



Mears Middle School

# Panther Pride News

Respect, Responsibility, Creativity, and Academic Excellence

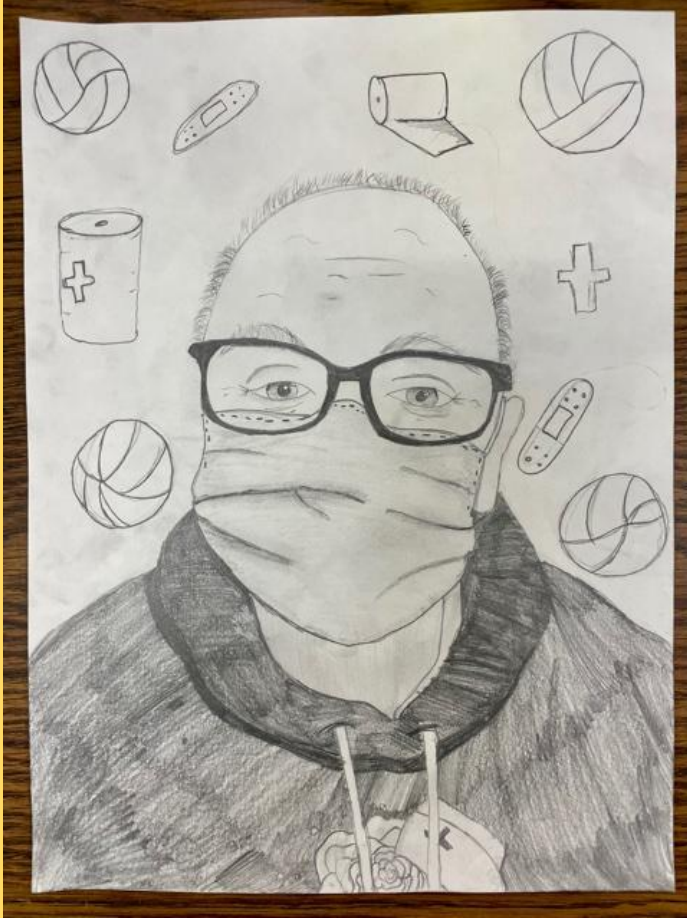
Friday, December 17, 2021

## *Mears Celebrates Season by Giving Back*



Over the last two weeks, students in Mears National Junior Honor Society have been promoting a school-wide fundraising and winter clothes drive to support the efforts of Salvation Army. Yesterday, well over 50 bags of donated winter clothes were loaded onto the Big Brother, Big Sister truck. Additionally, over \$300 was raised for Salvation Army through Project Pie Face. Special thanks goes out to Ms. Mia Sison, NJHS Faculty Moderator, for her inspired leadership. **Go Panthers!**

# Thank you, Nurse Dan



On his last day serving as Mears School Nurse, the entire Mears community congratulates Nurse Dan Boohar for his incredible contributions to our school community. Nurse Dan's work in caring for the health and well-being of all members of our school—especially during the ongoing Covid-19 crisis—has been truly invaluable. Nurse Dan has provided consistent care and helpful guidance on a daily basis during this time of uncertainty, and, in so doing, has been essential to our mission as a school. All of us at Mears, wish Nurse Dan and his family the very best. –Eric

Illustration by Sawyer Murdock, Mears student

# Angel Tree Gift Drive



Students in Mears Community Service class have organized yet another successful charitable drive. Through the Angel Tree Gift Drive, students have collected 50 presents for young people in Anchorage. The gifts were picked up earlier this week by Salvation Army, who will distribute them to children for the holidays.



# Gingerbread Math



Students in Ms. Hundrup's math classes have been building gingerbread houses to celebrate the holidays. House construction was also used as the basis for a math challenge related to housing costs. Sounds like a fun assignment!

# Girls Varsity v. Teachers



Mears Girls Volleyball Team, who are the newly crowned City Champions, played the teacher team yesterday in an incredibly competitive match up. Students and faculty alike thoroughly enjoyed this fun annual event.

