

# the wingspan

Centennial High School

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## The Unrelenting Strength of Elizabeth Reinhardt

Emma Liu

Co-Editor-in-Chief

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Life doesn't ask before it reshuffles your cards. For Ms. Elizabeth Reinhardt, her deck was flipped at the hands of a diagnosis that shifted her reality: stage 3 breast cancer.

But even amidst this challenge, Reinhardt, the assistant principal here at Centennial, has continued to be an anchor in our community.

Since joining Centennial midway through last year, Reinhardt quickly became known for her warmth and dedication in supporting the community. Having moved to the U.S. at just 9 months old, Reinhardt grew up in Howard County and enjoyed playing the cello and sharpening her lyrical skills. She went on to study music education and worked at Hammond High School for 16 years, where her ambition to support more students in a wider context led her to transition to administration. Now, she brings her passion and experience here at Centennial.

>>> *Continued on page 2*

## Thank You PTSA!

This newspaper would not be possible without the funding from the Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA) that has made our website and senior print possible. Your contributions to journalism are greatly appreciated.

-Wingspan Staff



Photo by: Kaitlyn McManus

## Michael Guizzotti, Centennial's Security Officer

Sage Hawkins  
Staff Writer

Roaming the halls from bell to bell, Centennial security guard Michael Guizzotti's presence is felt by each and every student in the building. However, despite his constant support, very little is known about the person behind the job.

Micheal Guizzotti grew up in Buffalo, New York in a poor inner-city neighborhood. Growing up in a tougher environment motivated him to pursue a career in law enforcement. Guizzotti's mother struggled with drug addiction, which further motivated him to pursue a career in law enforcement.

"I saw lots of violence and drug crimes firsthand which is the whole reason I became a police officer."

Guizzotti has a younger brother and sister from his parents' marriage and a half brother from his father's remarriage. He

attended an inner-city school, Kensington High School, which was eventually shut down by the state of New York. He recalled that his first job was at a local taco stand in his neighborhood.

A fun fact about Guizzotti is that he was once named Maryland's Strongest Cop, with a bench press of 465 pounds, deadlift of 660 pounds and a squat of 620. Another interesting aspect of Guizzotti's life away from the job is that he is an avid scuba diver who swam with sharks.

Before Guizzotti was a security officer, he was a Baltimore City police officer. Being a cop in Baltimore City is no easy task and comes with risks. Over his time as an inner-city cop, Guizzotti faced some tough situations but one specific encounter sticks with him as the most frightening.

"Unfortunately, a mentally ill person tried to stab me with a knife and I was forced to shoot them in self-defense," Guizzotti recalled.

Guizzotti suffered a severe hamstring tear that complicated his work as a cop. This injury unfortunately forced Guizzotti's early medical retirement and paved the way for his

current role as a school security officer.

"When I retired from the police department, security work was the first thing that came to my mind because police work and security work go hand in hand with each other."

Guizzotti worked at Centennial for around six years and then was moved to Atholton High School and now he has returned to Centennial, citing his love for the kids and community. For Guizzotti, something as simple as a student telling him dad jokes daily has the ability to make his day.

Guizzotti values the importance of community and his connection with the students and families at Centennial and he employs that value every day here at school. "I am a part of the community here, this is where I belong. And I love the kids and community here."

## 67: What the Sigma?

Caroline Jenkins

Opinion Editor

The first time I heard someone say "six-seven", their palms up as if weighing an object in their hands, I assumed it was in reference to some dirty joke popularized on TikTok.

As one of the few teenagers without the social media app, many jokes or pop-culture references go right over my head.

But I am not the only one these days who is struggling to catch up with the rapidly evolving slang words of the youth.

I quickly learned that part of the reason I was having such trouble grasping the meaning of 67 is down to the fact that it quite literally has no definition.

