

# LWA NEWSLETTER



VOL:2

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## MISSION STATEMENT

LWA teaches and motivates students to seek, discover, embrace, and apply knowledge while exploring their personal, artistic, and academic talents in order to engage in life with a culturally respectful, civically responsible, and innovative entrepreneurial spirit for success in higher education and the careers of an increasingly global society.

## MESSAGE FROM HEAD OF SCHOOL

Dear LWA Families,

Let me begin by wishing everyone a very happy and healthy 2024! I hope you all had a restful holiday. I spent much of the vacation with the basketball team and my family. The team had an amazing trip to Virginia with a really special bonding activity organized by Chloe Albuquer. While it was wonderful to have a break, I must admit I am happy to be back at school. I am a man of habit, and I look forward to resuming my routine. Few things help one appreciate what one has as effectively as distance, and so it is with renewed appreciation that I return to LWA. I am grateful for my one quiet hour in the morning before anyone else arrives on campus, for the teachers who pour their hearts into all they do, and, most of all, grateful for you and your children, who make this building feel not merely like a school but a home. It's easy to forget how much we have to be grateful for, but I hope that as you peruse the pages to follow, pages filled with laughing students and smiling teachers, you will see just how invested every one of us is in your child's education and well-being. According to Merriam-Webster, the word of 2023 was *authentic*. As it becomes exceedingly difficult to distinguish between what is true and what is fabricated, it is more important than ever to recognize and cherish moments of authentic joy, community, and friendship, which is what we have tried to capture for you in this month's newsletter. We hope you enjoy.

Best,  
Mr. Hank Williams



At Home with  
the World

[www.lawrencewoodmere.org](http://www.lawrencewoodmere.org)



## MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

Dear Lawrence Woodmere Academy Families,

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, we extend our warmest wishes to our families. The start of a new year is not just a change in the calendar; it is a symbolic opportunity for fresh beginnings and reflection.

Reflecting on the past year, the Board of Trustees is grateful for the resilience, dedication, and collaborative spirit exhibited by our incredible school community. Despite the challenges, we navigated through uncertainties with unwavering commitment to providing a nurturing and enriching environment for our students. We watched the Tiger Spirit come alive in the classroom, on the stage, and on the court. We witnessed in real time how our dedicated faculty has changed lives and inspired our children. And we were filled with joy each day from the smiles your children bring to our campus.

Looking ahead, 2024 promises endless possibilities for our school. Together, let us continue fostering a love for learning and nurturing the development of our students. As partners in this educational journey, your support and engagement are invaluable to our mission.

May this new year bring joy, prosperity, and success to our entire school community. We forge ahead with optimism, unity, and a shared commitment to the excellence that defines Lawrence Woodmere Academy. Wishing you a Happy New Year filled with joy, growth, and countless achievements.

Warm regards,  
The Lawrence Woodmere Board of Trustees



## COLLEGE CORNER



Every senior who intends to study in America has applied to college! Some students spent winter break plumbing the depths of their souls as they feverishly composed their supplementals, and we are happy to report that all survived. The new FAFSA came out on December 31, and it promises to provide students and families a simpler and more streamlined experience.

\*\*\*Some recent acceptances have been Stony Brook, Loyola, Hofstra, Drexel, Howard, Fordham, Spelman, Binghamton, and Reed!

## SPORTS



LWA Boys Varsity Basketball had a very busy yet productive break. The Tigers stacked up another two PSAA victories thanks to wins against KNOX and LUHI. The boys are sitting in 1st place with a league record of 7-0. Hank Williams scored 20 against Knox while Joshua Smith's 19 points against LuHi was huge in claiming a 72-71 victory over the previously undefeated school.

## KUDOS



Jane Kim and GerryAnn Pomerantz organized a gorgeous event on December 13. LWA hosted the Hewlett Woodmere Business Association's general meeting and networking event. It was a pleasure and an honor to learn about local businesses and the contributions they make in our community. We are so proud to be part of such a supportive, thriving, and vibrant community.

# LOWER SCHOOL

## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



For our January Student Spotlight, we bring you Alyse Liu, a 9-year-old student in the 4th grade.

**What was your favorite thing you did during vacation?**

I have a lot of favorite things. First of all, we went to see my aunt and cousins in Washington, D.C. We also went to a hotel, and on the first floor there was a pool that we did not get to go to because no one was there, but it was still fun.

**What is your favorite animal?**

Birds because they are so cute.

**What do you like most about LWA?**

Everyone is nice and makes me feel happy.