# Stay Informed/Get Involved

Friday, Dec. 17 -- No School for Students; Telework Day for all Staff

December 20-31 -- Winter Break

Monday, January 3, 2022 -- First Day of School, Spring Semester

## Cell Phone/Electronic Device Policy: Change Begins January 3rd



Beginning on January 3rd, the first day of semester 2, students will no longer be able to use their cell phones or electronic devices in the hallways, multipurpose room, or any other school areas **between the hours of 8:00 AM and 2:45 PM.** Teachers will remain in complete control of electronic device use in their classrooms.

We once again ask that you also discuss this huge change with your student to ensure a successful transition to the new policy. Please review the following information for consequences if students violate the policy that starts on January 3rd, 2022; **we depend**

**on your support for the successful implementation of this new policy.**

As part of this support, we ask that you communicate with your student through the office. When you text or call your student during class, it can create a behavioral concern for the staff member that does not help provide the best possible educational experience.

**For infractions in the hallway/MPR, we will use the following structure and use the updated electronic device spreadsheet and Q. to keep track of related behavior:**

- 1st infraction: phone taken and returned by same staff to student at end of day.
- 2nd infraction: phone taken provided to administration for parent pickup.
- 3rd infraction: phone taken provided to administration for parent pickup+ In-School Suspension (ISS).
- 4th infraction:: phone taken provided to administration for parent pick up + ISS and mandatory family meeting with administration for behavioral plan consideration.

Phones will be picked up by family at the front window. We recognize this is an imposition for families, so please speak to your students about not using phones during the day.

Please call or email if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Mears Administration

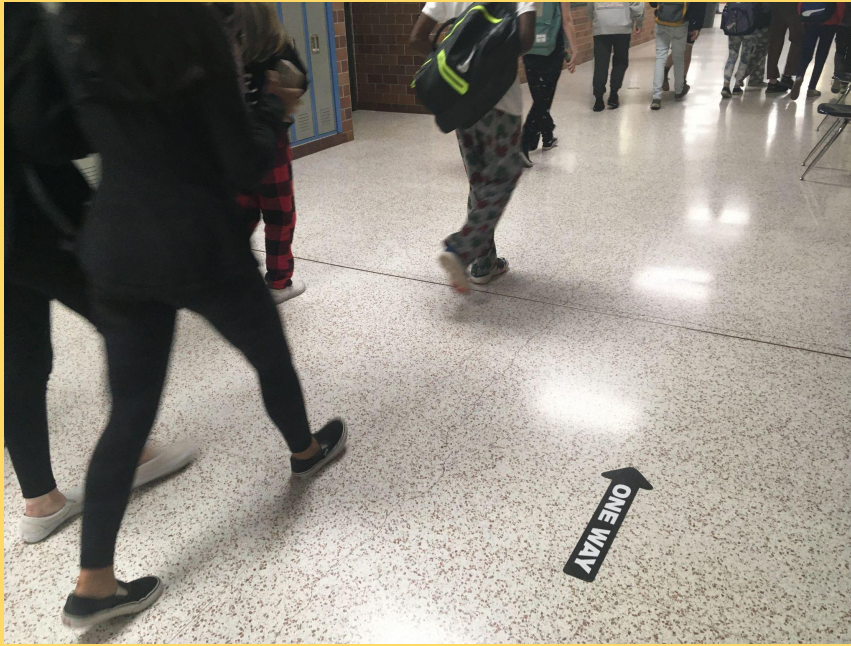
## Bag and Backpack-Free Hallways: Beginning January 3rd

With the return to two-way hallways and full locker use, the administration has decided to eliminate the use of bags and backpacks of any kind in the hallways starting January 3rd.

We've made this decision for three reasons:

1. **Safety:** We recognize that a school without bags and backpacks in the hallways is inherently safer because items are visible to staff at all times.
2. **Clarity:** Despite our best efforts to define appropriately-sized bags and backpacks this quarter, students continue to have a hard time distinguishing; by eliminating backpacks we're able to ensure a crystal-clear message and prevent behavioral infractions related to bag/backpack use.
3. **Opportunity:** Now students have the opportunity to fully employ their lockers, making backpack use unnecessary.





In short, we're convinced that keeping our hallways bag and backpack free starting January 3rd will result in many benefits for our students.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to email me.

