaxed and just fun,” says Green.

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Reflections on Four Years at Maggie Walker

As this school year, and my high school career, draws to a close, I think it is important to recognize the impact MLWGS has on its students - not just through the reputation it holds, but also because of the faculty, staff, and students here.

As an eighth-grader the decision of which high school to attend seemed monumental, and I almost didn't choose Maggie Walker. However, despite the ups and downs, I wouldn't trade my time here for anything.

Thank you to the wonderful teachers that work at MLWGS, who have continued to inspire and challenge us in the best possible ways, with whom we enjoy a level of trust rarely seen at other high schools. Thank you to the staff who work so hard to ensure we feel comfortable here in more ways than one, who make every possible effort to provide us amazing and unique opportunities.

And of course, thank you to the student body, a welcoming and diverse group of people who, as I've especially seen in recent times, support their classmates through the thick and thin.

I won't say there is nothing that could be done better at MLWGS - there is always room for improvement. For example, I sometimes wish teachers would be more understanding about our workload and space out assessments. I wish students would make class and extracurricular choices more based on their interests rather than crunching the numbers.

However, part of what makes MLWGS unique is the drive in students and teachers to not only take on challenging courses and a heavy workload (academics and extracurriculars included), but to excel while doing so.

Over the course of my four years here, MLWGS has proven to be a strong, supportive, and unique community of individuals, as demonstrated by several events and groups: Katie's Company, the dress code protest, pep rallies, Mr. O'Bryan's memorial. To the freshman I can only say this: above all, make use of the numerous resources available at MLWGS and enjoy your time here, because as cliché as it sounds, it really will fly by.

— SM

Have an opinion?

WRITE A LETTER TO
THE EDITOR

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THE MLWGS *Jabberwock*

Editorial Policy:

The MLWGS Jabberwock covers news events related to the school community and provides a forum for students to share their ideas. Statements expressed by columnists or in letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of the staff. However, all editorials are the combined work of both the Editor-in-Chief and her staff.

All members of the MLWGS community are invited to submit letters to the editor on any topic, although the publication of all letters is not guaranteed. The newspaper reserves the right to edit letters for grammar, language and length. Please e-mail letters to themlwgsjabberwock@gmail.com.

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Mental Health at Maggie Walker

By Sophia McCrimmon

Stressed-out students are not hard to find at a high-pressure school like Maggie Walker. Pressure certainly comes with the territory at an advanced high school, but for some students, the stress of school work can provoke or exacerbate more serious mental health problems.

These issues are highly personal and often excluded from mainstream conversations, yet they are fairly common at Maggie Walker and beyond. Research indicates that one of every four adolescents will have an episode of major depression during high school, and according to the National Institute of Mental Health, 25 percent of teens report having suffered anxiety at some point in their lives.

“It’s something that pretty much everyone I know deals with on a regular basis,” said Sarah Law (’17).

“At Maggie Walker in particular, the rigor, workload, and the lack of sleep people get all contribute to the problem,” echoed Emily Martin (’17).

Though certainly not all students experience symptoms of depression, anxiety, or other mental illness while at Maggie Walker, many others do work to overcome these personal struggles—often in silence.

“There’s a whole mindset that it’s bad to ask for help; because for so long we’ve been the ‘smart kid,’ we feel like we’re expected to know everything and how to deal with everything,” said Mairead Guy (’17).

At Maggie Walker, help for those who are struggling is certainly available. For students who are feeling temporarily overwhelmed, or experiencing more severe feelings of emotional distress, the most immediate recourse is the counseling staff.

“The biggest thing that we have to offer is that we’re here. We have an open door policy and there are no appointments necessary,” said guidance counselor Karl Zweerink, “We really do want students to feel like the counseling suite is a place they can come if they’re having a bad day or they need some extra support.”

“We’re here for support, but we’re



Guidance counselors Penny Deck and Karl Zweerink meet with a student. *Photo courtesy of Srishti Sanya.*

not trained therapists. We’re here to help coordinate for students,” said counselor Penny Deck.

Despite the open door policy of the counseling office, some students are still reluctant to solicit the help of guidance counselors.

