

# Focus ON CCSD

News for, by and about Charleston County School District,  
the state of South Carolina's premier school district where *Students are the Heart of Our Work.*

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## AMHS valedictorian will forever be an ambassador for his alma mater



It is a huge honor to be named valedictorian at any high school in Charleston County School District (CCSD) but an outstanding accomplishment when you're the top student at Academic Magnet High School – named U.S. News & World Report second best high school in America.

"It means an awful lot, particularly when you consider who you're competing against," said Principal Jacob Perlmutter. "The students here are some of the most talented in the state and as a result, we do not rank students by grade point average, except the valedictorian and salutatorian."

The motto at Academic Magnet is "Scholarship and Honor." Senior Huiwen Wang took those two values very seriously from the time he entered the school as a freshman until June 1, 2022 when he learned he was the class of 2022's valedictorian.

Wang said he purposely took the hardest classes available. He excelled in every one of those classes and when he goes out into the world, well beyond his college days at Duke University, he plans to always serve as an ambassador for Academic Magnet.

Associate Principal Lucy Pinckney has known Wang since his freshman year and followed his success with pride.

"I remember that nervous young man coming here with his mom to register," said Pinckney. "He's since grown into a confident, funny young man, with great potential. He took the hardest classes we offered here and aced them with ease, all while finding a balance in his life to serve his community."

Wang, who moved from China to America when he was one year old, has attended CCSD schools since kindergarten. He came to Academic Magnet by way of Charleston County School of the Arts (SOA), which shares the same campus.

"My friends were planning to attend and naturally I wanted to be with them," said Wang. "The school's reputation speaks for itself and I wanted to be a part of that."

There is some pressure put on incoming freshmen to join the clubs offered at Academic Magnet. Wang did not want to overextend himself, so he chose a few he loved and valued. The

Chess Club, National Honor Society, French National Society, Gaming Club, Asian Awareness, Quiz Bowl, and Ultimate Frisbee are all clubs that he feels will make him a better person and leader.

"Some of the clubs I participated in were for entertainment and fun, while others were more formal and of a serious note," said Wang. "They all taught me how to better communicate, plan, and collaborate. Those are valuable traits that we can never stop working on."

His doting mother, Qing Zhao could not be more proud.

"I am really happy for him," said Zhao. "He worked hard, he listened to his teachers, and he earned and deserves this honor."

Wang will be attending Duke with a handful of friends from Academic Magnet. He is glad he will know some other students.

"I am excited and nervous because it will be a new environment," said Wang. "I've lived in South Carolina most of my life. It is also intimidating because of how super, super smart the other students attending Duke are. I hope to use that to my advantage to learn from them so I can excel academically and continue to better serve my community."

Wang plans to double major in computer science and math. He credits some of his closest friends and teacher John Phillips for introducing him to coding and programming.

"I have always liked math and I was fortunate enough to learn under the best teachers here at Magnet and at SOA," said Wang.

Principal Perlmutter is confident Wang will be successful at Duke.

"It is one thing to be smart, but to be driven and devoted to your craft is really impressive," said Perlmutter. "He should be really proud as the valedictorian at one of the top high schools in the country. Huiwen was devoted to this school and many things in this community, and it shows in his accomplishment."

### Magnet is a special place

"My son grew up a lot here at Magnet," said Zhao. "He was a shy child and did not talk much, but now he is active in school and his community. This school brought out the best in him because it is about so much more than academics. The teachers and coaches are mentors, friendly faces, and companions."

Principal Perlmutter is a graduate of Academic Magnet and reflects on his time as a student there, with fondness.

"A career path is not always straight," said Perlmutter. "Mine was actually circular. I am now back at the school I graduated from and the school has the same values, the same quirky energy, and the same student drive. After all these years, the uniqueness of the school has not changed."

Wang credits the school's environment for some of his success.

"I am very happy to be at the top of my class," said Wang. "My hard work paid off but the culture at the school is a testament to how much you can learn and grow as a person. Academic Magnet is a tough school and students have to form bonds to collaborate and rely on each other – and we do."

Wang said a lot has changed since he started ninth grade, but the dynamic energy of Academic Magnet has not. He is appreciative of Perlmutter for keeping it that way.

"Academic Magnet is accepting to all and that hasn't changed in 30 years," said Perlmutter.

Wang was a Junior Marshall at the Class of 2021's graduation and was the pianist during the ceremony. It was an honor for Wang to be chosen to help celebrate those seniors. This year as he took his place at center-stage he was not only addressing the next unknowing valedictorian but an auditorium full of classmates that will forever admire his well-deserved accomplishment.

"Wang representing Academic Magnet High School is better than any national award," added Perlmutter. "That's the caliber of people we're producing."

