

ReCAP

The Communication Arts Program's Quarterly Newsletter



The start of a CAPtivating year!

Hello to returning CAP students and parents, and welcome to all new readers! This is our first edition of this year's CAP newsletter- a spot where we interview students, highlight projects, and give overviews of what each grade has been up to over the past quarter.

For newcomers, take a look around! Whether it's reflecting back on your (or your child's) grade, looking at years past for nostalgia and remembrance of old projects, or looking at grades ahead, this newsletter will showcase the assignments the students worked hard to finish this quarter, as well as the students themselves.

The first quarter of the 2022-23 school year has been off to a great start for each grade of CAP students, and this newsletter will describe it all: the freshmen starting their first CAP projects, the sophomores exploring dystopia and starting one of their biggest projects this year, the juniors learning about the reality of marginalized voices and different aspects of our society, and the seniors wrapping up their last major CAP project.

Enjoy!

-- Sarah Fillman, Sammi Frey, Delia Chen, Evan Wilson, Bintou Sangare, and Liliana Gray

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Fired Up for Freshman Year

by Bintou Sangare

In CAP 9 Drama, students learned about the elements of scene via improvisation and performed modern plays using the techniques they learned in class. While some freshmen like Kenai Fraizer Rayas (he/him) say that performing in front of his peers was “very embarrassing to do,” he also agreed that the performances were “definitely worth it,” as they taught students how to speak in front of their classmates, and reach outside of their comfort zones.

In their U.S. History class, students learned about different aspects of more recent American history through a plethora of projects. This includes everything from their National History Day Projects to their first ever Cinematic Analysis. Freshman Grace Sauri (she/her) commented on how the “common theme of America,” a recurring thread of each assignment and project, allowed students to expand their views on topics in relation to “immigrants, Americans’ views, relationships with other Americans, and changing political systems.”

In Honors English 9, students read the book *All American Boys*, a foundation to learn about aspects of both race and racism in America. In addition, students had multiple discussions on current topics that they learned about in class. Fraiser Rayas especially enjoyed “all the assignments that [Mr. Rada] had, specifically the discussions that we have. I really got into them and it was fun... being able to see someone else’s perspective [even] without... agreeing with it.” Students also wrote fictional narratives, which Freshman Staurt Mallon (he/him) recalled enjoying because students could “really write it on whatever,” giving them the freedom to “choose an issue... that [they’re] passionate about.”

Lastly, CAP 9 Photography students learned about the different elements and rules of photography and showcased their acquired knowledge through different photography projects. Mallon relayed how he “enjoyed the photography assignments” because “it allowed me to be... creative.” Students also got a head start on their CAP portfolios, a collection of assignments logged under either the “Critical Thinking” competency, the “Social Awareness” competency, or the “Media and Communications” competency that they will later use to create their senior year Advanced Exhibitions (see page 5).





Speaking With Sophomores

by Sammi Frey

This year, sophomores have been busy as ever, whether stepping into the shoes of citizens in Big Brother's world of *1984* or playing the role of election analysts, predicting the outcomes of midterms in the Crystal Ball project. Those weren't the only students' predictions that came true: Lily Sheckner (she/her) "expected [sophomore year] to be fun... and that came true." Thinking critically lets each student examine the role they play in their communities from as small a scale as each member of a CAP group to as large a scale as Maryland in the elections.

In CAP Journalism, students got hands-on experience as journalists: each of them matched with an older student within a school publication that interested them (BNC, Silver Chips, Silverquill, or Silverlogue). They then interviewed for quotes in an article they were writing. Questions like "Why is your publication better than all of the others?" from Paige Ananfack (she/her) and "what is your specific role within your publication?" from Sophie Pranio (she/her) helped frame the responses each journalist

was looking for. Not only did this project help CAP 10 students become "more comfortable in [their] interviewing, reporting, and news-writing skills," but it also set each of them up with an older Blair student as a mentor.

Moving onto the broadcasting side of media, C-SPAN Student Cam is one of the biggest undertakings of CAP's media program. This annual documentary making contest asks students to create a 5-6 minute documentary film answering socially compelling prompts. "As someone who's done C-SPAN before, Mr. Mayo definitely gave us more freedom to take risks." This year's prompt asks students to step into the shoes of an elected official: "If you were a newly elected member of Congress, which issue would be your first priority and why?" Sheckner "always tries to choose [a topic] that I'm passionate about," focusing on the Stop Hacks and Improve Electronic Data Security (SHIELD) Act, specifically targeting revenge porn. With a family friend who helped draft the law, she hopes to put her interview skills to the test.



Fun Fact

Sophomores won CAP's Halloween contest: door decorating, pumpkin painting, and spooky karaoke!

Jumping into Junior Year

by Liliانا Gray

CAP II summer work encapsulated the first semester comprehensive theme of marginalized voices. Throughout the summer students observed a social and traditional media platform for four weeks and looked for content about a marginalized group of their choosing. Each week, they wrote their observations and pondered questions like: Who is heard and who is ignored and what are the consequences of representation for that individual group? In AP World History, students used these journal entries to create sidewalk chalk art illustrating their marginalized group. In his summer project focusing on Indigenous American communities, AJ Jacobs (he/him) noticed “the current injustices in these communities aren’t focused on because Indigenous culture has been erased throughout time.” Throughout his four weeks of observing media, AJ came to the conclusion that “Indigenous people aren’t portrayed in the media and when they are, it’s often in the past tense.” As a descendant of the Lumbee tribe, AJ aimed to bring attention to Indigenous communities through his sidewalk mural. Coming back to school, students took what they had learned over the summer and made designs out of chalk on the sidewalk. As Blair students walked by, they saw a mosaic of different communities, representative of our diverse school.



