

THE LEDGER PICK-AXE

SMSA'S STUDENT NEWS SOURCE

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Students Gain Work Experience Through Youth Apprenticeship

Sophia Loehr

Many high school students find plentiful benefits in working part-time jobs. When not busy with schoolwork, sports, or other extracurriculars, students can earn money for college or other goals and learn life skills such as time-management, accountability, and balancing a full schedule. An even more efficient, flexible way to accomplish this is to participate in the Youth Apprenticeship (YA) program.

Through YA, work can be done during school hours as a class. SMSA partners with the Youth Apprenticeship organization along with businesses near and far to give students the opportunity to work during school, ideally in a



Junior Emerson Dreher at his Youth Apprenticeship job

field that the student is considering as a future career. Claire Knowles, senior, works at SSM Health as a Medical Imaging Assistant. She is planning to pursue this career in her future.

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Have Mercy, Will Serve Students Gave Back to Community

Isabella Theel

Faith and community are two of the six SMSA core values, each incorporated into the J-Term class *Have Mercy, Will Serve*. Having traveled off campus eight days during J-Term, students connected their faith with the service of God's people over the course of the term, while integrating the Corporal and

Spiritual Works of Mercy.

While students partook in different service opportunities, from organizing clothes at St. Vincent de Paul in Fond du Lac to volunteering at Feeding America in Appleton, students also learned of God's mercy.

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The Have Mercy, Will Serve J-Term Class at Feeding America

CURRENT EVENT

Olympians Prepare for Winter Games in Milan

Gwyneth Haubenschild

For the first time since the pandemic, there will be a full crowd at the Winter Olympics. Anticipate this year's host, Italy, to showcase its breathtaking views of the Italian Alps with events in Milan and Cortina. Expect new sports like ski mountaineering, which is a combination of downhill skiing and uphill climbing. For the first time since 2014, NHL players are returning to the Olympics, with all NHL teams expected to have at least one player represented in the

men's national teams. There will also be more women's sports this year, including double luge and large hill ski jumping. The Olympic Committee aims for this year to be the most gender-



Stoat siblings Tina and Milo, the mascots for the 2026 Winter Olympics



Ski mountaineering, a new sport this year

balanced games to this point, with a record high of 47% of the athletes being female. The games' mascots for this year are stoat siblings. Their names are Tina (Olympics) and Milo (Paralympics). Italy is anticipating a full fan presence to be

occupying the cities. Enjoy opening ceremony performances by pop singers Mariah Carey and Laura Pausini and Italian tenor sensation Andrea Bocelli.

In an interview, SMSA history teacher, Mr. Knepfel shared, "I am most excited to see how ski mountaineering pans out this year. It is an incredibly demanding sport, so I'm excited to see some of the most conditioned athletes in the world compete and shine the spotlight on this up-and-coming competition!"

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Kellan Gill to Play Collegiate Soccer at NIU

Annabelle Seel

Senior year is an exciting time for students as they navigate post-graduation plans, hoping to fulfill their goals and aspirations in a variety of ways beyond high school. Senior Kellan Gill is fulfilling his dream of playing collegiate soccer and preparing to take his game to the next level. Next year, Kellan will be on the men's soccer team at Northern Illinois University (NIU) while also pursuing a degree in sports management. This exciting next step represents years of hard work and his passion for soccer.

Kellan began playing soccer when he was four years old. "It was a great experience because my parents were very passionate and made sure I enjoyed it at such a young age," he shared. Over the years, his love for the game and his skills have



increased. Kellan played two seasons on the SMSA/NFDL co-op team in high school, as well as playing for club teams such as the MLS Next team - SC Wave.

However, his athletic success was not without challenges. "Playing on a high level youth team is tough because everyone is fighting to get to the next level," he explained. "I had to sacrifice two years of playing high school soccer to chase a dream I've had

since I was young, and that was tough; but, in the end, I got what I was dreaming of."

The opportunities that Kellan received during high school paved the way for him to continue playing soccer in college. This fall, Kellan announced that he will be continuing his soccer career at



Kellan with classmates at his signing ceremony

find fascinating." We wish him all the best as he continues to work hard and strive for success. Congratulations Kellan!

NCAA Division 1 school NIU. SMSA students and faculty were able to support Kellan as he signed his official letter of intent to become a Husky. Looking forward to this next stage of his life, Kellan said that he is most excited to meet new teammates in college. "On the collegiate stage people can be recruited from anywhere in the world, which I

SPORTS FEATURE

Wrestling Team Works to Improve

Audrey Bonen

The wrestling team has been hard at work! The season started back in December, and sophomore Issac Kelnhofer was interviewed this past January regarding challenges about wrestling, what he hopes to accomplish, and his overall thoughts about the season thus far.