**What do you like to do for fun?**

I like to talk to Neisha about things she might like. Also, I like my Minecraft coding class because I get to learn how to code and play at the same time.

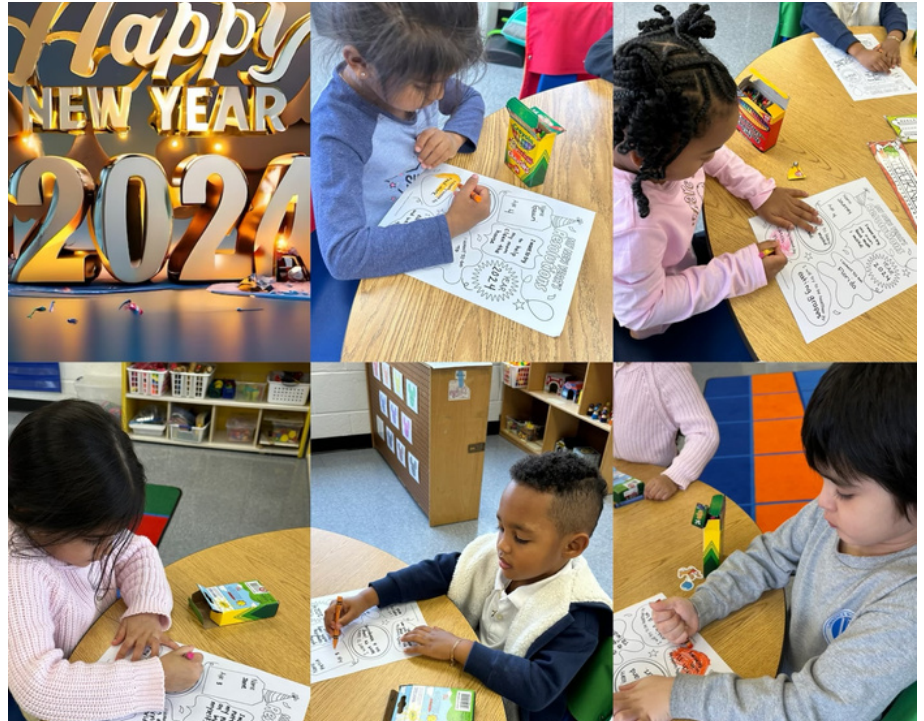
**What are you grateful for?**

I am grateful for the school because it's such a good school.

## CURRICULAR HIGHLIGHT

Lower School students celebrated the New Year at school by discussing and creating their own New Year's Resolutions. Students learned how to set goals and discussed how to be the best version of themselves.

**Happy New Year!**



## SPECIAL EVENTS

### SPECTACULAR LOWER SCHOOL CONCERT



### BUILDING GINGERBREAD HOUSES



# MIDDLE SCHOOL

## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



For our January Student Spotlight, we bring you Lexi Callen, a 12-year-old student in the 7th grade.

**What was a highlight of your winter vacation?**

Going to Europe and seeing all the places I have never seen before. My dad and I visited Germany. One of my favorite experiences was going into the catacombs. It was so cool to see ancient history.

**What are your hobbies?** Playing video games online. My favorite is Roblox.

**What is your favorite class, and why?**

My favorite class is science because I really like how Ms. Charles makes it so fun to learn and makes up games to help us memorize it better.

**What are your plans for the future?**

I don't really know for sure yet, but I am thinking of maybe becoming a nurse. It would be cool to see all these diseases and how I could help people with them.

**What are you grateful for?**

I am grateful for my family for helping me have a good life.

**What advice do you have for younger students?**

To stay focused on one thing but have fun while doing it, so you feel happiness while doing it.

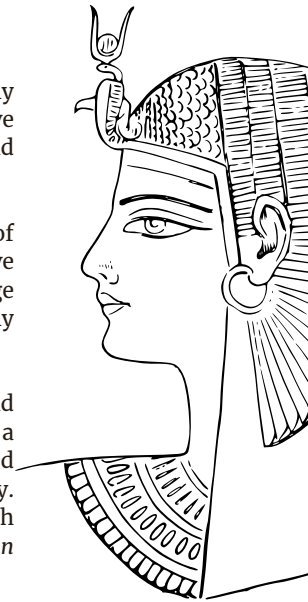
## CURRICULAR HIGHLIGHT

The sixth grade has been engrossed in Ancient Egypt and busily reading *Jake Ransom and the Skull King's Shadow*. Students have worked on decoding Ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics and completed a reader's theater based on *Jake Ransom*.

