



The Bullpup Press

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Happy 4th of July!



July 2018

Suwannee Middle School, 1730 SW Walker Avenue, Live Oak, Florida 32064

CERTIFICATION CELEBRATION

By Keri Marshall

On May 29, 2018, Suwannee Middle School students earning Microsoft Industry Certifications enjoyed a special reward celebration in the SMS multipurpose room.

Approximately 70 students received an invitation to attend the celebration.

According to Jennifer Byrd, SMS technology teacher, SMS students achieved an impressive 151 certifications for the 2017-18 school year, including 32 seventh graders and 53 eighth graders. Students also accumulated a total of 27 bundles, 3 in seventh grade and 24 in eighth grade. One bundle consists of three separate Microsoft certifications, including Word, Excel, and PowerPoint.

At the IT certification celebration, stu-

dents enjoyed donuts and an assortment of beverages, such as milk, chocolate milk, and orange juice. Students also had the chance to win one of nearly 100 prizes.

The industry certifications earned by middle school students are the same certification tests taken by adults in the workforce earning these certifications in a professional setting.

Byrd stated, "I believe they work very hard to earn these certifications and this celebration is a great way to celebrate their accomplishments."

Celebrations were also held to reward students earning industry certifications in the areas of agriculture and construction. Congratulations to all of the students who achieved these amazing accomplishments!



Bidding Farewell

By Allison Johnson

This year, Suwannee Middle School must say goodbye to six faculty and staff members who are retiring. Kaffa Owens, Marlene Plympton, Jody Musgrove, Debra Hodges-Byrd, Pam Caruso, Naomi Spears are all leaving the SMS family and they will be missed greatly.

Owens has been a Physical Education teacher for thirty-four years. She plans to spend time traveling, giving back to the community, and to God.

"I would like to thank God who is first in my life, all of the great people whom I have had the awesome opportunity to meet, work with, and be a part of their lives. God bless every one of you. I want you all to know that I love you all," stated Owens.

Hodges-Byrd has been an 8th grade ESE teacher and currently serves as a paraprofessional. She has worked at SMS for 14 years. In retirement, she plans on traveling, gardening, and spending time with her grandkids. She is also a Florida Gator fan.

All of our retirees say they will miss their co-workers and students, but they look forward to retirement. We will miss you, but we wish you all the best on this new chapter of your lives!

What is your favorite part of the 4th of July?



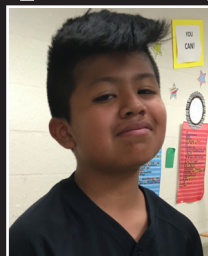
"I will buy all the fireworks and be in Mexico."

Johnny Lopez



"My favorite part is watching the fireworks and spending time with my friends and family."

Kersten Dye



"I like to celebrate it at home and buy fireworks."

Raul Torres



"I enjoy hanging out with friends and watching fireworks."

Lyndsey Howard

OFF CAMPUS FUN

By Key'Arah Gillyard and Natalie Smith



Seventh and eighth grade students at SMS had the opportunity to participate in several special field trips, as a reward for good behavior and good attendance.

Seventh grade students took a trip to the Skate Station Fun Works in Gainesville, Florida, on May 25,

2018. The students paid a fee of \$20.00 to attend the trip. Eighty-seven people attended the trip. Students enjoyed these exciting activities: jump and bounce, swamp golf, rock climbing, go-karts, arcade, skating, and batting cages.

This trip is highly anticipated by students, as it has been an annual tradition for seventh graders for three consecutive years. To participate, students may not have more than 10 unexcused absences, maintain a C average in every class, have no more than two referrals, and be at school for all testing days.

According to Samantha Land, a 7th grade SMS teacher, "7th grade teachers are extremely proud of those students who were diligent in coming to school and maintaining good grades. They deserve recognition with this reward field trip."

Students who were a member of the Spanish Club this year went on a field trip to Costa del Sol, a Mexican restaurant located in Lake City, Florida. The students enjoyed the opportunity to order anything they wanted off of the menu, allowing them to try new types of ethnic foods.

Shamira Mendoza, an 8th-grade Spanish Club member, stated, "I really had a fun time with my friends at the Mexican restaurant, Costa del Sol."



Of course, everyone knows that the greatest middle school field trip of all is the special eighth grade annual trip to Wild Adventures. This year, 172 8th-grade students went to this popular theme park in Valdosta, Georgia on May 18, 2018. Students paid \$25.00 each and cookie dough and candy bar fundraisers held throughout the year covered the balance of the trip cost.

"I had an amazing time with all of my friends and riding all the rides," stated Hannah Marlowe, an 8th-grade student at SMS.

In order to qualify for the Wild Adventures trip, students must complete and participate in their academic classes, be present and put forth 100% effort on testing days, have passing grades in all classes, have no more than 15 unexcused absences all year, and have no more than two referrals.

Certainly, all of these end-of-the-year field trips have given students memories that will last a lifetime.



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GUEST COLUMN

Are GMOs Really Safe to Eat?

