Enjoying Wednesdays with Lindsay Funes

By Dannah Tinio

Wednesdays... the very middle of the week where everyone is waiting for time to pass and become Friday already. Surely not everyone has the motivation to be efficient and productive in the middle of the week, but what does a Wednesday look like for 11th grader Lindsay Funes?

On a Wednesday morning, Lindsay wakes up bright and early at 6:20 am to get ready for school, then is on her way there by 7am for early morning Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) meetings. Following after, she heads to her favorite class, GT Guitar; then the rest of her day consists of Honors and AP classes. Not only is she taking all these difficult classes, but also she plays sports all year round: soccer, basketball, and lacrosse, all on the Franklin girls team.

This means she has to balance doing schoolwork, clubs, and sports. “Keeping a routine is what’s important so that you can consistently get done what you need to,” Lindsay said regarding her school life. She then goes on and explains how she plans her day accordingly. “If I know I have practice at 3:00, I will do assignments that are short and easy at lunch and save my harder assignments for home so I can work better.”

Maintaining a set schedule is pretty difficult for many high school students, so what Lindsay does is pretty impressive!

Of course it’s not always easy... when asked about her struggles, she said, “College Algebra is a class that requires a lot of my free time. To keep up I make sure I always do the homework when I get home.”

Lots of people feel the same way about math, Lindsay, so you aren’t alone!

Outside of school, she really enjoys playing guitar, explaining why GT Guitar is her favorite class in school. She talks about how she has a strong passion for playing guitar whether that be with herself, a group, or playing with an audience. “It started out as a hobby that turned into something that can relax me and make my day 100x better,” Lindsay exclaimed. The sounds and strumming of guitars are very beautiful.

To end her Wednesdays she watches television, does a quick bible study, reads, and goes to sleep. It is very important to know that if you are consistent with yourself, you’ll be able to maintain good grades in school while also being able to have time with your personal interests outside of school!
Can Tennis be More Than Just a Sport? Sure is for Mr. Sommer!

By Laila Roodbari

From football, soccer, basketball, baseball, tennis, and more, sports are usually all about playing the game, having fun, and doing your best to win. But sometimes, sports may have more meaning to a person, such as English teacher Mr. Sommer.

I interviewed Mr. Sommer in class before the school day began, and of course he was wearing a flannel since it was Flannel Friday. He had a very welcoming and kind manner throughout the interview. Not only is he very welcoming, but his classroom is too, as the walls are decorated with tennis equipment and a flannel. Mr. Sommer is a 10th and AP 11 English teacher, advisor of NHS, and coach here at FHS. He has many interests and hobbies such as reading, going on walks with his dog and his family, reading, helping others, and most of all, tennis.

Tennis has had a big impact on Mr. Sommer, leading him from playing to coaching, and even teaching him skills for life overall. In fact, tennis wasn’t even his main sport as a kid; it was lacrosse. But he got into it because of the challenge. “I played tennis a little bit as a kid but then mainly focused on lacrosse. But I have always loved the challenge of tennis because it takes coordination and quickness to improve,” Mr. Sommer said. “It’s a hugely mental game. You have to rely on your own preparation and practice to perform against your opponent. When I started playing tennis competitively, I realized it can be overwhelming at times during a match when things are going wrong, but when you win, you can look inward and feel great about your personal performance.”

Besides the challenges, he has a great experience with tennis. “Tennis matches are so much fun. At home matches, we greet the other team when they come to the courts from the bus. The boys and girls on our team finish up our warmups and let the other team have the courts. Then, we announce the starting matches,” Mr. Sommer said. “We cheer on our players as all the matches go on at once. From court to court, it can be calm or intense. It all depends.”

“Tennis has been phenomenal for Mr. Sommer, and what makes it even better is how it has even helped him with life in general. For that, he credits his tennis coach back in college.”

“Mr. Sommer with past members after a championship.”

“Mr. Sommer with past members on the tennis team.”

“When I met my tennis coach in college, right away I knew we would be very close because he loved my enthusiasm,” Mr. Sommer said. “He has taught me how to be a better tennis player, tennis instructor, and even classroom teacher. Most importantly, he taught me how to see the good in everyone and laugh as much as possible.”

His tennis coach is like a mentor to him. He has taught Mr. Sommer so much, not only with tennis, but with life in general.

“He was someone who gave me tough advice when I didn’t want to hear it, but I learned that it would be necessary in your future.” Mr. Sommer said. One piece of advice he was given was, “find a thing your good at and emphasize that skill, with tennis and throughout life.”