“I think most kids don’t feel very comfortable talking to a guidance counselor. Perhaps if there was an outside counselor who was only there for mental help as opposed to academic help that might make kids a lot more comfortable,” said Guy (’17).

Other options for students struggling to cope with stress are available. This year, the guidance office hosted a support group called S.O.S. (Stressed Out Seniors), which included a licensed professional counselor. Another new program is Dragon Advisors, in which small groups of freshmen meet regularly to discuss the challenges of high school. As a part of this program, the counseling office distributed a pamphlet on stress during exams, which included tips on ways to de-stress as well as a list of common symptoms of test anxiety. In the new semester, the guidance office is offering small group counseling opportunities on the issues of stress management, substance abuse, and identity.

“There are a lot of things I would love for us to be able to do, but I don’t know how realistic they are at Maggie Walker. I would love it if we had more time, so that students could come to do a support group without feeling like they

were missing class or missing an opportunity to get work done,” said Zweerink.

“It’s challenging at Maggie Walker, because students are already kind of stressed and overstretched,” agreed Deck.

A previous program called Peer Helpers, in which trained students helped their struggling peers, is evidence of this issue. Over time, attendance dwindled as students became preoccupied with other concerns.

“It’s something that pretty much everyone I know deals with on a regular basis.”

Others see problems with the way teachers accommodate students who are having difficulties with mental illness or stress.

“If a kid is struggling, teachers can be quick to blame the student and their work ethic instead of understanding that it’s not their fault and it’s not a character flaw,” said Serina Guy (’16).

Though opinions vary on the highly personal issue of mental health, there is no disagreement that an effective support system is highly necessary.

“This is a bigger problem than anyone wants to say,” Martin said, “and we need to make sure we’re doing everything we can to support students.”

Robotics Team Feels Cramped

Opinion

By Parth Kotak

Our school's robotics team, 422: The Mech Tech Dragons, needs more space. The team consists of over 50 dedicated members (roughly 7% of the student population) who work on a variety of tasks—building a robot for the season's challenge, operating said robot, writing lines upon lines of code, raising awareness, and designing logos and graphics—in order to win at regional and national competitions. The members of the team stay afterschool often, up to 18 hours a week during the peak of the build season, typically January and the first two weeks of February. Their official workspace is room 112 and the build room on the other side.

That's right. One of the largest clubs in the school receives so little space to create, arguably, the most expensive, largest, and most difficult project of any other club. The outreach and

“Approximately 84 people were interested in joining the robotics team; however, the small build room limits the number of people the team can admit.”

programming sections of the team branch out into the Mac lab, room 111, the library, and other computer labs as needed in order to alleviate the space crisis; the real problem lies in the build room—or it would, if there was enough space for it in there. At any given point in time, there may be 15-20 students and



3-4 mentors in that tiny build room, surrounded by sharp metal, power tools, robot parts, and wood boards.

The limitation of space invites a whole host of problems. First and foremost, the robotics team faces recruitment issues. Approximately 84 people were interested in joining the robotics team; however, the small build room limits the number of people the team can admit—labor is superfluous because space limits the number of people who can work at any given time. The team can't reach its full potential under these conditions. Cal Costic ('16) points out that “students get less build experience” because of the space restriction. Secondly, the limited table space in the build room means the team can't invest in labor-saving devices such as power-tools to produce robot components in higher quantity and more efficiently. The team is currently limited to just four power tools, which leads to lines of people waiting to use one tool, severely crippling the team's ability to deliver products on time for testing before competitions. Says Stephen Holtz ('16) “Things aren't made fast enough, deadlines are pushed back, resulting in mechanisms not being properly tested... this hurts us in the long run, but the immediate task of building and completing a quality designed bot is also affected.” The prob-

lem is compounded by the team's lack of storage space. The members have to be careful about what they decide to save, because it must all fit in the build room, keeping in mind that anything kept is occupying crucial work space. The team had to destroy eight First Lego League tables because of their inability to store them.