The seventh grade has been learning about the Age of Exploration and reading *Blood on the River*. Students have created restaurant menus based on the Columbian Exchange and have learned about the trials and tribulations of early colonists in the Americas.

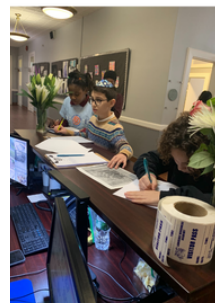
The eighth grade has been exploring Westward Expansion and the 19th century reform movements. Students participated in a presidential decision simulation debating whether the United States should have expanded westward during the 19th century. Also, students have discussed the horrors of slavery through the lens of *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave*.

-Mr. Justin Ellis



## SPECIAL EVENT

Under the innovative tutelage of Mr. Tiliakos, our middle schoolers participated in a schoolwide scavenger hunt, an activity that Mr. T calls "learning on the move." Students were tasked with answering subject-specific questions and questions about LWA in general. The fifth graders answered all questions with 100% accuracy and were the definitive champions!





# UPPER SCHOOL

## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



For our January Student Spotlight, we bring you Elinor Radomsky, a 15-year-old sophomore who has attended LWA since first grade.

**What was a highlight of your winter vacation?**  
I went to Israel to visit my family. It was nice to see all of them.

**What are your hobbies?**  
I like to listen to music, crochet, and read, especially mystery thrillers.

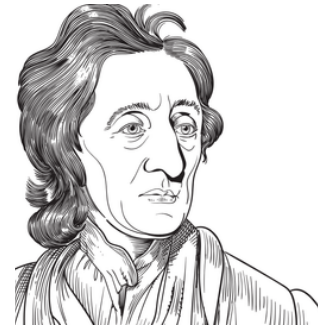
**What is your favorite class, and why?**  
Algebra because I love math, and I love Mr. Davis. He is a great teacher.

**What are your plans for the future?**  
That is a hard question. I want a job that I will be happy to go to every day. I want to have a happy future with a healthy family.

**What are you grateful for?**  
I am grateful that I get to be in America, that I have the opportunity to go to a private school. I am grateful for my family, my friends, my teachers, and my life.

**What advice do you have for younger students?**  
Even if life gets hard, you should push on and get through it because it will get better. Do not be afraid to reach for help if you need it.

## CURRICULAR HIGHLIGHT



A few weeks ago, 10th grade Global History students presented their ideal schools based on the Enlightenment ideas of John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Their task was to create an Enlightenment school that would function in the modern world. In their presentations they had to build a school from the ground up and consider everything: the kind of teachers/principal their school would have, rules, discipline procedures, dress code, curriculum, extra-curricular, athletics, etc.

-Mr. Tolentino

## SPECIAL EVENTS



Student Council hosted a holiday hangout for the Upper School, but some young LWA students joined the fun, running directly to seniors Destiny Smith and Ciara Leatherbury. Grades 9-12 played an intense game of Holiday Charades. Thank you to the chaperones and a special shoutout to Ms. Busche!



Juniors and seniors shared personal essays as proud and teary-eyed family members marveled at their children's courage, talent, and depth during the first LWA Literary Salon!

# CROSS-DIVISIONAL EVENTS

During the last Forum of the year, we watched our schoolwide “We Are From” poem and gave out ACTS Awards. Mr. O’Keeffe had the brilliant idea to create a bonus award beyond the traditional four categories of Academics, Community Service, Talent, and Sports, so Jackson Han received the *Rizz Dance Moves Award* for his outstanding performance during Cultural Heritage Day!

Lower School was invited to join us for Paws of Praise, and we celebrated students’ acts of kindness as a community!

We then transitioned into a cherished LWA tradition when students and staff sing along to holiday songs while the unparalleled Mr. Altieri plays the piano on the last day before winter vacation. At first, everyone was gently humming along to classics such as “Frosty the Snowman” and “All I Want for Christmas Is You.”

Then, in an unprecedented turn of events, our youngest members flooded the stage and hence began an impromptu dance performance the likes of which LWA has never seen before! The little ones shimmied, twirled, and hopped with abandon and pure happiness! Their innocence and joy were truly a gift to behold.

Borrowing some courage from the Lower School students, a few fifth graders and even some twelfth graders made their way to the stage. Ciara Leatherbury, a senior who has been dancing professionally since she was in LWA’s Lower School, danced with some of the younger kiddos!