With the help from his coach, it shaped him into the person he is today along with being our very own tennis coach here at
**The Gazette**

**Personality Profiles**

**“She’s a runner; she’s a track star”**

By Kierra Richardson

Kaylyn Johnson is a bolt of a runner here at Franklin High School. While she is one of our best known athletes on the track team, she must maintain her education and keeps it up to par. Her everyday schedule is a busy but fitting life. “I wake up at 5 a.m. every weekday to get ready for school, and arrive to school around 7:35 to work effectively in all of my eight classes to maintain all A’s and B’s,” Kaylyn said. “After school, I try to do some work before I go to practice so that I won’t have much to do once I get home.”

She explains that she must prioritize her education because it’s the key to her success, so she takes school very seriously. After she does everything, she then allows herself to talk to friends on social media apps.

Sixteen-year-old Kaylyn Johnson is a class of ‘24 student athlete who is 5’9 ½” and was born on September 30th, 2005. She’s been running track her whole life on the Owings Mills track team and started volleyball this year on Franklin’s JV team. Because Kaylyn is a student athlete, most of her life is all about track, but on weekends, she enjoys her own company and hangs out with friends. Her favorite part of the day includes working out with her dad at the gym since it helps her relieve stress in school and even improves her relationships. We all have those days where we don’t want to do anything, but Kaylyn has her dad there to motivate her to workout because it will eventually pay off. Additionally, she also motivated her dad to be in the gym with her and to put the work in himself.

“Now we use the time that we workout together as like daddy-daughter bonding,” she said. Talking to Kaylyn Johnson gives you the sporty outlook on the life of an athlete.

Kaylyn’s love for track started at 7, and as she grew older and older, her love and desire to succeed in track only expanded. She believes track will open doors for her in the future. “Running and working out is my escape from reality. While being active, I can clear my mind and release stress,” Kaylyn said. “The feeling of winning or beating your own personal record or even making family and friends proud is undeniable.” This dedication to exercising and training is very important for Kaylyn to achieve her goals. “I train four to five times a week on weekdays, but practice lasts for up to two hours as well.” While training all week, she still must go through the long hours of school which can be a tiring day for some, but Kaylyn manages it.

After college Kaylyn wants to become an OB/GYN and create her own family. She wants to succeed financially, but also be happy and healthy. Kaylyn prioritizes moments by taking life slow and taking in every second she can since most teens find their most memorable moments in high school.

**How Dance Impacted Ms. Gibson**

By Naza Nnagbo

Ms. Gibson teaches Dance 1, 2 & Dance Company.

Q: What is it like to teach new dancers?

A: Teaching new dancers, how to choreograph using their personality can definitely be a little awkward for them at first, especially if you’re not familiar with dance. It might feel uncomfortable moving in certain ways, but I’ve found that using music as a guide is really helpful.

Q: What was it like to transition from being a college student majoring in dance to now a dance teacher?

A: It was different because I was always used to being in the student point of view, being told what I needed to do, but now flipping it, definitely was difficult at first but over time, I started to really enjoy it. I like being in the teacher position as opposed to a student and a dancer. She started dancing when she was 4, and now 24 years later, she hasn’t looked back.

Q: Did you ever lose interest in dancing throughout the years?

A: I never lost interest but I had a major injury and it caused me not to dance. It felt like I didn’t have any purpose in my life but teaching was very fulfilling.

The injury happened while in a middle split, which is when your stomach is on the floor and your legs are out to the side. [The professor] leaned on me and herniated 4 of my discs in my spine which caused me to shrink a centimeter or two.”

Even though she experienced struggles throughout her time in dancing she still pursued it, and now inspires many new or experienced dancers to show their style and personality while performing any type of genre, from ballet, to jazz, hip hop and tap.
A Day In the Life of a Successful Junior

By Fiona Durante

Some kids in school just wake up, go to school, then go home and do homework. Not for this one student here. Meet Joan Omimuta, a junior here at Franklin. She is in all advanced classes, likes doing theater, is involved in some of our groups here such as Student Government Association and Asian Student Union, and even has a job. This girl does everything! I wonder if you’re thinking, how does Joan juggle all these activities and still maintain good grades?

School Life

Starting off the day is normal for Joan as she gets up, catches the bus, and gets the day started by learning different things in her eight classes. She would even go to the library at lunch and communicate with friends, especially about the events and drama going around school. After school, she usually stays to participate in the extracurriculars she’s in. She is involved in clubs such as SGA, Theater, ASU, Science Olympia, and the Red Cross program. The programs she is involved in can be beneficial to the community. Joan says, “For most of the clubs, I mostly help in organizing things like events or activities that can help boost spirit throughout the school.” The reason she joined these clubs is, “last year I didn’t get to do anything because we were virtual, and virtual clubs were not the same, so this year I decided to change that and join more clubs to make up for getting back in school spirit,” reflected Joan. “I feel more accomplished by being more involved in school this year.”