The team has talked with administration about expanding the available work space for robotics. Currently, in order to test the robots, a temporary set-up must be constructed in the Sophomore/Junior Commons or the gymnasium, neither of which serve as the permanent, easy-to-access set-up that robotics needs. Holtz adds, “I know plans are in the works right now for the school to replace the courtyard with a new, dedicated robotics build room, as well as new locker rooms.” Sreekar Kundlakunta ('16), the team Chief Community Operations Officer (CCOO) brought up the possibility of renting an off-site warehouse.

“The team has talked with administration about expanding the available work space for robotics.”

“Blue Cheese [Deep Run HS's robotics team] has a warehouse that they're able to use,” Kundlakunta says. In the short term, Holtz explains, it would be immensely helpful to have a storage area for the bins upon bins of robotics-related paraphernalia. Although the school is facing massive funding issues, it is important to support one of the school's few major STEM-related clubs to present a well-rounded image of our school.

Teacher Feature: Mr. Irving Charles

By Helen Li

HL: Since you are a Maggie Walker Alumni, and you have been with the school since its inception pretty much, what is something that you have seen change within the school over the years?

IC: Well, that's a lot of things. I've seen changes within the students themselves, changes as far as the structure of the building and the development around the school so...

HL: Let's talk about the students then, what types of changes have occurred with the students?

IC: Hmm...for one thing the enrollment has increased, the number of students, so that is one thing. Pretty much the students, as far as my opinion, are the same. They are still great students, innovative. They are self-motivated, you know, creative thinking.

HL: And in terms of the surroundings of Maggie Walker?

IC: The surroundings in terms of the structure of the neighborhood, that's getting better as well. As time moves one, with the renovation and reconstruction of the neighborhood here, with the revitalization, I think it is going to be good for the whole community.

HL: You were once a Richmond City firefighter. How has that experience influenced you?

IC: Once again, that influenced me like I said, I have a great knowledge of the city—being here most of my life and working here—so...it has been a great advantage as far as this position goes. My old contacts I still have, and I try to get some things done with them and other people who I know.

HL: You are responsible for the security matters at Maggie Walker, but outside of that, what do you like to do in your free time with your family,



Mr. Irving Charles, security guard at Maggie Walker, poses in his office on the first floor. Photo by Srishti Sanya.

friends?

IC: Oh well, I have young daughter, and all of my time is devoted to her and my family.

HL: How old is your daughter?

IC: Daughter's 10 years old...Just being with her and my wife is sometimes challenging.

HL: In what ways?

IC: Well...just trying to keep up with their demands. They like to shop and all.

HL: I heard a rumor that once Mr. Tharp leaves, then you are going to leave, is that true?

IC: Yeah, yeah. Game plan is for Mr. Tharp and myself to leave at the same time. It's supposed to be 2016.

HL: So what are you going to do after that? Do you have any plans?

IC: Yeah. I'm going to do a lot of fishing. And you know, I have a lot of interests around the house to keep me busy. I don't have any doubt that I won't find

anything to do.

HL: So what would your ideal retirement be?

IC: Right now I'm thinking about getting up in the morning, having a nice cup of coffee, taking my daughter to school, do some yardwork, go back and pick my daughter up from school, and I think that's going to complete a day.



HL: Since you have been with the school for such a long time, what is problem that you still see among the students and school?

IC: One problem that I am concerned about is that there is a large amount of theft. I think that when you leave something, you should be able to come back and pick it up where it was. One of my concerns though is that there are still a lot of things missing, students picking up iPods, iPhones, etc. I think the only way that we can solve that problem is to make everybody responsible for their stuff. Keep up with it, you know. They're spending good money on electronic equipment, I think they need to be more responsible as far as keeping up with them.



By Preston Hausser and Claire Mendelson

The spring sports season is well underway, and MLWGS teams have already claimed many victories over conference rivals on the road to compete in post-season play.

Baseball



 **Walker** 15 7 0
 **T.J.** 1 3 4

With seven hits and zero errors, the Dragons defeated Thomas Jefferson 15-1 on their opening day of the season. Forrest Smith ('16) and Matthew Pinson ('17) both went 3 for 3 with 3 RBI and 2 RBI, respectively. Matthew Moore ('15) pitched a dominant four innings.