By McKayden Wilkerson, SMS Student

GMO stands for Genetically Modified Organism(s). This is what a farmer uses to keep bugs and diseases away, so they do not kill his crops. A researcher takes the naturally occurring genetic code from an organism that is resistant to a pest and mixes it with the genetic code of a crop.

For example, to keep away corn earworms, the genetic code for toxin production in *Bacillus thuringiensis* (a type of bacteria) is incorporated into the genetic code of a corn plant. This way, when the plant grows up, it will produce the toxin that kills the worms. This type of corn is called BT Corn. Some farmers though, believe there are easier ways to prevent pests than modifying the genetic code of crops.

"We don't need pesticide-resistant GMOs to control weeds. There are natural ways to fight them," said Bill Freese, a science policy expert at the Center for Food Safety. However, some farmers have thousands of acres and spraying pesticides is a major issue!

With this additional knowledge about GMOs, you can clearly see why some people think this is "unsafe to eat." Still, it has been scientifically proven that they are not harmful to eat. We have had GMOs since 1994, and they are still in fields today.

Have you ever driven by a cornfield or field of zucchini? Were they Genetically Modified? Unless you know the farmer personally, you probably said no. We could

have driven by a field of genetically modified crops, or bought genetically modified crops, and had no idea.

In reality, it is impossible to look at a vegetable in Walmart and be able to tell whether it is a GMO or not. You have eaten GMOs, with no idea you were doing so!

When you have a bad headache or stomachache, do you take a Tylenol or Motrin? Don't you know that could cause nausea, heartburn, indigestion, or worse? Yes. Then if you take a medicine made of chemicals in a lab, and these foreign chemicals in your body can cause side effects and other sickness, why not eat a GMO that consists of a naturally occurring substance?

One day, we will run out of enough food. So today, farmers are trying to improve plant growth with GMOs. Today, you can either eat a natural occurring substance or a man-made substance. In a natural occurring substance, you know what is in it, and that it is safe. While in a man-made substance, you don't know if it's safe, or what is really in it.

Take an ear of corn, for example. If one is coated in man-made pesticide, with poisons and chemicals, and the other is natural, made with God's soil and sunlight, that produces its own pesticides, which one would you choose?



McKAYDEN WILKERSON,
GUEST COLUMNIST

THE AWARD GOES TO...

By Daisy De La Cruz-Vazquez and Julie Romulo-Vazquez

Suwannee Middle School hosted end of the year awards ceremonies on May 21 and May 24, 2018, where students received awards for their academic achievements.

"Rewarding students for working hard is important. It will encourage them to continue to strive for success," stated Williams.

All honor students, the students with the greatest iReady growth from each math and reading class, and students receiving CORE or industry certifications were invited to attend the awards assemblies. Dr. Jimmy Wilkerson, SMS Principal, and Laura Williams, SMS Assistant Principal, as well as sev-

eral SMS teachers, presented awards to students.

This year, the awards were presented at smaller assemblies, rather than one lengthy ceremony, which enabled a larger number of students to attend.

Williams shared, "We were excited to have three smaller, grade-level award ceremonies this year instead of one giant

ceremony. We were also excited to have the ceremonies during the day when all students earning awards could attend, even if mom or dad could not."

Congratulations to all of the award winners! May you continue to achieve greatness next school year!



SOME OF THE SMS STUDENTS EARNING IT CERTIFICATIONS THIS YEAR

THE STAR-SPANGLED BANNER

*By Francis Scott Key
1779-1843*

O say, can you see, by the dawn's early light,
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming?
Whose broad stripes and bright stars through the perilous fight,
O'er the ramparts we watched were so gallantly streaming;
And the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there;
O say, does that star-spangled banner yet wave
O'er the land of the free, and the home of the brave?



**THE BULLPUP PRESS STAFF WISHES
YOU A HAPPY AND SAFE 4TH OF JULY!**

TEACHER SPOTLIGHT

By Emma Brown and Emily Gamble



PICTURED L-R: EMMA BROWN,
JEFF JOHNSON, EMILY GAMBLE

er at Suwannee Middle School, where he has been teaching for four years. In addition to working with special education students, he has also served as a history teacher.

Johnson has not always wanted to be a teacher. He said, "Originally I wanted to be a child psychologist. But through a mentoring program at Florida State University, I found there was a need to teach, so I'm kind of having the best of both worlds."

J e f f Johnson is a 6th grade special education teacher

Johnson has been married to his wife Amy Johnson for 21 years. Their son, Evan Johnson, currently plays for the Gulf Coast Commodores in Panama City, Florida.

"I love seeing my son play, but unfortunately I do not get to attend a lot of his games being that he is attending college in Panama City, FL," said Johnson.

Johnson's hobbies include coaching baseball and making custom turkey calls. He enjoys coaching because he likes to see his hitters get better at batting.

Johnson has a way of bonding with his students through humor, education, respect, and success.

SMS is blessed to have Johnson as part of the Bullpup family.

GO BULLPUPS!

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