On Oct. 28, Dictionary.com named 67 Word of the Year, stating in their rationale for the 2025 choice that "perhaps the most defining feature

>>> *Continued on page 6*

## Feathers of the Wingspan

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## Beyond the Diagnosis

>>> *Continued from Page 1*

From the early hours of the day to the dismissal bell, Centennial Assistant Principal Elizabeth Reinhardt's lively spirit shines in every encounter she has. But behind her warm smile, Reinhardt grapples with her diagnosis.

On June 7, 2025, Reinhardt discovered a lump in her breast. Though her doctor was initially dismissive, a mammogram, an X-ray picture of the breast, was scheduled. On June 30, the results came back: she had triple-negative invasive ductal carcinoma, a rare and aggressive form of breast cancer.

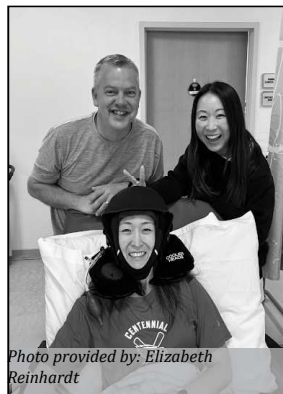


Photo provided by: Elizabeth Reinhardt

"The overwhelming emotion is just shock. Like bewilderment," Reinhardt explained. "Everything happened so fast...I can't believe this is happening to me. I think every day, I think that to myself, like, how is this possible?"

Reinhardt maintained a healthy life; ate well, lifted weights, and enjoyed running. She had hardly been sick a day in her life, not even the flu. A cancer diagnosis was the last thing she expected. Additionally, Reinhardt had hardly ever come in contact with cancer—her closest relation being her sister in law, a survivor.

Reinhardt wrestled with how she should handle her diagnosis. "I went back and forth for a long time about whether I wanted to share publicly, and to be honest, I was still processing the information because everything happened so fast." Ultimately, she decided that her story could encourage others to be proactive about their health and shed light on cancer awareness.

In late August, Reinhardt broke the news on social media, courageously sharing her experience.

"I think it's important that people know and are aware that breast cancer, and just cancer in general, can happen to anybody...And if somebody's



Photo by: Kaitlyn McManus

reading that post and they're like, 'yeah, I have never gotten a mammogram' or 'I've never done a self-breast exam.' I want them to know that they should. Being aware of your body and advocating for yourself is so important."

Her message lies in her own experiences as she navigates this difficult time. As she receives treatment—16 treatments over 20 weeks—Reinhardt leans on her family and community.

"I have an amazing support system. My husband is amazing, my parents live right down the street... they're very supportive," Reinhardt said. "The teachers [at Centennial] have been so amazing. The compassion and kindness that they've shown me is, like, really overwhelming. It's been great."

She fondly recalls the day when she walked into her office to find it decorated by Centennial staff members, Rona Li, Erin Parisi, and Katie Carr. A symbol



Photo provided by: Elizabeth Reinhardt

of support, she stated, "keeps me going."

On October 1, in honor of the beginning of Breast Cancer Awareness Month, staff wore their "Reinhardt Race Team" shirts for the Zaching Against Cancer (ZAC) race on November 22, held at Turf Valley Resort. The ZAC foundation was founded in 2013 in memory of Centennial alum Zach Lederer, a former Centennial student who passed away from cancer. Reinhardt, who loves to run, is honored through this fundraiser, with half of the revenue from the shirt being donated to cancer research.

Carr, who organized the event, recognizes the importance

of sharing stories and fostering connection.

"We're really emotional about her, and I have experienced the healing power of support and love. And we wanted to show that to Ms. Reinhardt...no one should have to fight alone."

This sentiment drives Reinhardt's desire to serve as a pillar of support for others, fearlessly sharing her story and openly talking about cancer.

"When my sister in law was going through it, I was like, 'Oh, it must be so hard.' But I had no idea the emotion that goes into it...So now that I'm going through it, I'm like, yeah, if somebody else were going through it, I feel much better equipped to understand what they need and empathize with how they feel."

By sharing her journey online, Reinhardt has access to a network of survivors. "Another thing that I got from posting online is all these people I had no idea about are reaching out and saying, 'Yeah, I had that.' And I'm like, yes—I can make it too. Because if you made it, I can make it too."