Regards,

Mike Scott

Mears AP

[scott\\_michael@asdk12.org](mailto:scott_michael@asdk12.org)

## Mears Activities Update

Cross Country Skiing and Boys Basketball start right after the break, so if you're interested, please submit your paperwork in advance.

**Families must fill out the following forms for students to participate in sports:**

- Middle School Participation Form
  - [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1xnIL0dz4uKW6YsMk\\_MrWGZd4mjAkPMj5/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1xnIL0dz4uKW6YsMk_MrWGZd4mjAkPMj5/view)
- COVID-19 Supplemental Waiver of Liability
  - <https://www.asdk12.org/cms/lib/AK02207157/Centricity/Domain/4260/CVID-19%20Waiver.pdf>
- COVID-19 Return To Play
  - <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vsUwRmFJTh5s4ecdD0wJ2PW8ywX2-J5U/view>
- Health Examination Form
  - <https://drive.google.com/file/d/11I5oSifxCsxF-MNIknP6hBp0FPtELfeI/view>

Added to these forms, if a student has tested positive for COVID-19 in the three months prior to the activity, families should fill out the **COVID-19 Return-To-Sports** form.

Forms can be scanned and emailed to our AAFP: [spartz-hays\\_robin@asdk12.org](mailto:spartz-hays_robin@asdk12.org) or dropped off at the school by your student near the main office between periods 1 and 2: designated basket supervised by Ms. Spartz-Hays.

Visit Mears website for all activities updates and information:  
<https://www.asdk12.org/domain/4260>

## City Champs



A big congratulations goes out to Mears Varsity Volleyball Team, who won the Anchorage City Championship last weekend.

## Upcoming Activity Events

### **Boys Basketball**

This popular sport starts on January 10th. Submit your paperwork soon!

### **Cross Country Skiing**

This exciting event begins on January 6th. Submit your paperwork soon!

# Panthers Write!



## December, 2021 Writing Contest Winners

After lengthy deliberation, judges finally identified November's winners from a stack of excellent stories.

Thank you to the Mears writing community for submitting so many excellent flash fiction stories. It was a difficult decision, but after reading the many entries multiple times, the judges selected this month's winners.

In first place, for her story, "The Mullet is Back," is Caitlyn Crombie. The runner-up, for "Help, my Cell Phone is in Jail," is Shanna Coonrad.

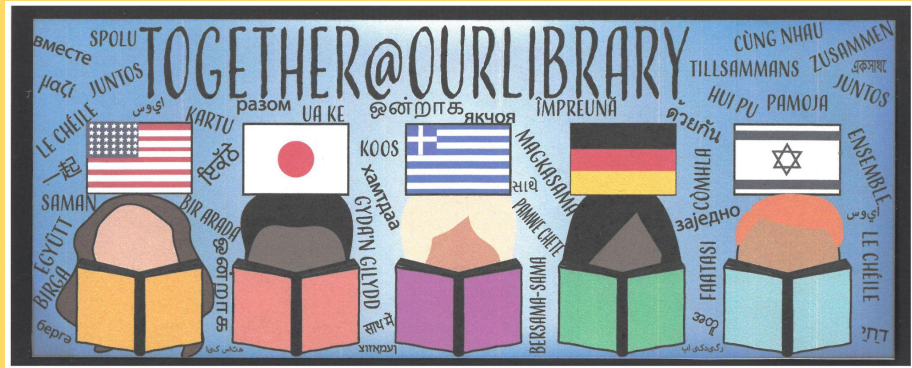


Congratulations to both Caitlyn and Shanna and their amazing Creative Writing teacher, Mr. Thomas Pease.



# Bookmark Contest Winners

Together @ our library



Make sure your student has joined the counseling canvas page. Updates from the counseling office will be made throughout the year on Canvas. If students have not done so already, please have them click the invite link below.

Caitlin Burr, 7th Grade  
[burr\\_caitlin@asdk12.org](mailto:burr_caitlin@asdk12.org)  
 907-742-6424

Crysta Svendsen, 8th Grade  
[svendsen\\_crysta@asdk12.org](mailto:svendsen_crysta@asdk12.org)  
 907-742-6428

# Mears Health Update

## Important Covid Health Reminder:



Important Links:

[Anchorage Covid Vaccination Info](#)

[ASD Covid Information Link](#)

[ASD Return to School/Covid Mitigation Plan](#)



### **PTSA Meeting Schedule**

Parents, family members, and students are all welcome and encouraged to participate in PTSA meetings. Be sure to mark your calendars and come join us to learn all the ways that PTSA supports the Mears school community.

