

# River Bend Middle School

## Annual Report

2016-2017



### A Year in Review

This year has been a year full of fun and exciting experiences for our students here at River Bend. It has been our pleasure to work side by side with our students, parents, community, and staff to create an atmosphere of excellence. Our mission is to **empower our students to**

**make meaningful contributions to the world** by becoming knowledgeable Critical thinkers, Communicators, Collaborators, Creators, and Contributors. Please enjoy reading through some of the happenings this past year around the Bend.



### A New Administrative Team



River Bend Middle School welcomed a new Assistant Principal this year – Mrs. Nikisha Diehl! She joins our Principal, Mr. Dave Shaffer and our other Assistant Principal, Mr. Eric Fritz.



River Bend Middle School received its first designation in 2010, Re-Designation I in 2013, and Re-Designation II in 2016.

Our school was also recognized at the LCPS School Board Meeting in 2016 as well as the National Schools to Watch Conference in 2016 and The Virginia Middle School Association Conference in 2016.



At River Bend, our instruction is focused on building knowledge and skills to support a shift to deeper learning. To effectively implement learning experiences aligned with authentic challenging problems, teachers are using the core elements of **Personalized Learning** along with the **Gold Standard Project Based Learning** to transform our classrooms for 21<sup>st</sup> century learners.



# Ravens OTTW Experiences



## "This I Believe"

The 7<sup>th</sup> grade Language Arts team conducted the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual ***This I Believe*** writing project this school year. Students explored the narrative nonfiction writing genre to craft motivating, thought-provoking, and truly beautiful pieces of self-reflection. Over 100 7<sup>th</sup> grade Ravens were published in our book, ***This I Believe: Personal Philosophies of Remarkable 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Students, Volume II***, and were honored at our book release party on December 19, 2016.



The outreach of this project extended beyond just our students and families here at River Bend. In conjunction with our students' reading of *Trash* by Amy Mulligan, this project allowed us to make a difference and donate to a charity dedicated to helping those whose lives and experiences inspired the writing of *Trash*.



## Trout Release

To celebrate Earth Day, Mr. Nawrot's 7<sup>th</sup> grade science class supported a Virginia trout stream. The science class raised brook trout from fertilized eggs supplied by VDGIF hatcheries. This spring students and staff released the trout fry into Wildcat Hollow Run where they began a new chapter of life.

In addition to the trout release, kids had a chance to net and study macroinvertebrates with help from Trout Unlimited volunteers. All are welcome to come and participate in next year's trout release in the spring of 2018.



## Spectrum

In the fall 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade Spectrum students participate in two simulated archaeological digs. 6<sup>th</sup> graders unearthed artifacts including an 18<sup>th</sup> century wig curler, letter seal, flint, and pottery shards. 7<sup>th</sup> graders excavated items from the 1970s and 80s, including a Zenith television remote control with "space phone", record album, and pages from Life magazine. Analysis of primary source documents and online literature enabled students to identify their finds. Following this, 7<sup>th</sup> graders Skyped with archaeologist, Dr. Alexandra Jones, to learn more about her career field.



## Victory Garden

This spring the 7<sup>th</sup> grade honors history classes partnered with Morven Park to create a Victory Garden on our school campus. We learned about how food scarcity is a problem in Loudoun County and in many areas of Virginia. We also learned about victory gardens and rationing during WWII. From there, we cultivated our gardens with the help of Ms. Reisman's classes and we donated the food to a local food bank in June, just before the end of school. Students also created a public display about their group's process from start to finish.



## Tech Ed

This year in Tech Ed students had the opportunity to hear guest speakers from Nuestar. They came to facilitate "The Hour of Code" while introducing student to careers related to computing and information technology. The Tech Ed department received two grants, one for a programmable drone and a second grant for 10 microcontrollers.

# Happenings Around the Bend

## Fall Fundraiser

The fall fundraiser was in conjunction with the Great American Opportunities Company called Tastes to Treasure. This featured gourmet cookie dough from America's favorite recipes and over 600 magazines at up to 90% off the newsstand price. The kick-off assembly was September 13. Many students sold items and were able to win prizes such as candy or cash. Students who sold more than 100 items qualified to win a PlayStation gaming system and all other students who sold items participated in a "GLO" party in October.



During the month of February, the band "Souled Out" performed for our students to help us celebrate Black History month. The band performed songs highlighting historical events and advances in technology.

## Volunteer Breakfast



**Thank you Volunteers for all you do!**



To produce Annie Jr, students braved the auditioning process; many for their first time ever, practiced singing and dancing for 13 weeks, and stretched themselves as they got into their characters. Boys learned to do makeup, girls wore mustaches, tech crew learned to embrace the darkness, and some students learned to let it all go and scream at the top of their lungs. They were thrilled to perform in front of great audiences for all three of the shows.