Reinhardt remains committed to not allowing her cancer to interfere with how accessible she is to students. Even fighting illness, Reinhardt's instinct to support others remains, a testament to her dedication and graceful courage.

"Despite being sick, I want to still be there for everybody I'm supposed to be there for," Reinhardt said. "I love my job, I love my family, I love my friends. I really just pretty much love everything I do. I never think, 'Oh, I really hate this.'"

Although her cancer holds a reputation for recurrence, Reinhardt stays optimistic. She will undergo surgery in January, and additionally, she has been responding well to treatment. Reinhardt is determined that cancer will just be a "blip in my life, and that by this time next year, I'll be looking at this entire experience in the rear view mirror."

Her resilience does not go unnoticed. Dr. Joelle Miller, Principal of Centennial High School, spoke admirably of working

alongside her.

"I'm very specific about the qualities of an assistant principal that I want to work with," Miller said. "The job is not easy...and they gave me her in January, and I was thrilled." Miller praised Reinhardt's unwavering work ethic, acknowledging how even in the midst of her demanding treatments, Reinhardt has "been here, every day, except for her seven-and-a-half-hour treatments on Wednesday." Miller expressed how "I'm a lot older than her, but I learn a lot from watching her."



Photo provided by: Elizabeth Reinhardt

Reinhardt's own silent battles are harder to see, but her perseverance is undeniable. Her spirit radiates throughout the community, with students and staff alike seeing her as a role model. No matter what, even in the battle for her life against cancer, Reinhardt's ever-lasting smile speaks volumes: a look that

represents not just kindness, but of strength, courage, and grit as she navigates this challenging chapter.

Her cards may have experienced an unprecedented shuffle, but one thing is for certain: cancer does not chip away at Elizabeth Reinhardt's spirit, nor does it challenge the community behind her.

Her message is strong, one that should be taken away by every reader:

"You know how when you get on an airplane and during the emergency briefing, they

tell you to make sure you put on your mask before helping others? This holds true for us in life also. You need to take care of yourself first. You can't show up for others if you can't show up for yourself. And your health is the greatest asset you have—protect it."

## Love is in the Air... and at Centennial with Penguins

Teju Reddi  
Managing Editor

Starting the month of November with love, students and staff at Centennial High School are buzzing with excitement for Dr. Kelli McDonough and her husband, Mike Johnson, as they said "I do" on November 1, 2025.

McDonough is an English teacher here at Centennial. Along with her classes, McDonough also sponsors many other core extracurricular activities for her students, such as the Mock Trial Team, the National English Honors Society chapter, and the Student Government Association (SGA) which she works with her best friend and bridesmaid, Shalonda Holt. Holt is a biology and anatomy teacher at Centennial High School and works with McDonough on SGA.

McDonough got married to Mike Johnson, a Montgom-

ery County Elementary school teacher. They tied the knot at the Maryland Zoo in Baltimore in front of the Penguin exhibit.

In addition to her love story with Johnson, McDonough also holds a deep connection with her favorite animal, penguins. Every student of McDonough is well aware of this fact. McDonough explained how "when I was in third grade, I was a really big reader." It was then that her teacher made a deal with McDonough: "If I finished all my work, then I could go to the reading corner." Here is where the penguin aspect waddles in. "My teacher made me an igloo, and turned it into a reading igloo." Now, McDonough shares her love for penguins with Johnson, making it an integral part of her big day.

The same way a penguin swimming through the ocean turns to others for companionship, so does McDonough with her husband, Johnson. They met each other on a dating app and began a relationship. McDonough knew Johnson was the one for her when she got to meet his little niece and nephew. She watched how he interacted with them and saw the small details



Photo by: Teju Reddi

that truly mattered.

The niece had quite a big role in the engagement part of their love story. McDonough and Johnson have an inside joke about Johnson proposing with a ring pop. One fine day, the niece asked about her future aunt marrying her uncle and tossed a ring pop to McDonough. She quickly realized that Johnson was kneeling down, sparking an exciting moment during the proposal. Without hesitation, McDonough said yes.