## WELLNESS LEADER HONORED

Ellen Nitz, Charleston County School District's Director of Nursing Services and Angela Wicke Program Coordinator for MUSC Boeing Center for Children's Wellness, presented Principal Ian James at Midland Park Primary with a wellness award in honor of the late Donna Frye for her 11 years of service as the school's Wellness Leader. The school's wellness committee will also receive a \$1200 check to put toward their wellness initiative next school year.



## Community Day at Charleston Progressive Academy

The East Cooper Breakfast Rotary Club teamed up with the community and staff at Charleston Progressive Academy to spruce up the playground area and build planter boxes so that when students return they will have an exciting play area with new learning areas.

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# CCSD GRADUATION 2022





# Montessori Community wins district's annual wellness award



Montessori Community School awarded grand prize

The MUSC Boeing Center for Children's Wellness (BCCW) in partnership with Charleston County School District (CCSD), celebrated schools and their wellness efforts last month.

During the 2021-2022 school year, 39 CCSD schools earned a Wellness Award.

The grand prize winner was Montessori Community School (MCS). As part of the grand prize, the entire staff at Montessori Community was treated to a healthy catered lunch, presented with a giant check for \$2,000, and a trophy.

This was the first time a CCSD Montessori school earned the top award. Physical Education teacher Ruth Sword championed the effort at her school, with the support of the entire faculty and staff. Sword has been at Montessori community for 12 years and said that wellness has always been a part of the culture of the school.

"The Montessori Community School established a culture of wellness throughout their 2021-2022 school year," said Sword. "All MCS students participated weekly in our school gardening program. MCS students have had the opportunity to attend field trips to local farms to learn about fruits and vegetables. As our MCS students get the opportunity to taste what they have grown, they are open to exploring these new healthy food options."

Sword explained that physical activity at MCS is also encouraged by participating in the South Carolina Walk to School day, physical activity breaks throughout the week, flexible seating in the classrooms, the MCS Color Fun Run, staff/student volleyball matches, and the Kids Heart Challenge.

Runners up in the BCCW challenge were Harborview Elementary School (led by wellness Leader Heather Hord) and James Island Elementary School (led by wellness Leaders Meredith Barnette and Ginny Jones).

The MUSC BCCW School-Based Wellness Initiative was created with the goal of improving nutrition and increasing physical activity for students and staff by motivating districts and schools to make policy, system, and environmental changes through participation in the School Wellness Checklist.

"It's been a challenging year for schools, staff, and students, yet we've seen school wellness committees really commit to the initiative and thrive," said Angela Wicke Program Coordinator for MUSC Boeing Center for Children's Wellness. "We are seeing a trend in relating social-emotional learning with school gardening, yoga, mindfulness, art, and even STEM projects. It's really exciting to see all of the creative ways that schools are creating cultures of wellness through a concentrated commitment to this wellness initiative."

Wellness Awards range from \$250 to \$2,000. The award money must go into the wellness programs at each school to help grow and sustain their initiatives. In total, \$21,950 went to CCSD schools for the 2021-2022 school year. In addition, CCSD schools received over \$32,000 in wellness grants this year to fund initiatives such as school gardens, increased water consumption, kinesthetic classrooms, and movement throughout the school day.

"Participating in the MUSC BCCW School-Based Wellness Initiative is key to developing the whole school, whole community, whole child model (CDC's framework for addressing health in schools)," said Holly Kut, CCSD Instructional Specialist for Health and Physical Education. "The School Wellness Checklist goes beyond the student health and wellness; it caters to employee wellness, which fosters higher morale, provides self-care opportunities, and community involvement supporting lifelong healthy learning. Happy healthy schools make happy healthy students."

According to Dr. Janice Key, Director of the MUSC BCCW, all participating schools did an outstanding job supporting wellness through healthy nutrition, adequate physical activity, and support of emotional needs.

"Healthy kids are better learners," said Key. "Studies have proven that healthier children miss fewer days, have improved behavior, and are more likely to graduate from high school. I am incredibly proud of the efforts made by the students and staff at Montessori Community."

"We are proud to implement this initiative across the state in 19 school districts," said Wicke. "CCSD is always a top performer and one of the longest-standing districts. Many of the CCSD schools have been participating for so long, that the culture of wellness is now ingrained in their daily operation, resulting in healthier students, staff, and communities."

"As the physical education teacher and wellness coordinator at MCS, my goal is to create a love of physical activity and healthy eating through exposure to many different ways for my students to build a healthy foundation," added Sword. "As this healthy foundation is established, students are mentally and physically stronger individuals that are able to be productive citizens in our society."



## Charleston Fire Department receives engraved memorial flag

On June 15, representatives from Cooper River Center for Advanced Studies and CCSD presented an engraved memorial flag to the Charleston Fire Department ahead of the Sofa Super Store fire that claimed the lives of nine Charleston firefighters.

The engraved flag is the result of a collaboration between a district staff member (who is also a local woodworker) and students in the Cooper River CAS Makerspace and Building Construction program.