### **Upcoming PTSA General Meeting -- Jan. 18, 2022 5:30pm**

Meeting Dates for Spring Semester: Feb. 22, Mar. 15, Apr. 19, May 3, 2022

[Mears PTSA Zoom Link](#)

Meeting ID: 958 2804 2654

Passcode: 124813

All meetings for the first semester will be held via zoom.

### **PTSA Volunteer Needs**

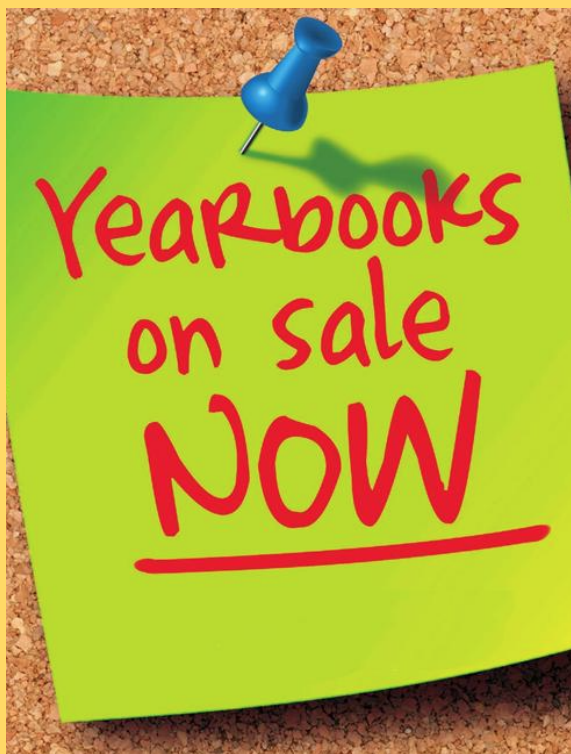
We are actively recruiting for Volunteers and for Open Board Seats and hope that you will join us! We specifically need volunteers for the following:

- Open Vice President Position
- Open Board Secretary Position
- School Store & Merchandise/ Morning and Lunchtime Shifts Now Available
- Merchandise Inventory
- Social Media Coordinator
- Yearbook Sales Promotion & Distribution

Are you interested in supporting Mears PTSA as a volunteer? If you'd like to learn more, please fill out this brief survey:

[Mears PTSA Volunteer Interest Form, 2021-22](#)

## Mears 2021-22 Yearbook Sales Have Begun



2021 – 2022 Yearbooks are on sale now! Purchase your yearbook at [www.ybpay.com](http://www.ybpay.com) use Yearbook ID: 13921122 Mears PTSA



# Pie-in-the-Face Principal



Holiday Greetings and Gratitude,

On behalf of all the teachers and staff at Mears, we wish all of our students and families a wonderful and relaxing holiday season.

As we bring to a close the Fall semester 2021, I want to convey our appreciation for all that we have accomplished together so far this year. Most importantly, we have successfully reopened our school and safely brought our students back together to learn and grow under the caring and inspired guidance and instruction of Mears incredible teachers and staff.

As always, we deeply value our partnership with all of you, as we work together to support and educate the wonderful young people who are the heart and soul of the Mears Family. It remains our privilege to educate and serve this fantastic school community.

We all look forward to another successful semester together, which will begin on Monday, January 3. In the meantime, we wish you all a joyous winter break filled with lots of fun, friends, and family. –Eric Backman, Principal



## **We are on Dena'ina Homeland**

Mears Middle School acknowledges that we operate and gather on the traditional land of the Dena'ina Peoples and honor, with gratitude, the land itself and the people who have stewarded it throughout the generations.

## **Mears Middle School Mission**

Through teamwork and cooperation, all students become partners in their own educational progress, fostering self-respect, responsibility and integrity.

[Mears Middle School Website](#)