Before even saying yes, the wedding could not happen without planning, and that could

Of course, as being a best friend to the bride, the groom has to get bestie approved, and sure enough, Holt raised the green flag for Johnson. Holt explained how Johnson is there for McDonough. The newlyweds and the Holt couple are amazing friends and love to hang out all the time. Holt's husband, Tony Holt, and Mike Johnson have a great friendship. "My husband and Mike connected right away...and I don't know why, but they have a bromance," Holt explained.

With all these amazing people around McDonough, her best friend has a sweet message



Photo by: Teju Reddi

only happen with the bride's best friend. Shalonda Holt, a science teacher here at Centennial High School, played a big role as one of McDonough's bridesmaids. They are like two peas in a pod; their friendship is very well known at Centennial. Their friendship started way before Centennial. "We actually went to college together, and we worked at the same admissions office program, but we didn't know each other in college," Holt said. Later at Centennial, they connected and built their friendship from there.

for the bride.

"Congratulations. I'm so happy for you. You deserve the world, and now you have it. I'm so excited to be honored to be included in your special day...and I just love you so much, and you are my family."

With that, McDonough and Johnson are officially married, and they have a lifetime of memories to make, laugh, and share!

## Journalism is Back Strong!

Ryan Doody

Co-Editor-in-chief

25. Twenty-five students had signed up to take Journalism for the 2025-2026 school year, which was more than enough to qualify as a class. A number that seemed unreachable a year ago had been accomplished. For all the young journalists and staff at Centennial who had worked so hard to revive the Wingspan, a



Photo by: Evan Ruiz-Lebron

huge sigh of relief was released, myself included.

Last year's Wingspan team faced an incredible amount of adversity and persevered through the multitude of challenges that were thrown in our direction. For the 24-25 school year, the Journalism program had not achieved the required amount of student enrollment for it to run as a full-functioning class. The team was forced to meet as a club instead under a new advisor, Mr. Rus VanWestervelt, our third different advisor in three years. VanWestervelt brought years of experience and unwavering positivity to the club, playing a crucial role in motivating

his students to persevere through our undesirable circumstances.

Editors-in-Chief Abby Rothrock and Tavroop Kaur did their absolute best to keep the newspaper functioning at its standard, despite the cards being stacked against the Wingspan. What was formerly a 50-minute class period each day became a 30-minute, biweekly Eagle Time meeting. Although we reported just as consistently and were able to still publish both online and print articles, the club format posed too many barriers. Inconsistent attendance and the little

time we had to meet left members of the Wingspan, especially Kaur and Rothrock, feeling overwhelmed by the weight to keep journalism afloat.

"The Wingspan club honestly always felt like we were fighting," Kaur reflected. "We were fighting to get articles out on time, fighting to get new writers, fighting to report on certain topics."

Rothrock adds on to the struggle and explained how "It was also harder because we didn't have a set staff. It was kind of just whoever wanted to write articles for a cycle, and there was nothing going into grade books so as much as we tried to enforce strict

deadlines, they often got pushed back a lot because they weren't at the top of people's list of priorities."

In response to the club, VanWestervelt, along with the editorial team, made it our goal to achieve the required number of student registrations for Journalism for it to run as a class for the next school year. Instagram reels, emails, and persuasive conversations with friends were all employed to motivate more people to take Journalism.

"I honestly think running it as a club for a year was a blessing in disguise in terms of growing the paper and allowing it to become more widely known throughout the school," Rothrock said. "We had more people joining that wouldn't have joined if it was a class because that's a whole different level of commitment."

Watching Rothrock and Kaur effectively navigate the obstacles of the club still plays a prominent role in how the paper is run this year; my Co-Editor-in-Chief Emma Liu and I were inspired by their work ethic and learned from the lessons from last year. This guidance is used to help continue to grow the Wingspan even more.