# Educator Night at the Riverdogs 2022



Charleston County School District celebrated this year's Top Five Teacher of the Year Finalists and recognized Nathalie Bennett as the 2022 Teacher of the Year at the Charleston Riverdogs stadium. Teachers from across the district were invited to attend with their families and treated to an evening picnic and baseball fun.



# NINE RECENT CCSD GRADUATES RECEIVE 2022 COLLEGE-SPONSORED National Merit Scholarships

Nine Charleston County School District (CCSD) students from the graduating Class of 2022 earned college-sponsored National Merit Scholarships from the National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) this year. They are part of the third group of winners in the 67th annual National Merit Scholarship Program, which was released earlier this month. A total of 14 CCSD students have now received scholarships from NMSC in 2022.

## THE FOLLOWING CCSD STUDENTS EARNED 2022 COLLEGE-SPONSORED NATIONAL MERIT SCHOLARSHIPS:

### ACADEMIC MAGNET HIGH SCHOOL



Mary C. Compton  
National Merit  
University of South  
Carolina Scholarship



Kaylin L. Morris  
National Merit  
University of South  
Carolina Scholarship



Randall C. Reed, Jr.,  
National Merit Clemson  
University Scholarship



Piper D. Wood  
National Merit  
University of South  
Carolina Scholarship

NMSC released the names of more than 2,600 winners of National Merit Scholarships financed by U.S. colleges and universities. Officials of each sponsor college selected their scholarship winners from among the finalists in the 2022 National Merit Scholarship Program who plan to attend their institution. These awards provide between \$500 and \$2,000 annually for up to four years of undergraduate study at the institution financing the scholarship.

“These four students, Mary, Kaylin, Randall, and Piper, embody the pursuit of academic excellence regardless of the circumstances,” said Academic Magnet’s principal, Jacob Perlmutter. “They achieved this recognition during the most uncertain times and I am so proud of their accomplishment.”

This year, 155 higher education institutions are underwriting Merit Scholarship awards through the National Merit Scholarship Program. Sponsor colleges and universities include 82 private and 73 public institutions located in 42 states and the District of Columbia.

“SOA is thrilled to celebrate this impressive achievement of Elliot and Ryan,” said Dr. Shannon Cook, the principal of Charleston County School of the Arts. “These student-artists have studied, practiced, performed and succeeded! We look forward to all they will accomplish as they move forward to their next challenges.”

By the conclusion of the 2022 competition, about 7,500 finalists will have been selected to receive National Merit Scholarships totaling nearly \$28 million. Winners are students who have, according to evaluators, the strongest combination of academic skills and achievements, extracurricular accomplishments, and potential for success in rigorous college studies.

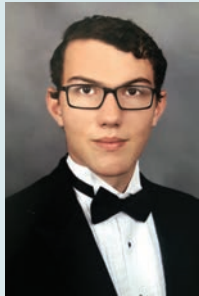
“We are honored to congratulate three Wando seniors on being offered college-sponsored Merit Scholarships from NMSC,” said Wando’s principal, Dr. Sherry Eppelsheimer. “As Baily Chave, Nolin Harris, and Maddox Barron prepare to attend these wonderful institutions, the Wando High School community stands proud of their academic accomplishments, and we look forward to hearing of their continued success.”

NMSC, a not-for-profit organization that operates without government assistance, was established in 1955 to conduct the National Merit Scholarship Program. The majority of National Merit Scholarships offered each year are underwritten by approximately 400 independent corporate and college sponsors that support NMSC’s efforts to honor the nation’s scholastically talented youth and encourage academic excellence at all levels of education.

### CHARLESTON COUNTY SCHOOL OF THE ARTS (SOA)



Elliot C. Catoe-Griffis  
National Merit  
University of South  
Carolina Scholarship



Ryan M. Kopanski  
National Merit Clemson  
University Scholarship

### WANDO HIGH SCHOOL



Maddox R. Barron  
National Merit  
Vanderbilt University  
Scholarship



Bailey Chave  
National Merit  
Oklahoma State  
University Scholarship



Nolin P. Harris  
National Merit Purdue  
University Scholarship

# CCSD leads state with 21 awards in SC/NSPRA’s Rewards for Excellence Student Showcase

Charleston County School District’s (CCSD) Division of Strategy and Communications, along with five schools, combined to receive a state-best 21 awards in the 2022 Rewards for Excellence program, sponsored by the South Carolina Chapter of the National School Public Relations Association (SC/NSPRA). The honors include three “Best in Show” honors in the District Excellence in Writing category, School Social Media (Cooper River Center for Advanced Studies, and School Website (R.B. Stall High School).

SC/NSPRA recognized 119 programs and projects from across the state during a ceremony on Friday, May 13, 2022, in Columbia.

Rewards for Excellence recognizes outstanding communications and public relations efforts by South Carolina schools, school districts, and education agencies and associations. Public relations veterans with extensive experience in educational and business communications evaluated a total of 217 entries from the school and district levels.