 **Walker** 6 8 1
 **Godwin** 1 4 1

On March 24th Dragon Baseball defeated Mills Godwin for the first time in school history. Frankie Celentano ('16) and Nathan Berry ('16) both went 2-4 with a run scored while Henry Haas ('17) went 1 for 3 with a double and an RBI. Matthew Pinson ('17) pitched a complete game four-hitter.

Softball



 **Walker** 16 9 1
 **T.J.** 2 1 1

The softball team started their season strong with a 16-2 victory. Emma Roby ('18) went 2 for 3 with a home run, and Abigail Barber ('18) matched her teammate with the same stats. Kelly Richters ('18) earned the win on the day.



 **Walker** 19 12 1
 **H. Springs** 0 3 8

MLWGS softball followed up their win against T.J. with shutout game against Highland Springs. Emma Roby ('18) rounded the bases on a bunt home run and Grace Glaubit ('17) added two doubles for the Green Dragons. Roby pitched a complete game.

Boys Soccer



 **Walker** 0 0 — 0
 **Godwin** 2 2 — 4

Gordon Hadley ('16) had 7 saves in goal, but the Dragons couldn't hold off against a physical Godwin team. Walker moved to 1-1 on the young season.

 **Walker** 1 1 — 2
 **P.H.** 1 0 — 1



Alessandro Ragazzi ('15) and Daniel Jovin ('17) each scored one goal to lead the Dragons to a victory over Patrick Henry. Gordon Hadley ('16) had 7 saves in goal.

Girls Soccer



 **Walker** 0 0 — 0
 **Godwin** 1 2 — 3

The Lady Dragons faced off against a tough Godwin team, but couldn't find the back of the net. After several key seniors graduated last year, the team this year is rebuilding.

Boys Tennis



 **Walker** 9
 **T.J.** 0

The boys tennis team beat Thomas Jefferson 9-0 behind the victory of number 1 seed, Pierce Tarry ('17), who defeated his opponent 10-0. Robby Fischer ('15) and Nate Tamingler ('18) both won their matches 10-1.



 **Walker** 9
 **Bruton** 0

Karl Katlaps ('17) made his season debut and shut out his opponent. The doubles team of Kahn Sahingur ('17) and Tamingler also came out victorious, winning 8-0. Walker improves to 2-1.

Girls Tennis

 **Walker** 9
 **T.J.** 0

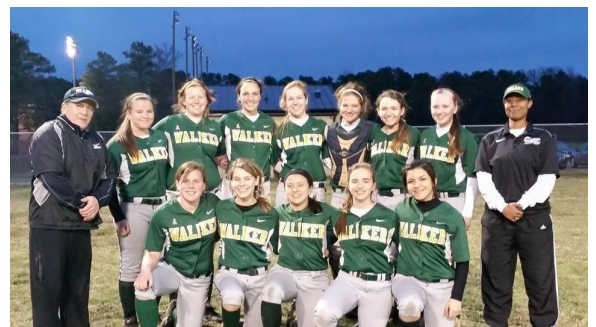
The MLWGS girls tennis started off the season with a win over Thomas Jefferson. Darby Anderson ('16) and Elizabeth Benos ('17) shut-out their competition 8-0 and sealed the deal for MLWGS.

 **Walker** 9
 **Bruton** 0

Anna Soffin ('18) and Anna Kuno ('15) easily handed defeat to their match-ups from Bruton in a conference match. Each player contributed to an overall 9-0 team win.

Track

Both the girls and boys indoor track and field teams claimed first place at the 2A state championship meet in the beginning of March. Moving into the spring season, the Dragons continue to be a formidable force. At the Captains Classic meet, the 4x400 and 4x800 meter relay teams took first place for both the boys and girls. The girls also claimed first place victories in the 100 and 300 meter hurdles and 800 meter run, and the boys finished in first in the 1600 and 800 meter runs.



MLWGS softball celebrates a win. Photo courtesy of Caroline Richters.