Each day during third period, the Wingspan press room – room 108 – is lively with members of the team busy writing articles, brainstorming ideas with editors, or working on layout. The format of the class allows plenty of time and space for work to be accomplished by the strict deadlines that are set. Being able to have full class time each day to collaborate as a team has led to an extremely successful start to the year for Wingspan.

"Having journalism as a class this year has made it easier

to keep up with deadlines, connect with the staff, and cover the multitude of events in our community," Liu said. "We are able to merge as a team every day, making the dynamics and teamwork extremely strong."

For some, Journalism is just another elective offered at school, but for those who have immersed themselves in the community, it means more than that. Whether it's covering the most important games, writing a feature on your favorite teacher, or simply writing about your opinion on a topic, what you write for the Wingspan leaves a mark on the school's history, even if it may not seem that way at the time.

"Journalism is voice, and voice is power," Liu said. "Knowing how to engage your community, spotlight stories, and investigate is essential in maintaining equilibrium in a society. By joining the school newspaper, you are learning how to think for yourself, understand the world around you, and ultimately, you acquire the skills needed to create change."

The Wingspan is a legacy that deserves to be carried on, one that was made possible by Rothrock and Kaur, who fought harder than anyone else for this class. Their fight was not in vain, maintaining the importance of Journalism and keeping the field alive. At Centennial, Journalism is more than just writing articles for a grade; it's a time capsule that contains the history of our school, something that can't be quantified by a percentage. The Wingspan is firing on all cylinders this year, but it is important to remember the people who worked so hard to fight for it.

## Centennial Mock Trial's Trip to Philadelphia

Zola Gargano  
Staff Writer

Deep in the heart of Philadelphia, Centennial's Mock Trial team was hard at work, competing against other teams from around the world and presenting their cases in front of real judges and juries.

Empire Mock Trial, which is the circuit Centennial is involved in, is an international organization in which students can examine and prepare for contemporary trial cases as well as receive feedback from legal professionals.

Centennial's Mock Trial team is led by English teacher, Kelli McDonough, who accompanied the team in Philadelphia from September 25 to 29.

McDonough shared that this year's case was about a college professor who was let go because of the possibility that he incited violence in his class. He had an X account (formerly known as Twitter) that was followed by students, on which he shared his political beliefs. The professor proceeded to sue the university for wrongful termination.

Sandy Jayaprakash, a second year Mock Trial member and senior at Centennial, enjoyed working with the case and appreciated its relevancy.

"I felt like it really connected to the current day situation of politics and whether free speech is warranted or should be

legal, and the consequences limiting free speech can have on institutions' credibility."

Mock Trial students had to prepare both sides of the case and present each, totalling around seven hours of time in court. Seven hours may seem like a lot, but the team spent much more time simply preparing for the case.

"We met about eight times over the summer...team members meet together about 4 to 5 hours per week over the summer, and about the same amount of time when school starts," McDonough detailed.

The team spent their time "just kind of drafting our case strategy and working with our lawyer-witness pairs," according to Jayaprakash.

Even with the team's extensive preparation for the trip, all their time in Philadelphia was

not strictly spent on the trial. The team participated in a community service project, in which they helped pack "to go bags" for a local homeless shelter. They also spent time sightseeing, and even did an escape room.

In regards to the competition, McDonough emphasized that seeing teams from other schools was certainly a highlight of the trip.

"It's just seeing what other schools are doing that works, and trying to bring some of those strategies back to make ourselves a better team as well."

Not only does interacting with other teams help Centennial's improve, but McDonough shared that they "really do appreciate the Empire Mock Trial circuit because it's kind of like a family."

"We had a lot of bonding both in the courtroom but

also outside,” Jayaprakash added, sharing the sentiment.

After returning from their trip, McDonough wasted no time getting started on the next steps for Mock Trial.

“We have just formed a brand new team of sixteen individuals, who will then be competing against other teams from the state of Maryland,” she shared.

Last year, the in-state Mock Trial team was very close to being in the final four of their competition, which would mean they would have gotten to travel to Annapolis and compete.

“This year, our goal is to be one of the final four,” Jayaprakash claimed.