The program features the following three main awards categories:

- Medallion (for comprehensive public relations programs)
- Golden Achievement (for a single project or an aspect of a comprehensive program)
- Publications and Electronic Media (for individual products designed to improve communication)

The following entries from the district and CCSD schools were honored in this year’s Rewards for Excellence program:

#### DISTRICT

Excellence in Writing - *It all starts with a conversation* – Best in Show  
Excellence in Writing - *NCHS offers class on “street law” for aspiring lawyers*

Excellence in writing - *Pulse of CCSD – Child Development teacher brightens everyone’s day*

Excellence in Writing - *Pulse of CCSD – Phillip Caston cataloging high school memories year after year at Wando*

Excellence in Writing - *Students at Laing expand Go Baby Go project with community donations*

Photography - *Laurel Hill “Snow Day” 1*

Photography - *Laurel Hill “Snow Day” 2*

Photography - *Learning how to raise farm animals*

Special Publication - *Valedictorian Booklet 2021*

Video (In-House) - *CCSD Minute January 22, 2021*

Video (In-House) - *Clemson School of Architecture Career Summer Academy*

Video (In-House) - *“Go Baby Go” at Laing Middle School- Stories of CCSD*

#### SCHOOL

Newsletter - *Stiles Point Elementary School*

Social Media - *Cooper River Center for Advanced Studies’ Facebook page - Best in Show*

Social Media - *R.B. Stall High School’s Facebook page*

Video - *Cooper River Center for Advanced Studies (Toys for Tots PSA)*

Video - *North Charleston Creative Arts Elementary School (January iReady Challenge Winners)*

Website - *R.B. Stall High School – Best in Show*

Website - *Drayton Hall Elementary School*

Website - *North Charleston Creative Arts Elementary School*

Website - *Thomas C. Cario Middle School*

“We are tremendously proud of the fact that CCSD won more communications awards than any other district in our state this year,” said CCSD’s Chief of Staff, Dr. Erica Taylor. “Our efforts are

all about sharing news about the people and programs of CCSD to our employees, parents, and community at large. It is truly rewarding to see our talented and dedicated team of communications professionals and school staff members recognized by their peers in this way.”

This is the second year in a row CCSD set its own record in the SC/NSPRA Reward for Excellence program; the district earned 17 honors in 2021.

SC/NSPRA is an affiliate of the National School Public Relations Association. The state chapter is composed of more than 140 school public relations practitioners, superintendents, and other educational professionals from across the state. The organization strives to foster development in the field of school public relations and to encourage meaningful community involvement in and understanding of the public school system.



2022 CCSD RFE Winners

# Cooper River Center for Advanced Studies hosts Student Showcase



Cooper River Center for Advanced Studies (Cooper River CAS) hosted their Spring Student Showcase on Thursday, May 17, 2022.

Families, community members, and business and industry representatives toured the campus and learned about the programs of study – Health Sciences, PLTW Biomedical Science, Information Technology, Media Technology, PLTW Pre-Engineering, Mechatronics, Global Logistics, Building Construction, Automotive Collision and Repair. They also viewed student projects, experience student skill demonstrations, and met the instructors.

Students at Cooper River CAS develop both academic and employability skills that help them to define their career paths and pursue post-secondary goals. The school’s career counselors work closely with students to provide real-world career experiences.

Students gain relevant industry education, training, and certification through rigorous college and career teaching

standards. Students learn to demonstrate life and career characteristics that enhance their global perspective, develop self-direction, promote a strong work ethic, and build interpersonal skills.

“Our Spring Showcase is evidence that we are well on our way to accomplish our mission. Our parents, business partners and students showed up in full force last night. I can only imagine the impact the Cooper River Center will have on our community when we are operating at full capacity. We have now transformed the future of 100 students in spite of all the obstacles we faced this past year.”

The Center’s instructional programs align with regional, state, and national college and career indicators that prepare students for high-skill, high-demand, high-wage careers for the 21st-century global economy. The programs offered to ensure all students are well prepared for career fields that will meet the demands of future industry.



# Scout project benefits W.B. Goodwin

William Johnson, son of Melanie Johnson, the school librarian at W.B. Goodwin Elementary School, completed his Eagle Scout badge by building a Gaga Ball pit (similar to dodgeball) as well as making other improvements around the school playground.

Eagle Scout is the highest rank in the boy scouts. Johnson is a member of Troop 11 in Mount Pleasant. To obtain Eagle rank, a scout is required to complete a service project.

Johnson was in Kindergarten when his mom started working at Goodwin. He has grown up visiting the school and wanted to do something to benefit the students there.

Johnson chose to build a Gaga Ball pit and a new playground bench for teachers. The lumber used to build the pit was donated by Guy C Lee Building Materials. The project took the better part of a day and a team of seven volunteer scouts with three dads to get the job done. They also repainted the existing picnic tables.