When asked to explain wrestling to someone who has never watched a match before, Isaac talked about the tactics needed for the sport and how intense it is. "Wrestling is very intense, and anything can happen. You need a combination of

strength, speed, and technique in every area of the sport. Wrestling is a tough sport, and you have to be mentally prepared to fight through situations."

The team has been improving a lot this season, which Kelnhofer made a point to speak about. "The team has been doing better this year than in the past, and we are continuing to get better each day. We didn't have many people make the podium, but we seem to get more each tournament. We are also fighting harder for each point we score." The phrase "making podium" means that a wrestler has placed

within the top three at a tournament/wrestling meet.

Kelnhofer was also asked about what he hopes to accomplish this season. He stated that he wanted to go to state and continue to get better. "My goal is to get 30+ wins and be the takedown leader for the team." A takedown leader is a wrestler who is best at knocking his opponent down to the mat and getting control. This means that the leader is skilled at gaining control and requires both strength and technique in order to execute.

Wrestling can be seen as more of an individual sport than a

team sport. Kelnhofer was asked if he thinks the sport is more individual or team-based. He explained that wrestling is more team-based than most people might think. "Wrestling is the ultimate team sport, because in practice, whoever you wrestle is how much better you're going to become. Also, whenever you win or lose, it affects the team score. You have to do your best every time for your team."

In general, the wrestling team is improving every day with its intense focus, technique, and training in order to succeed.

Mrs. Sales: An Adoration Inspiration

Bellana Weaver



A recent photo of Mrs. Sales with her husband, children, and grandchildren.

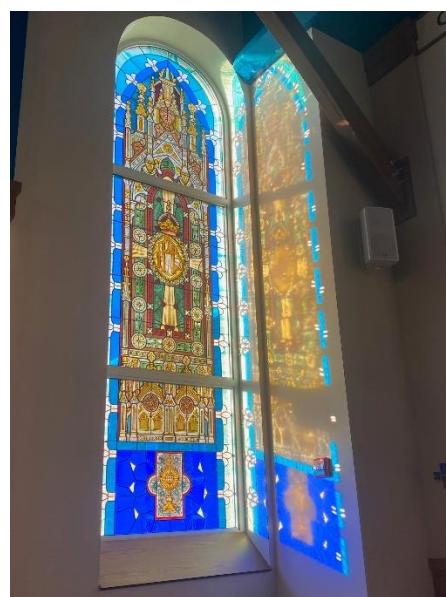
Most of us have heard of Mrs. Sales, a wonderful and soft-spoken teacher with intimidating high school English classes. Some even know a little about her deep love for and understanding of Jesus Christ. She's often spotted in the chapel during Adoration, and she makes a point never to miss Mass on Fridays. Mrs. Sales always openly expresses the Lord as her Savior through pictures around the class or in her words and way of speaking. It's safe to say she puts Him at the center.

Mrs. Sales was born in Fond du Lac and was raised a

Catholic. Among her fourteen siblings, she is the second youngest. After graduating from what is now Fond du Lac High School, she studied to be a journalist. She earned her bachelor's at

University of Wisconsin- Oshkosh and worked for a free newspaper, *Action Publications*, interviewing and writing about many people for weekly human-interest articles. After her children were all in school, she was inspired by the learning environment at their Catholic school and eventually obtained a degree to teach high school. She shared that during her time at Marian University, she could tell what kind of teacher her peers would be. Elementary teachers were motherly, middle school teachers were energetic

and enthusiastic, and high school teachers were nerds; to that Mrs. Sales added, "I'm proud to be a nerd." Now, she has been happily married for almost forty years, with three adult children and five grandchildren.



A picture Mrs. Sales took in the SMSA chapel, a location in which she spends time each day in adoration, contemplation, and prayer.

"For the last ten to fifteen years, faith has just become more important to me," she shared. "I've become addicted to being in His presence." Adoration holds a

special place in her heart. She feels at peace almost immediately when she visits the chapel and sits before the real presence of our Lord. It didn't happen immediately; it took time for her to learn and know God the way she does now. She explained how it is much easier to learn about God in your head and still not be open to Him in your heart. Simply sitting in His presence invites Him in, and then, as Mrs. Sales says, "God does all the work; you just need to be open to receiving."

We can all take Mrs. Sales as an inspiration to walk closer to God. High school can become tough; friends tend to drift away, or homework starts to pile up. It feels easier to isolate rather than lean into community. We can rest in Jesus, knowing He will never abandon us.