It is clear that Centennial’s Mock Trial team is extremely dedicated to their practice, and we wish them the best of luck in the rest of this year.

**See what your teachers are listening to!**



## A Week to Remember: Celebrating Homecoming 2025

**Andrew Banjade & Sahil Prasad**  
Staff Writers

Starting the year off strong, the week of September 22 held one of the most popular and sought-after weeks of the school year: Homecoming Spirit Week.

Spirit Week is a long-standing tradition of the Centennial community where students show their enthusiasm by dressing in themed outfits each day. The festivities began on Mon-



Photo provided by: Kareena Shah

## Rainbow Ribbon Award: The Path Towards Inclusion

**Kaitlyn McManus**  
Photo Editor

On Oct. 13, Centennial High School was awarded the Rainbow Ribbon Award, which recognizes Howard County public schools that create an inclusive LGBTQ+ environment. This award is orchestrated by the Community Allies of Rainbow Youth Organization (CARY) and strives to promote an affirming, diverse community.

To be qualified to receive this award, the school must complete a variety of “strands,” such as having a Sexuality and Gender Alliance (SAGA) club or incorporating LGBTQ+ curriculum. Each school must apply for each strand in its entirety to receive the final Rainbow Ribbon Award.

Steven Parker, Centennial High School’s Rainbow Representative and sponsor for SAGA, said that receiving the award was



Photo by: Kaitlyn McManus

usually a three-year process, but Centennial was able to accomplish it in two years.

For this accomplishment, Centennial will receive a rainbow flag that will be placed at the front of the school. The flag not only represents support for the LGBTQ+ community, but also indicates to students that “this is a safe space for me,” as Mr. Parker explained.

“For people not a part of the [LGBTQ+] community to see [the flag] and go ‘okay this is something that is good here, I will support and be an ally,’” Parker said.

Centennial High School’s principal, Dr. Joelle Miller, described how we have to continue to strive for excellence and inclusion for all of our students: “We still have to be conscious of the environment we are creating here.”

SAGA President Maya Finkelstein said she appreciates how Centennial creates a welcoming environment where LGBTQ+ students are seen, supported, and celebrated.

“The catchphrase ‘be kind, Centennial’ from the morning announcements has now taken on another layer of meaning, and I could not be happier.”

day with an absolute fan favorite: Twin Day.

The themes are voted on by the Student Government Association (SGA) each year, generally repeating the most popular themes from prior years. Gayeon Kim, a member of the SGA explained, “I think Twin Day is a classic; it’s enjoyed almost every year, and dressing up with friends doubles the fun.”

Whether it be because of their three or four years of experience or their overwhelming school spirit, the upperclassmen once again dominated participation in Spirit Week. “I think participation was equally spread out, but I think the seniors’ and juniors’ outfits stood out the most,” Kim said.

Some freshmen participated but showed hesitation when compared to the well-acclimated upperclassmen. “It’s their first year, so I think to combat that, we should definitely encourage Spirit Week more and make it something that everyone can enjoy, instead of just people who are already comfortable with the school,” Kim emphasized.

The least popular days tend to be the ones where dressing up takes more work, while the days that require minimal preparation, such as Color Day or Twin Day, see the most participation among students. “It

allows us to express and connect our interests,” Kim stated.

There are five different

To end Spirit Week, the SGA planned a mix of indoor and outdoor events for all



Photo provided by: Angela Huang



Photo by: Tammy Chen

themes to choose from each year. Centennial Principal Dr. Joelle Miller shared her personal favorite.

“For me, it’s Color Day, because that’s the one I see most represented. That pride in your class and the spirit—that’s the one I saw the most people dress up for. Obviously, I love Pajama Day, but Color Day was my favorite.”

grade levels. The classic events remained the same: the Senior–Junior boys’ volleyball game, the performances of the Color Guard and Marching Band, and the walkouts of the different fall sports teams. The volleyball game was especially exciting, with many impressive plays from both the seniors and juniors, including several surprising kicks over the net.