"I knew the playground could use more equipment and I knew Gaga is a game that all of the students would enjoy," said Johnson. "My mom also told me the teachers needed a place to sit to watch over the students while they play."

Principal Natasha Jones, was thrilled with the work.

"I am so pleased William thought of our students and used his project to better our school," said Jones. "We know the improvements will be enjoyed by our students and teachers for years to come!"



"My son has worked hard over the years to achieve the rank of Eagle and I was so excited when he told me he wanted to do something for my school," his mother Melanie added. "It means so much to me."

The Gaga Ball pit was well received by students.

"It is so much fun," said fourth grader Semaj Bolds. "We were all excited to have new equipment to play with. This game is great!"



## Jazz musician visits Pepperhill

Charlton Singleton visited Pepperhill Elementary School to speak to students about the impact of music in their lives, the history of jazz, and about doing their best in school.

# East Cooper CAS student raises over \$7,000

Emma Nodine, a student at East Cooper Center for Advanced Studies and a member of Health Occupation Students of America - Future Health Professionals (HOSA), recently spearheaded a fundraising walk for Bardet-Biedl syndrome (BBS). The event in April raised \$7,582.

Nodine presented this project and her research on BBS during the Capstone presentations in the CAS. Biomedical Innovation is the capstone course for the Project Lead the Way (PLTW) Biomedical Sciences program for high school students. Students design innovative solutions for the health challenges of the 21st century. They work through progressively challenging open-ended problems, addressing topics such as clinical medicine, physiology, biomedical engineering, and public health.

Students have the opportunity to work on an independent project with a mentor or advisor from a university, hospital, research institution, or the biomedical industry. A great deal of time and effort go into these projects and Nodine wanted her project to be one with a positive impact.

Nodine's idea came about after meeting a child afflicted by BBS, which is caused by gene mutations and can affect many parts of the body. The money raised will go to research.

"I've known I wanted to do my project on Bardet-Biedl Syndrome for a while," said Nodine. "I have always been fascinated to learn about the condition and I am very passionate about it since I have close family friends who are affected by it. I have witnessed this individual's incredible growth and accomplishments first-hand."

"As Emma's HOSA advisor this year, I have seen her change lives right in front of my eyes," said Katie Parker, an instructor in the pre-medicine academy. "I knew she could accomplish anything the day I met her. When Emma first introduced me to her capstone project topic, I fell in love with it. I lent a hand in any way that I could, but Emma had everything beautifully organized including all necessary logistics. She did an outstanding job and it gives me chills knowing she is in high school making a world of difference and she still has her whole life ahead of her."

According to Nodine, the hardest part of the fundraiser was organizing everything to prepare for the permit.

"The process is pretty lengthy and included going door-to-door to every house that would be affected by the walk to obtain signatures of permission," said Nodine. "It all ended up being incredibly worthwhile in the end. The fundraiser also allowed me to be involved in the Health Science field outside of the classroom while being surrounded by others as passionate about the topic."

Parker added that when Nodine joined HOSA she immediately took an interest.

"This propelled her into a leadership position," said Parker. "She has collaborated on all the club projects and drives, competed in prepared speaking on the state level, and will join us at internationals in Nashville this summer."



*I've known I wanted to do my project on Bardet-Biedl Syndrome for a while. I have always been fascinated to learn about the condition and I am very passionate about it since I have close family friends who are affected by it. I have witnessed this individual's incredible growth and accomplishments first-hand."*

EMMA NODINE – STUDENT, EAST COOPER CENTER FOR ADVANCED STUDIES



# CCSD TRACK AND FIELD STARS SHINE IN STATE MEETS

Multiple student-athletes from several schools in Charleston County School District won gold at the South Carolina High School League state track and field meets in May.

**AAAAA**

Wando High School's Hannah Togami won the girls' pole vault completion for the second year in a row. The junior cleared 13'1" to set a new state record.

On the boys' side, Wando's Jake Liebert won the 3,200-meter run with a time of 9:25.89.

**AAAA**

James Island Charter High School's girls' track and field team won four golds on their way to a third-place finish in the team standings.

- Senior Tia Lucas won the girls' high jump for the second year in a row; she cleared 5'2" on her way to victory.
- Sophomore Hannah Vroon captured the state title in the 1,600-meter run for the second year in a row thanks to her time of 5:03.17.
- Freshman Avery Belk repeated as the state champion in the 800-meter race with a time of 2:17.34.
- The Trojans' 4x800 girls' relay team finished first for another state championship; M.K. Huddleston, Alex LaRue, Avery Belk, and Hannah Vroon won the event with a time of 9:46.17

Nicola Visser of Lucy Beckham High School (an eighth grader) won the girls' pole vault state championship by clearing 11'7". This is the school's first state title in the sport of track and field.

**A**

St. John's High School finished third in the girls' team standings behind three gold medals.