In Research Methods, students had in-depth conversations regarding confirmation bias, perception, and the factory model of education, all of which led to a dialogue about social media. Students were separated into groups and proposed or opposed the notion that **the Internet divides us more than it connects us**. Opposing the motion, Grace Humbert did “a lot of research about how the internet creates opportunity for people to spread positivity and enact change.” During her closing statement, she pointed out how the internet can “help us to reach out to other people and see the world from a different point of view.” This dialogue laid the foundation for 11th graders to question their existing biases and reflect on media’s role in our society. Although the opposing motion didn’t win, Grace accepted defeat, learning “to see the issue from both perspectives.”

PROFILE: DC FIELD TRIP

A new interdisciplinary was introduced to CAP II where Juniors took a field trip to DC, experienced the 3D immersive technology-centered art at ARTECHHOUSE, and saw the work of various African artists at the National Museum of African Art. Mr. Mogge, CAP AP World History teacher, explained the trip aimed “to highlight elements of African culture that students had previewed in class” and “bring all the 11th graders together as a community.” In their AP World History class, students learned the concept of cultural diffusion and how different cultures influenced African art through trade and religion. In Research Methods, students studied Afro-surrealism along with Afro-futurism and discussed their significance in art.

Students used knowledge from class lessons to observe African art pieces in order to more critically understand their meaning. As a follow-up to the interdisciplinary, students picked artifact that they had photographed at one of the museums, drew it, and wrote a paragraph analyzing its cultural value and representation of individual expression. After the field trip and the synthesis project, Leah Kirschner stated that “African art is more diverse than I initially thought. This field trip truly showed the complexity of African art and allowed [students] to connect with it more than they would have reading it out of a textbook.”



Sparring with Seniors

by *Evan Wilson*

This quarter, seniors presented their Advanced Exhibitions (AEs), their last major project before their senior presentations this December. AEs are opportunities for students to explore passions, hobbies, interests, service, and more, through the two categories of Impact on School and Community and Area of Emphasis. Through journal entries, artifacts, a final reflection, and their presentations, seniors demonstrated their learning and takeaways from these two projects. Topics included service trips, business creations, hobbies, and internships, each requiring the application of CAP skills outside of the program.

For example, Anna Marchler (she/her) participated in a six-week-long program at Stonebranch School of Art in Rockville. The program was long and intensive: hours of drawing and studio work everyday to refine and train artistic skill. “We had a lot of one-on-one time with the teachers, and you could tailor it to your needs because every artist at the program had different goals.” Marchler’s time at Stonebranch was more than artistic development - it was also a time for personal growth. “Not only did I learn a lot of technical skills for drawing a still life, but also how to better communicate and be more confident in my work.” Learning to receive and grow from feedback was a valuable lesson, especially in working and effectively handling a studio environment.



Ila Raso (she/her) was a Youth Teaching Assistant (YTA) with the Smithsonian Institution’s annual summer camp. From their home base on the National Mall, campers explored the various museums the Smithsonian



has to offer while participating in group activities and projects. Raso’s time with the Smithsonian blended passions for the arts, education, and child development. She noted specifically rewarding moments when she had the opportunity to educate the students about topics outside their camp’s focus. On a visit to the African Art Museum, she recalls how “the kids were saying, ‘Those masks look so scary and weird.’ I had to take the opportunity to help them realize that just because something is different doesn’t mean it’s weird. It doesn’t make it worse or better, it’s just different, and that’s the beauty in it.” Drawing on her own experiences and learning within the program, Raso feels that moments like these are where real change and growth happens.

Advanced Exhibitions allow CAP seniors to put their four years of learning into practice, taking their knowledge and applying it to something beyond the classroom or school. Choosing an area to explore or a group to help can be daunting, but seniors have some advice for younger CAP students: Marchler reminds students that “you don’t have to go big, what matters is that you want to do it and that it’s something that fulfills you.” Raso echoes similar sentiments, advising students that “exploring your passions is what’s going to lead to something successful and that you’re going to go explore further.”

AMBASSADORS' CORNER



by Delia Angulo Chen

Starting the year with community-building events, we hosted our second annual CAP Scavenger Hunt. Arranged into small, multigrade groups, students were given clues during lunch to point them to various CAP teachers' classrooms. Once in the classroom, each CAP teacher recited a clue to find an object in their room. After the students deciphered and photographed the object, they were rewarded with their next classroom clue. Finishing in a record-breaking thirty minutes, Habib Camara (he/him, grade 12), Silvan Unger (he/him, grade 11), and Van Cao (he/him, grade 11) rushed back to the Blair practice field to pick up their well deserved and highly coveted gift cards for the Four Corners shopping center. "I'm glad (I) got to work together with kids of different grades and meet the new CAP teachers" reflects Camara.

After working to introduce current CAP students to various classrooms around the school, the ambassadors got right to work recruiting new CAP students. On October 25th, CAP held its Informational Night, open to prospective eighth-grade students and their guardians. Along with the Info Night, the Ambassadors were hard at work during October and November going to recruitment events at the local middle schools and allowing the eighth graders to ask any potential CAP or application questions to current students.

During the four-day week leading up to Halloween, CAP hosted a lunchtime Halloween activity a day. Aptly named Halloweek, CAP finished off the first quarter with a week full of door decorating, pumpkin painting, halloween jeopardy, spooky karaoke, and finally a showing of *The Nightmare Before Christmas*. Each CAP grade had a chance to accumulate Halloweek points for coming first in the daily challenge. Winning by a pumpkin patch landslide, CAP sophomores swept the competition and won all but one challenge. Keep an eye out on the CAP Instagram @mbhsCAP to see what new CAP-wide activities are coming up!