This unplanned dance party, with its mingling of grades, its unbridled laughter, its unabashed joy, is only possible in a school like ours, a school where students of all ages feel seen, at home, and, above all, loved.



*Last Friday Forum of 2023*

# AT HOME WITH THE WORLD

## WHY LWA?

### AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

By: Sylvanus Tabe (translated from French by Noé Sobelman)



There are 34,576 private schools in the United States. Why LWA?

“I was looking for teachers who are not just experts in their fields but passionate educators, willing to mentor and guide students in their academic and personal development. They definitely have these amazing teachers at LWA.

It's also important for me to have a global perspective. A school with international programs like LWA's 'At Home with the World' with its commitment to multicultural awareness has been preparing me (and my peers) for a future that transcends borders.

Also, every person here knows me by name. I love it.”

# PARENT ASSOCIATION EVENTS

The PA Holiday Extravaganza, chaired by Frances Scarantino, was a resounding success! The event boasted 35 vendors, a plethora of arts & crafts, and fun for all!





# 'TIS THE SEASON FOR GIVING

On December 18, our students and staff visited Northwell Hospital for a spectacular act of service. They performed at the Winter Wonderland event in Shankman Auditorium, singing, playing drums, dancing, and spreading good cheer to all who were near!

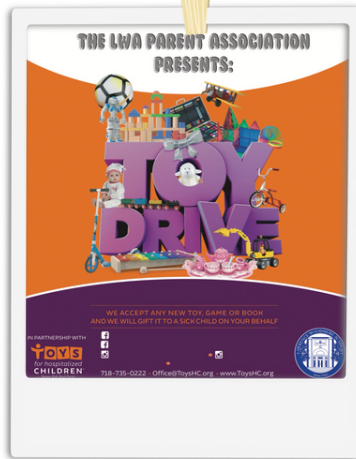
The vendor fair had friends and family of LWA host several tables as well.



## ... AND GIVING SOME MORE



Nadia Kalyan and her Helping Hands Club ran the Shoe Drive. LWA collected 1375 pairs of shoes for the organization Funds2Orgs: "It's estimated 300 million people don't own shoes. Shoe drive fundraisers help provide inventory to over 4,000 micro-entrepreneurs who sell the shoes to support their families. In turn, they help themselves out of poverty with a hand up, not a handout."



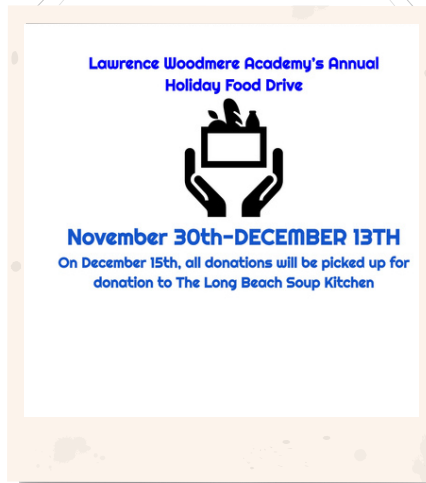
Karen Nessim, on behalf of the Parent Association, led our toy drive. We filled up six boxes of toys, books, and games for Toys for Hospitalized Children, an organization that distributes toys throughout the year, not just at holiday time.



In an annual LWA tradition, the Lower School gathered together to read *The Mitten Tree* and discuss the importance of helping those in need, especially during the holidays. Families were asked to send in at least one pair of newly purchased mittens/gloves, which were placed on a holiday tree located in the cafeteria. The mittens were brought to a local shelter, so that LWA can bring some warmth to those who need it most this holiday season.



Lower and Middle School students created holiday cards for Cole Morgenlander, older brother of current junior Adam Morgenlander. Cole is currently serving in the U.S. Air Force and works on our country's surveillance planes. During his spare time, he loves playing video games with his brother and building gaming computers.



GerryAnn Pomerantz, our Director of Communications, chaired the annual food drive, which was open to Middle School and Upper School. We partnered with the LB Soup Kitchen and collected over 500 cans of food! The 10th grade students collected the most and are the winners of a pizza party!



Students from all divisions sent cards, snacks, games, and necessities like sunblock, chapstick, and socks to Ms. Lowe's brother, SFC Bron Lowe, who has been in the National Guard for 10 years. His wife, Bianca, and two daughters, Aurora and Aubrey, live in Islip, NY, where Ms. Lowe is helping out while he is on deployment.