- Sophomore Tylashia Alston won the state championship in the 400-meter race; her time was 1:00.91.
- Rowan Stroble, a freshman, finished first in the high jump with a height of 4'10".
- Tylashia Alston, Hannah Collins, Denazia Sutton, and Dasha Buford won the title in the 4x400 meter relay with a time of 4:18.31.

Jaden Judge, a sophomore at St. John's High School, captured the boys' discus title with a throw of 138'7".



James Island Charter High School's girls' track and field team



St. John's High School's Rowan Stroble



St. John's High School's relay team



Lucy Beckham's High School's Nicola Visser



James Island Charter High School's Tia Lucas

# Tennis lessons and competitive play provided to several CCSD schools



Left: Students earned certificates and trophies for participation in afterschool tennis; Middle: CCSD's Danny Jones tennis players and their families; Right: A CCSD student participates in afterschool tennis

Students at three Charleston County School District (CCSD) schools recently completed an eight-week tennis program designed in conjunction with the Lowcountry Youth Tennis Association (LYTA) to provide free tennis to children in the tri-county area.

Lambs, Matilda F. Dunston, and North Charleston Elementary School students participated in the afterschool program that is held at the Danny Jones Center in North Charleston.

In addition to receiving lessons and participating in competitive play, students at Danny Jones were introduced to and practiced with three professional tennis players who were playing in a Professional WTA event in Mount Pleasant. Students were also given free tickets to attend the Credit One Charleston Open on Daniel Island and watch professional matches. Also all of the players were invited to attend a Charleston RiverDogs baseball game. Some of the players will participate by going onto the field between innings and playing tennis to celebrate National Tennis Month in May.

The season culminated with an awards ceremony for players and their families, complete with ice cream, certificates, and trophies.

Dunston tennis coach John Farrelly has been a member of the LYTA for many years and has taught students the game. He said the goal is to introduce the sport to students who would otherwise not have access or means to learn the game.

"Tennis gives students the benefits of teamwork and exercise," said

Farrelly. "Additionally, it gives students the feeling of success that they can pass on into the classroom."

Individual school programs receive equipment and lessons are free. Throughout the season, the three CCSD schools played against each other. The offering also carries over into summer when students can attend Academic tennis camp for \$5 a day (there are no-cost options as well).

The tennis program has a K-2 team and a 3-5 team. The K-2 players use the hockey rink at the Danny Jones complex and the 3-5 players use the tennis courts. All students are taught "10 and Under Tennis" which is a United States Tennis Association (USTA) countrywide program.

"Parents have embraced the tennis programs," said Farrelly. "The goal is to expand to middle and high school so students can play in sanctioned tournaments and also develop a love for tennis which can be enjoyed for life."

Farrelly added that parents appreciated having translators on-site at each match and at the award ceremony. Not only do parents receive weekly updates from the School Parent Liaison through the Talking Points App, but parents are able to access pictures of their children playing tennis and a weekly parent letter on the LYTA's webpage.

"The parents and students are able to get to know each other," said Farrelly. "Tennis also gives the kids something to talk about that is

not school-related."

Tennis is also promoted at Dunston where the school PE coach made it part of the curriculum and Farrelly also ran an introductory month-long tennis program at Dunston for students in 21st Century after-school program. Students attended once-a-week instruction. April Gift from the USTA was there on their final day to pass out prizes and certificates.

This was made possible thanks to the USTA donation of equipment. The kits include a digital curriculum, nets, 30 racquets, and more. Gift said the kits are an extension of their mission to create a better pathway to tennis for all grade levels. Kits are available by contacting Gift at [gift@scstennis.com](mailto:gift@scstennis.com).

"I would like to give a shout out to the staff at the schools, parents, and LYTA members that are there every week helping at the facilities," added Farrelly.

"We want to give students an opportunity to learn the game and learn it affordably," said Gift. "A lot of kids don't have opportunities because there is no programming. So this type of partnership allows for expanded tennis instruction at no cost."

The Danny Jones facility is looking forward to a multimillion-dollar facelift this year. Farrelly is excited to have facilities that can be used and enjoyed by students and parents with opportunities to experience multiple sports moving forward.



# Northwoods Middle Track Team debut

The Northwoods Middle School Nighthawks debuted their first-ever track team this school year. The 2021-2022 season was an incredible learning experience and garnered interest from additional students who plan to participate next year.



# Wando remains the top high school in South Carolina for athletics



Wando High School is once again the best high school in the state for athletics at the AAAAA level. The Warriors earned the South Carolina Athletic Administrators Association's Carlisle Cup for the 2021-2022 school year; this is the seventh year in a row they have earned this prestigious honor.

The award goes to one school from each of the South Carolina High School League's (SCHSL) five classifications and is based on the overall athletic program's success in the postseason.