Tricks to Success

Like any high school student, it can be hard to maintain good grades, especially if you’re like Joan. So how exactly does Joan maintain her grades while participating in all these activities? Well, it’s simple, Joan usually does it during lunch or once she gets home. I balance school and extra curriculars by staying organized and doing things immediately when they need to get done,” said Joan. “I do homework, study, and watch Netflix. Sometimes I stay up studying or doing homework until one or two in the morning. It has been a bit stressful, but I wouldn’t say overwhelming.” So, she’s like us. As we are worked up with homework, we end up staying up late and getting less sleep, which can be stressful for us.

As much as Joan is challenged by this chaotic schedule, she still has fun with friends. In fact, she meets most of her friends in these activities. “I have made a lot of new friends and better friendships just by joining these clubs,” exclaims Joan. With all the organizing and activities she plans and participates in, she has a lot of fun. By joining these activities, she can create new friendships and make high school fun for her. Even though she can be shy in school, in her extracurriculars she becomes an outgoing person. So, after learning a little bit more about Joan, she can relate to us a lot. Hopefully after reading about some of her life, and relating to her, this will influence you to keep pushing through the school year in both your classes and extracurriculars.
Mental health is so important, especially today. Adjusting back to “regular” school has been a huge adjustment that we as teens are struggling with. As we return to “normal” schedule, we get busier and busier.

Typically, our school day is 7:40 am to 2:25 pm. During this period, we go to eight classes, learning eight different types of content. After school, there are extracurricular activities. After a long day, we are then expected to do homework for each of those eight classes.

A day in the life of a teen is hectic, draining, and seemingly detrimental to mental health.

However, high school life is not dissimilar from adulting.

Ms. Vandervall and her cheerleaders at their varsity cheerleading fall competition.

Take a sneak peek into the life of the varsity cheerleading coach here at Franklin, Theresa Vandervall. Her life may be more relatable to your own than you think.

Ms. Vandervall suffers from depression, a serious mental health disorder where it’s hard to feel motivated or productive. She also suffers from anxiety as well, which causes excessive worry and obsessive thoughts.

Does she let these issues rule her life? No, she has found ways to cope.

“I begin each day with a pep talk with myself. If I don’t, I probably would never get out of bed and accomplish nothing. Depression is REAL,” states Ms. Vandervall.

Her homelife is equally hectic, cooking, cleaning, and caring for her family. Talking to her fiancé is one of the highlights of her day.

How does she keep it all balanced? It can seem impossible to overcome, but she has had an inspirational person in her life.

“My grandmother is the most influential person in my life. She was married with two children by 18 and still was able to complete nursing school and have a successful career which was not easy for a young mother and definitely not for a black woman in the 1950s,” Ms. Vandervall said.

Despite the mental health issues that Ms. Vandervall goes through, she is able to work with the cards that she was dealt and thrive. She always puts her best foot forward and finds something positive and meaningful in her life.

“I love working with my ladies (cheerleaders). You all bring me joy,” Varsity Cheer coach Theresa said.
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Personality Profile

The Art of Baking
By Kylie Beveridge

Have you ever sensed that lovely smell of sweet chocolate cake or fresh warm bread coming out of the oven when you go to a coffee shop? Well, that urging feeling to taste it is caused by the art of baking. Baking is a cooking method using prolonged dry heat, such as using an oven. As heat travels through, it transforms batters and dough into baked goods with a firm dry crust and a softer center.

One of the most amazing things about baking is that it can be used to bake sweet and salty goods as well. Baking can be much fun, especially when you are creative with recipes. I learned this as I talked to my sister Alexi in 9th grade, who loves to bake.

Mindset on baking -
Alexi loves baking sweet goods, such as cakes, cupcakes, and cookies to be exact.

There are a lot of variations to sweet goods. They can be filled with either salty or sweet mixtures to create different textures and create new flavors and activate different taste buds. A simple ingredient can change the taste and even the smell of the good, altering the whole recipe. For example, by adding lime or lemon zest on a butter cookie, both the smell and flavor will take you to another dimension.

According to Nicole Beurkens, Ph.D., author of the best selling book Life Will Get Better, “Baking has a set start and end point that helps people feel a sense of control, both of which help stave off feelings of overwhelm.”