## A visit from Eileen Whelan



Ms. Whelan, from the WJLA – ABC 7 Weather Team, stopped by the Bend to share her passion for weather with our 6<sup>th</sup> graders. She talked about what her day entails as she prepares for the news. The students also got to see some of the instruments used in weather predicting and were able to look inside the Storm Tracker vehicle.





# Excelling in Arts & Education

## Spelling Bee

This year's winner was  
**Kiran Bajaj, 8th grade**



## Guitar

This has been an exciting year for RBMS Guitar Department. We've launched our own

YouTube channel, participated in our second annual "Guitar Building Workshop," and hosted the annual LCPS All-County Guitar Festival. Seven students were chosen to represent RBMS in the 2017 All-County Guitar Orchestra. Eighth graders, Dhruv Singh, Maria-Jose Lema, Ben Antonellis, Tanvi Mannur, Jane McCarty, and Amanda Sternitzke were selected to participate. Additionally, Angelica Franco Brito was the first ever sixth grader to be selected as a performer in the LCPS All-County Guitar Orchestra. The following students received a silver medal at the Aguado Guitar Competition in May: Max Farley, Ben Barber, Andres Rodriguez, and Erick Gonzalez. In the solo division, Maria Jose Lema won 1<sup>st</sup> place and a \$100 cash award. She will also be performing the Vivaldi Concierto in D major as a soloist with the RBMS Orchestra at their final concert. Congrats on a great year!

## National Latin Exam

The following students earned recognition for their performance on the National Latin Exam. **Latin 1 – Summa Cum Laude (Gold Medal):** Mario Naranjo, Maya Natour, Liam Reaser, Erin Chan, Hannah Ryan, & Colson Merrill. **Maxima Cum Laude (Silver Medal):** Aryan Agarwal, Annie Rose Greenman, Henry Mellor, Grace Choi, Kathryn Barnett, Matthew Si, John Nowinski, & Charles Poulin. **Magna Cum Laude (Bronze Medal):** Marium Khawaja, Philippe Grard, Nana Frimpong, Taylor Evans, Maryanna Nguyen. **Cum Laude (Honorable Mention):** Amelia Smith, Trisha Thatai, Katherine Nelson, John Ruhl. **Latin II – Summa Cum Laude (Gold Medal):** Alyssa DeFrese, Essam Allibhai, Lauren Keffer, Benjamin, Barber, Hana Wang, & Emerson Rodriguez. **Maxima Cum Laude (Silver Medal):** Colin Todd. **Magna Cum Laude (Bronze Medal):** Kayla Lim, Alexander Barnes, Auburn Rasmussen, & Shayan Razavi. **Cum Laude (Honorable Mention):** Erin Stevenson.



## ORCHESTRA

\*Riti Liu represented RBMS at the 2017 VBODA District 16 Middle School Honor Orchestra.  
\*RBMS String Orchestra received an Excellent rating at the 2017 VBODA District 16 Orchestra Assessment in March.



## CHORUS

\*Ten 6<sup>th</sup> grade students participated in the All-County Chorus.  
\*Ten 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grade students participated in All-District Chorus  
\*The Raven Choir performed "The National Anthem" at the Washington Wizards vs. Chicago Bulls game at the Verizon Center in March.  
\*The following students participated in the VA Middle School Honors choir in April: Riley Freck (6<sup>th</sup>), John Aslanes (7<sup>th</sup>), and Trisha Thatai (7<sup>th</sup>)  
\*Miss Binger is assistant conductor to The City Choir of Washington.



## BAND

\*The following students represented RBMS in the Young Composers Recital at the 2016 VA Band and Orchestra Music Educators Conference in Nov.: Brian Collins, Maggie Lum, Molly Lum, Kiersten Lemke, Madela Langhum, and Sorayah Melendez.  
\*The following students represented RBMS at the 2017 VBODA District 16 Middle School Honor Band: Brian Collins, Jacob Cox, Leon Carmouze, Sabrian Johnson, Raymond Ouellette, Sasha Wang, Maggie Lum, Abigail Duke, and Hannah Asuncion.  
\*Symphonic Band received a Superior Rating at the VBODA District 16 Band Assessment.  
\*Jazz Band received a Superior Rating at the 2017 LCPS District Jazz Assessment in April.



# Happenings Around the Bend



## A Day at Redskin Park



As part of Mr. Shaffer's involvement with the Washington Redskins Charitable Foundation, a group of students from River Bend spent the day at Redskins Park playing flag football with the players and enjoying lunch in the player's cafeteria.