The Warriors collected four SCHSL AAAAA team state championships (girls' swimming, boys' lacrosse, girls' lacrosse, and girls' soccer) and nine individual state/relay championships (one in boys' swimming, four in girls' swimming, one in boys' cross country, one in boys' golf, one in boys' track and field, and one in girls' track and field).

"I want to congratulate the coaches, student-athletes, parents, and the entire Wando High School staff on claiming our seventh Carlisle Cup in a row," said Wando's Athletic Director, Mark Buchman. "I am extremely proud and honored to work for such a dedicated staff of coaches, athletes, athletic trainers, teachers, administrators, volunteers, and parents to meet this honorable accomplishment again. Thank you for your hard work and loyalty. Let's Go Wando!"

Wando has now won nine Carlisle Cups overall since the 2008-2009 school year

*"I want to congratulate the coaches, student-athletes, parents, and the entire Wando High School staff on claiming our seventh Carlisle Cup in a row. I am extremely proud and honored to work for such a dedicated staff of coaches, athletes, athletic trainers, teachers, administrators, volunteers, and parents to meet this honorable accomplishment again. Thank you for your hard work and loyalty. Let's Go Wando!"*

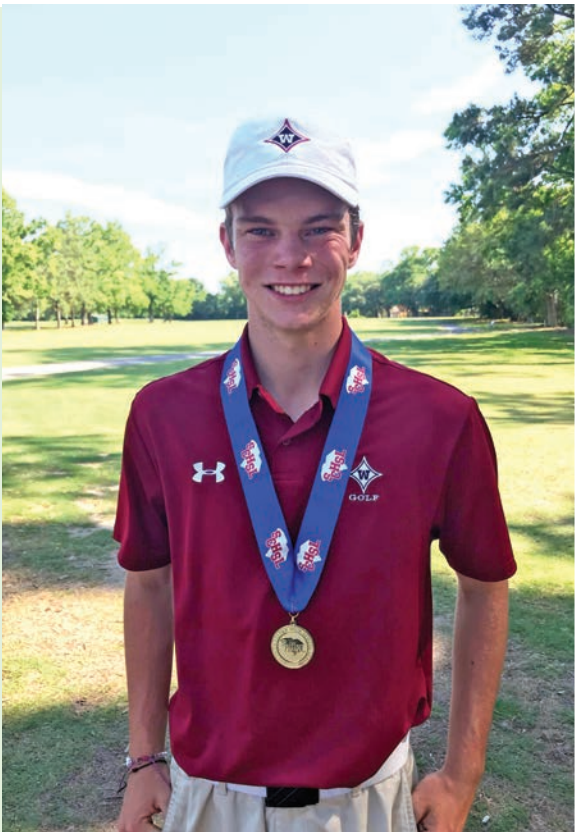
MARK BUCHMAN – WANDO HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

## Wando's Tucker Simons wins state championship in golf

Wando High School has the top golfer in the state at the AAAAA level. Tucker Simon won the South Carolina High School League state championship with a score of -2 (142) in the two-day tournament at the City of Charleston Municipal Course on May 16-17, 2022. Simon edged West Ashley High School's Ryan Bozard in a playoff for the individual title.

Wando finished third in the team standings as well.

This is the first time in 20 years (Tanner Ervin in 2002) that a Wando golfer earned individual medalist honors in the state tournament



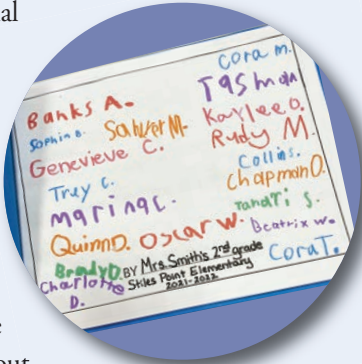
## Stiles Point Elementary

# 2021-2022 National Book Challenge finalists

Jennifer Smith, and her second-grade class at Stiles Point Elementary School are finalists in the 2021-2022 National Book Challenge hosted by Studenttreasures Publishing.

Each of the second-grade authors was recognized for their contributions to their book, "We Wish You More," which was published earlier this year through Studenttreasures' free publishing program.

Smith and her students created "We Wish You More" a book inspired by the little things in life. The second-grade authors put forth their best effort, researching, writing about, and illustrating details about all the things in life they hope more people get to experience, before sending in their pages to be published.







# Cario students earn a Young Hero grant

Students at Thomas C. Cario Middle School were awarded a 2022 King-Size Hershey Heartwarming Young Hero Grant for \$500. The grant money was used to engage 50 youth as volunteers in Global Youth Service Day (April 29, 2022). Grants for Global Youth Service Day projects focus on inclusion, empathy, and connections.

Cario’s project, “Reaching over the river with KINDNESS” benefitted their peers at Morningside Middle School as they settled in for a week of state testing.

Kristen Lewis is the instructional coach at Morningside and explained that the students improved on their winter test scores, and Cario students wanted to help them keep that going. A small team, spearheaded by eighth grader Bella Samuelson brainstormed how they could best use the grant money to accomplish that.