# BEST FACULTY ON EARTH



FACULTY  
TALENT SHOW

FACULTY  
HOLIDAY  
LUNCHEON

FACULTY  
CAROLING

# TIPS, TRIVIA, AND COMMUNITY CHALLENGE

## TIPS

We begin this month with the best of intentions, and yet all too soon, most of us succumb to old patterns, and those earnest midnight resolutions seem as far away as the summer breeze. In this January edition of the LWA Newsletter, we bring you some essential takeaways from *Atomic Habits*, a bestselling book by James Clear about habit formation. The information below is taken directly from James Clear, so all credit goes to him.

### 1. Tiny Changes Make a Huge Difference

*“Over the span of moments that make up a lifetime, these choices determine the difference between who you are and who you could be.”*

Like compound interest, a commitment to small daily habits will result in enormous long-term results. While doing ten crunches a day, reading a single page of a book every evening, or meditating for one minute in the morning may not seem like radical changes on any given day, at the end of the year, these small habits will have led to significant improvements in the quality of your life. Rather than focus on some massive once-in-a-lifetime transformation, use your energy to make small changes to your daily habits. The key is repetition - not perfection. One of Clear's rules is “never miss twice...Missing once is an accident, missing twice is the start of a new habit.”

### 2. Stop Focusing on Goals

*“You do not rise to the level of your goals, you fall to the level of your systems.”*

Counterintuitively, Clear insists that a huge reason why people fail at behavior modification is their focus on goals rather than systems. Most of us concentrate exclusively on the desired outcome - *I want to lose 20 pounds* - and disregard the habits and systems that we must put in place - *a new routine at the gym, a daily food journal* - in order to achieve this outcome. Many people have the same exact goal, so it cannot be the goal that separates the people who succeed versus those who fail. The process that we create to achieve results is the distinguishing factor. If we fail at adhering to a goal, it's not (necessarily) the goal we need to change but rather the systems that underlie our daily life.

### 3. Link Habits to Identity

*“Every action you take is a vote for the person you wish to become!”*

Reframe your habit from “what I want to do or get” to “who I want to be.” Say to yourself not “I am a person who wants this” but rather “I am a person who is this.” Your current habits are a reflection of who you are, and in order to build new habits that stick, you should first decide on what you value and who you want to be. Then, prove your new identity to yourself with small wins. If you're looking to make a change, stop fixating on outcomes and start concentrating on your identity. The goal, after all, is not to write an article. The goal is to become a writer. So “become the type of person who can achieve the things you want to achieve. Build identity-based habits now. The results can come later. The process of building habits is the process of becoming yourself. The most practical way to change who you are is to change what you do.”

### 4. Four Laws of Behavior Change

*“If a behavior is insufficient in any of these four stages, it will never become a habit.”*

- Make it obvious
- Make it attractive
- Make it easy
- Make it satisfying

The points above barely skim the surface of the material covered in *Atomic Habits*. If you are interested in self-improvement and appreciate specific and actionable advice, this book is definitely worth reading.

## TRIVIA

### GUESS WHO

...was taught by four current LWA teachers and is now an LWA teacher herself! First three students to find this teacher will receive a treat!

## PLAY

### JANUARY COMMUNITY CHALLENGE

Tell us what love means to you and/or take a picture with your loved one(s) in honor of Valentine's Day.

Email to

[Iwanewsletter@lawrencewoodmere.org](mailto:Iwanewsletter@lawrencewoodmere.org)

Please be sure to indicate the name and grade of the student.

Faculty and staff are welcome to participate!



# UPCOMING EVENTS IN JANUARY

HAPPY NEW YEAR

## January 12

Semester One Ends (January 16: Semester Two Begins)

## January 15

Martin Luther King Jr. Day: School Closed

## January 17

Parent Association Meeting  
6:30 PM

## January 26

Holocaust Remembrance Assembly

Report Cards Sent Home

Middle School Theatrical Production  
7 PM

### A FEW OTHER SUPER DUPER IMPORTANT JANUARY DATES :

**January 2:** National Cream Puff Day

**January 3:** International Mind-Body Wellness Day

**January 8:** National Fourth Graders Day

**January 10:** National Take the Stairs Day

**January 12:** National Hot Tea Day

**January 14:** National Organize Your Home Day

**January 16:** International Hot & Spicy Food Day

**January 17:** National Kid Inventors Day

**January 19:** National Popcorn Day

**January 20:** National Cheese Lovers Day

**January 21:** International Sweatpants Day

**January 22:** National Hot Sauce Day

**January 26:** National Fun at Work Day

**January 29:** Curmudgeons Day

**January 31:** National Hot Chocolate Day