## Dr. Williams Stops by the Bend

On February 2, 2017, the Superintendent of LCPS, Dr. Eric Williams, visited River Bend Middle School. During his visit, Dr. Williams observed many One to the World experiences where students were engaged in authentic challenging problems and making meaningful contributions to the world.



## PFHS Senior Walkthrough



## Career Day



## Business Partners

Auntie Anne's	Loudoun ENT Specialists
Barakat Orthodontics	M/I Homes
Cheers Sports	Maid Brigade
Cheesecake Factory	Montessori Kids Universe
Chick-Fil-A	Papa John's
Crown Trophy	Saba Orthodontics
Family Hearing Services	Walt Disney World
Firehouse Subs	Washington Redskins
Jersey Mike's	Charitable Foundation
K & H Landscaping	
Kravitz Orthodontics	
Lake Center Dentistry	

## Relay For Life

A Team Event to Fight Cancer



This was the first time RBMS participated in Relay for Life of Loudoun County. Our team **"Ravens to the Rescue - Soaring for a Cure"** had 14 staff members and raised over \$4,000. Relay for Life is part of the American Cancer Society. We walk to remember loved ones lost, honor survivors of all cancers, and raise money to help make a global impact on cancer.

# Academic Excellence at the Bend

## Odyssey of the Mind

RBMS sent three teams to the regional Odyssey of the Mind competition in March. The team **"Problem 3 – It's Time, OMER!"** qualified for the state competition in April. Months of preparation go into the presentation of the long-term problem, as well as practice for the spontaneous challenge. A special thank you to Dan Moldover, parent coordinator, and our many coaches and judges from the RBMS community for your support.



## Battle of the Books

This year our team participated in the countywide competition. We won the regional competition and moved on to the state competition, but did not win this year. We are determined to win back the trophy next year.



## Innovators Fair & STEM Expo



## Extra-Curricular Clubs

AIM (Adventures in Middle School)	Pokemon Club
Author & Arts	Puzzle Club
Buddy Club	Science Olympiad
Card Game Club	Sewing/Quilting Club
Drama Club	SOAR
FCA (Fellowship of Christian Athletes)	Student Government
Fuel Up to Play 60	Yearbook Club
Gardening Club	Yoga Club
Habitat Club	
Indoor Soccer	
Leo Club	
Library Club	
MakerSpace Club	
Math Counts Club	
Morning Announcement Team	
Newspaper Club	
PAWS (Program for Animal Welfare)	
Running Club	

## Geography Bee

This year  
**Vithuran  
Rathakrishnan**  
(6<sup>th</sup> grade) was our  
school winner.

## Student Government

Owen Hendershot,  
President  
Lily Beth Tuma,  
Vice President  
Cade Breslow,  
Secretary  
Abby Burden,  
Treasurer



# Academic Excellence at the Bend



Congratulations to RBMS's first group of NJHS students. NJHS serves to honor students who have demonstrated excellence in the areas of scholarship, service, leadership, character, and citizenship.



## Poetry Slam

Our 8<sup>th</sup> annual Poetry Slam was in April. Our 6<sup>th</sup> grade students prepared their own original piece of poetry and read it in front of an audience of classmates, parents, and teachers. We also had staff & faculty volunteers read some of their favorite poetry.

## Math

In the fall of the 2016-2017 school year, we started transitioning from the IXL program we had been using to our new PL program, ALEKS. We decided to send IXL off in style with the IXL Farewell 50 Challenge. Students had to master 50 IXL lessons (completed mostly outside of class) by mid-December and it culminated with about 75 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> graders at an IXL party with video games, crafts, hot cocoa, donuts and door prizes.



## Student Accomplishments

**Emily Diaz (8<sup>th</sup>), Alana Andrews (7<sup>th</sup>), and Sarah Pappalardo (6<sup>th</sup>)** – Lacy Leadership Award

**Tharun Saravanan** – 2017 Sterling Ruritan Outstanding Student of the Year

**Daniel Rea** – RBMS First Ever Wrestling Champ

**Brian Collins** – represented RBMS at the 2017 LCPS MS Jazz Honor Band in April

**Maggie Lum and Jack Weinbrecht** – awarded “Best Soloists” Awards at the 2017 LCPS District Jazz Assessment in April

**Raghav Krishnaswamy, Bhavya Guduru, Alex Chung** -

Noetic fall 2016 Math Competition National Honor Roll Medal (Top 10%)

**Hastita Ravula** – First place TJHS Intermediate Math Open Competition – Algebra 1 division

**Nayara Suarez-Martorell** – Medaled for the Harmony Writing Contest

**Tarahji Robinson** – Awarded the Malone Art Certificate & \$250 Lions Club Award

**Sarah Bokae** – Awarded the Malone Math Certificate & \$250 Lions Club Award

**Maria Jose Lema** – Awarded the Malone Science Certificate & \$250 Lions Club Award

**Henry Gregory, Colin MacNabb, Stanton Nowinski, Keegan Sheperd, Riya Prasad, Nilaya Dhamat, and Trisha Thatai** – Odyssey of the Mind – Regional 1<sup>st</sup> place winners