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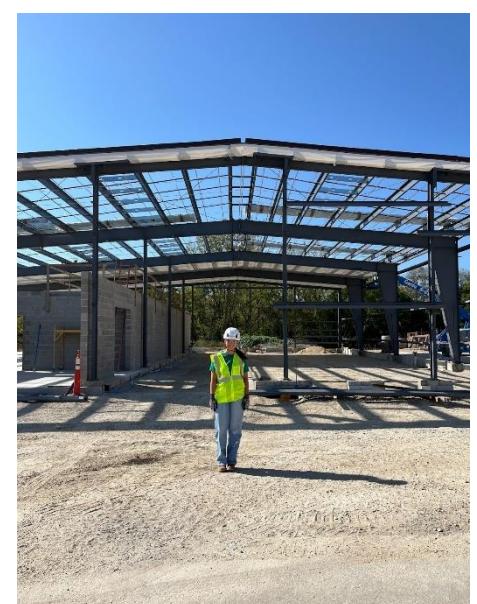
Claire gets valuable work done within school hours, giving her time after school for softball and other activities. She shared, "My responsibilities include resetting rooms for the next patients after scans, making sure that the patients are comfortable during and after scans, and hooking them up to vital machines for the nurses. I have developed the skill of compassion due to the patient interactions I have while at work." She is learning how to perform important tasks that she will need for her job after college, along with making personal connections in the workplace.

Students are required to complete 450 hours of work in a year. Summer hours can be counted. SMSA students work at C.D. Smith, Hometown Nutrition, Wright Vet Clinic, and many other businesses.

Youth Apprenticeship allows students to truly experience what it would be like to have a job in a certain area. "My favorite part of YA is getting that hands-on experience in the real workplace," shared Claire. YA also offers opportunities for students who do not yet know what their future career will be. There are many diverse areas that

students can work in, including hospitality, finance, health, marketing, education, and more. Claire encourages, "DO IT!! Youth Apprenticeship has given me reassurance about what I want to do for my future. This program has also given me a leg up in applying for colleges. When any college hears that you are in a program that gives you experience in the workplace, they will be thrilled!"

Ultimately, whether students know where they want to attend college and what they will study or don't have any idea yet, Youth Apprenticeship is an option



Senior Morgan Nachreiner at her Youth Apprenticeship job that offers flexibility, valuable training, and real-world experience.

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"You have to pray and understand that God is merciful to you before you can give mercy," Mr. Braun, teacher of *Have Mercy, Will Serve* explained. Students visited churches and prayed daily

rosaries. One of these churches was the beautifully designed St. Joseph's Chapel in Milwaukee, where students prayed a rosary and received a tour. From there, students went to Kinship, a community meal center on the north side of Milwaukee, where they distributed meals for all kinds of people from the homeless and physically impaired to those with mental health issues.

Overall, the service opportunities deeply resonated with students, who gained new experiences and outlooks on serving the community.

"What I enjoyed most about *Have Mercy, Will Serve* was being able to help serve the community in various ways," shared sophomore Briana Chavez. "The simplest actions can make a difference, and you never know what someone is going through, so even just talking to someone can mean a lot."

"I really enjoyed the feeling of satisfaction from knowing that we made the world a little bit better from our day's work," sophomore Isaac Loehr shared. "One takeaway I have from *Have Mercy, Will Serve* is that anything makes a

difference. Don't let the fact that you might not immediately alter hundreds of people's lives discourage you from being kind to the person standing next to you, because any act of love is significant."

Have Mercy, Will Serve reminds us that Christ teaches his followers to serve one another. One can hope to remember that it is the small acts of kindness that can change the outcome of someone's day, week, or even life. Be the difference in someone's life today.

POP CULTURE

Six Seven: Funny or Annoying?

Lauren Pelz

Whether you love it or hate it, the viral term "6-7" has taken over the minds of children and teens across the world. The saying started when the rapper Skrilla released the song "Doot Doot" featuring the numbers in its chorus. High school basketball player Taylen Kinney was the first to create Tik Toks with the phrase and hand gesture. The song soon began appearing in sport highlight reels and grew even more when a video of a person dubbed "Mason" shouting "6-7" with the accompanying hand gesture,

spread across the internet. This slang was even named the 2025 word of the year.

However, this term has also sparked controversy, with some people loving it, while others find it overused and annoying. Around six or seven people were asked about their thoughts on this viral saying. The general consensus was that it's annoying when it's forced. One student explained, "It kinda just has to happen naturally for it to be funny." Another student was less optimistic, declaring that the term

is "annoying all the way. No question that it's even funny." Despite negative opinions, "6-7" is still said frequently inside and outside of school. One person reported hearing it "six or seven times a day." When asked about the future of "6-7" one student replied, "I think people will continue to say it, but mostly satirically, like they are making fun of the fact that we ever found it funny." Another said, "We can pray and hope that it dies as soon as it possibly can."



So, what are your thoughts? Do you find "6-7" funny or annoying? Should it keep being used or should it be left in 2025? No matter your opinion, "6-7" is still being used today and has created many memories for children and teens alike.

Thank you Pick-Axe Staff!

Students:

Audrey Bonen, Gwyneth Haubenschild, Carson Kaufman, Sophia Loehr, Lauren Pelz, Isabella Theel, Annabelle Seel, Bellana Weaver

Teachers:

Mrs. Sales and Mrs. Besson