The team determined that decorating Morningside, their sister-school, with posters and signs of encouragement might lift moral during testing. They also organized other students at Cario to put together “test survival kits,” complete with letters of encouragement, pencils, erasers, sharpeners, candies, and more. Cario teachers even wrote letters of encouragement to their colleagues as well.

Members of the Cario PTO learned about the project and were so impressed, that they donated to the initiative.

After weeks of planning and preparation, students arrived on the Morningside campus, May 6, 2022 to decorate the halls and pass out goodies.

Sheila Osborne, Instructional Coach at Cario, and seventh grade math teacher Traci Peters chaperoned the project, but essentially allowed the children to take the lead.

“The idea was to reach out to a sister school to raise morale and excitement the week of state testing,” said Osborne. “District-wide there is a middle school initiative called ‘Make it Happen’ which is designed to encourage others, inside and outside of school. ‘Reaching over the river with KINDNESS’ was an extension of that.”

During state testing week at Cario, students are treated with the same type of support. Samuelson and her classmates appreciate the effort during that stressful week and thought spreading that type of joy to others may be beneficial.

Eighth grader Angel Mitchell was also a team leader for the project. She asked fellow Comets to volunteer in sorting, bagging, and decorating.

“This brought classmates together that may not have otherwise interacted,” he said. “It also gave us a chance to give back to our middle school peers who also may need that extra boost during testing week.”

Eighth grader Emerson Benkoski said participating made her feel like she accomplished something in her community and made people happy.

“I think what we are doing is very important because we are helping others that don’t have as much as we do,” said Benkoski. “We have a lot of privileges throughout our school and community compared. This project is very thoughtful and I feel it will make Morningside very thankful for us to think about them and care for them.”

Samuelson agreed.

“I truly feel like our world is made a better place when its people give back to the community,” said Samuelson. “Not because we feel like

we have to, but because we can find the goodness in our hearts to think about others and help who we can.”

Peters described the project as an amazing accomplishment.

“It is wonderful to have our school children recognize and appreciate what they have and be so motivated to help and encourage others,” said Peters. “Kids helping kids is what real teaching is all about-building the whole person!”

“With all that is going on in today’s world, I believe taking one step at a time in doing our part can improve the environments of all schools in our district,” added Samuelson. “Making one student smile is a victory on its own.”

“I am very proud of our students and staff,” said Principal Sharon Randall. “Experiences based on giving and helping others build community for our school and now with our sister school, Morningside Middle. This is a great learning experience for all involved, and I hope we may continue and build upon these partnerships in the coming years.”

“To me, giving back to my classmates and peers is a very rewarding and fulfilling feeling,” added Benkoski. “It is a great way to get to know your community, boosts self-confidence, and makes me feel happy. I can’t wait to do more exciting projects like this for the people around me in the future.”

“The students and staff at Morningside were so welcoming,” said Osborne. “They really opened their arms to us and embraced our students’ efforts. We look forward to hosting Morningside students at our school later this month and continuing this partnership for years to come.”

# James Island Elementary students to share their perspective on Civil Rights Era with community

Lessons learned about the Civil Rights struggle in the 1960s by fifth graders at James Island Elementary School (JIES) have turned into an art display that will be available for the community to view at the James Island Cultural Center. Shelby Joffrion, a fifth grade teacher at JIES, coordinated the effort, which is titled “An Exercise in Empathy.”

“These children and their families completed an incredible cultural empathy project that is simply breathtaking,” said Joffrion. “We did the program in February, but it is not just another ‘Black History Month’ project. It is so much bigger than that.”

The display, which was unveiled to the public in May, explores the unique perspective of fifth graders.

Each child chose a photo from the 1960s, researched it, and recreated it. Every student was then asked to interpret what was happening in the photo and how the actions within the image made them feel.

“When I tell you that the art they submitted is stunning, impactful, and empathetic, it seems like an understatement,” added Joffrion. “I am so proud of them.”

Joffrion made sure to stay in close contact with the students’ parents and guardians for this project.

“Including families in the planning and execution of the assignment is a big reason for this program’s success,” Joffrion said.

Joffrion added the project aligns with the following state standard:

5.4.CC Analyze the continuities and changes of race relations in the United States and South Carolina following the Supreme Court decisions of *Briggs v. Elliott* and *Brown v. Board of Education*. This indicator was developed to promote inquiry into how race relations in the U. S. changed due to the ruling of *Brown v. Board of Education*. This indicator was also designed to promote inquiry into how the efforts of civil rights groups and leaders helped to promote racial equality throughout the United States.



# Jennie Moore Elementary students learn about the Gullah/Geechee culture

The first grade team at Jennie Moore Elementary School worked with Ms. Nina and Engaging Creative Minds to learn more about the Gullah/Geechee culture. Students learned about the history of the Sea Islands and also learned some traditional dances and songs.