**Maria Behrends'** film *Unseen* won the 1<sup>st</sup> place Film Award at the Loudoun Creates Oscars event.

**Dylan Whitbread and Pranay Goswami** – 1<sup>st</sup> place in the Science Olympiad  
**Alex Chung and Vithuran Rathakrishnan** – 1<sup>st</sup> place tie (6<sup>th</sup> grade) in the Virginia Math League Competition

**Bhavya Guduru and Isra Satiar** – 1<sup>st</sup> place tie (7<sup>th</sup> grade) in the Virginia Math League Competition

**Raghav Krishnaswamy** – 1<sup>st</sup> place (8<sup>th</sup> grade) in the Virginia Math League Competition

**Lauren Keffer and Becca Wilson** received the Silver Key Award from Scholastic Art & Writing

Congratulations to the RBMS FTC Advanced Robotics Team (“The Legitimates”) comprised of **Dhruv Singh, Grace Choi, Jack Weinbrecht, Rohan Prasad, Raghav Krishnaswamy, and Tharun Saravanan**. The team qualified to advance to the Virginia State Tournament.

**Raghav Krishnaswamy and Bhavya Guduru** tied for the 1<sup>st</sup> place Gold Medal for RBMS and received the Honor Roll Certificate for placing in the top 5% nationally at the AMC 8, Math competition.

### RAVENS of the Year

6<sup>th</sup> grade – **Daniella Harris, Kyle Moriarty, Mirai Bernard Derek Torres, Grace LaFrancois, and Grant Gonzalez**

7<sup>th</sup> grade – **Quynhanh Tran, Sam Shumaker, Maggie Goetz, Daniel Pappalardo, Maddie Johnson, and Mark Delaney**

8<sup>th</sup> grade – **Lauren Turner, Jackson Shumaker, Ruiyao Li, Matthew Weber, Sarah Fishman, and Cade Breslow**

# Staff Recognition

## Staff Awards and Nominations

**Ms. Weiskopf** was named Chair of the National Mythology Exam. The NME is consistently given to over 10,000 students in approximately 400 schools around the United States and in several foreign countries. Ms. Weiskopf also was awarded the Excellence in Teaching at the Pre-Collegiate Level Award from The Society for Classical Studies.

**Mr. Steven Weitlich**, Technology Education Dept. Chair, received the 2017 Educator Grant from the Air Force Association.

**Mrs. Jennifer Kassander**, 6<sup>th</sup> grade Language Arts teacher was named Scholastic Reading Club Teacher Advisor.

**John O'Brien** – LCPS Substitute Teacher of the Year nominee

**Reagan Murnan** – SEAC Teacher of the Year nominee

**Marquelle Adkins** – Shenandoah University Teacher of the Year nominee

**Karen Duval** – Washington Post Teacher of the Year nominee

**Eric Fritz** – Assistant Principal of Year nominee

**Crystal Wallen** – TLC First Teacher of the Year nominee

**Samantha Russell** – TLC First Teacher of the Year nominee

**Tabitha Ales** – 2017 Outstanding Educator of the Year by the American Institute for Astronautics and Aeronautics National Capital Section (AIAA NCS)

**Maddie Davis** was recognized by The Catholic University of America for her work as a media specialist.

**Kelly Hoover** was recognized by the Washington Post for her archaeological work at Montpelier during the summer of 2016.

## GRANTS

Wendy Ahart  
Tabitha Ales  
Renee Crawford  
Eric Fritz  
Adam Kossler  
Tammy Mack  
Kristin Musick

Paul Nawrot  
Melanie Nunes  
Christina Pezzimenti  
Dave Shaffer  
Lyndsay Simpson  
Steven Weitlich  
Kendra Whitaker



- Welcome Back Teacher Breakfast
- Spirit Nights
- Quarterly Staff Luncheons
- Donuts with Dads
- Fall & Spring Teacher Grants
- School Musical
- Student & Staff Basketball Game
- AOL 5K Race
- Teacher Appreciation Luncheon
- Muffins with Mom



## Presentations

Kathy Kuhn – Children's Literature Conference at Shenandoah University

Marquelle Adkins, Melissa Dober, Eric Fritz, Jennifer Kassander, Tammy Mack, and Dave Shaffer – Virginia Middle School Association's Annual Conference

Dave Shaffer – Blended Learning National Conference & Inspire Loudoun

Melissa Dober, Eric Fritz, Dave Shaffer, and Brian Tompkins – Schools to Watch