The addition of the outdoor section of the Pep Rally brought a pool noodle relay race between grades and teachers, as well as a girls' flag football game between the juniors and seniors. A notable running performance



Photo by: Tammy Chen

came from English teacher Mr. Bailey, who shocked the crowd with his speed, though it wasn't enough to stop the sophomores from winning the competition. In terms of engagement, the excitement was rampant. "I didn't see one phone—not at the volleyball game, not out at the pep rally. That level of engagement hasn't been like that since probably before COVID," Miller exclaimed.

On the morning of Homecoming Day, locals gathered along Century Drive to observe the Homecoming Parade, which featured floats from many of Centennial's clubs and sports teams.

This year's parade showed much higher participation compared to previous years. "The parade took over an hour—last year it was a half hour—because of the participation we had from all the different clubs and sports teams," said Miller. "I just want it bigger and bigger and bigger, and I think we're heading in that direction."

Soon after the parade, the Homecoming football game kicked off. This year's game had a tough ending, with the Eagles losing to Poolesville 8–21. Despite the unfortunate outcome, Centennial's marching band and color guard put on an impressive performance at halftime.

This year's halftime performance kept with the Star Wars theme that was present in the Pep Rally. The Color Guard, in particular, was standout. "Color guard is an integral part of the band since their choreography really

helps fill up the field and ties the formations together," Ming Sun, a drum major in the marching band said. Sun also credited Centennial students who filled the stands in support of their peers. "I was very happy with the turn-

out that night, too, since a larger audience usually motivates the band to perform better."

Later that night, the culminating event of the week took place: the Homecoming Dance. Over a thousand tickets were sold, and students packed Centennial's gymnasium. The dance gave the whole student body a chance to mingle across its many interconnected social circles.

Ryan Doody, a senior, echoed the sentiments shared by many seniors. "It feels like the school really comes together. Different grades and friend groups all mix together, especially when there's a dance circle or something like that, and I've always appreciated that aspect of the dance." The final dance was bittersweet for seniors like Doody.

"It's crazy to realize this is my last Homecoming of high school because it doesn't feel too long ago that I was nervous about the dance my freshman year... This year, I tried to embrace it a little bit more, just knowing I'd never have another one," said Doody.

## mezeh: Is it better than Cava?

Christine Ma  
A&E Editor

On Thursday, Oct. 23, excited local customers gathered at Mediterranean restaurant mezeh from 5:00 to 8:00 PM to claim a

free bowl during their opening day deal. When I arrived at 5:30 PM, the line was stretched out across the entire parking lot. I spent nearly two hours waiting in line, but the \$5 purchase made it worth it, as the deal came with a free bowl deal along with the purchase of a drink to attract more customers at their grand opening.

mezeh is less familiar compared to other chain restaurants with locations in only six states and Washington D.C. Hearing a new Mediterranean fast-casual restaurant opening makes me think immediately of Cava, a close competitor.

With the high demand in the food market for fast-casual dining, mezeh's location right in Long Gate shopping center (where it was previously KFC) is convenient for many members in the community, as it is only a walk for many of the nearby neighborhoods.

Both mezeh and Cava share origins in Maryland, with mezeh opening with their Annapolis location in 2012 and Cava opening their Bethesda location in 2011. They also share the same Mediterranean background, which is visible in the similar ingredients like tzatziki, falafel, basmati rice, feta, black lentils, and tahini and harissa sauces. Additionally, they have ingredients that aren't found at Cava, such as bulgar pilaf, Lebanese tabouleh, pearl couscous, caramelized eggplant, and corn salsa. My friend and I were especially excited to try the caramelized eggplant, and it easily exceeded our high expectations due to its Chinese origins.



Photo by: Christine Ma

Along with more various options in their ingredients, I even found mezeh's side pita to be much better than Cava's because it was softer and chewier in contrast to Cava's harder texture that felt dry and not so crisp.

I found the quality of mezeh's food to be higher as each ingredient seemed freshly roasted and crisp. Similar to Cava, I could see the employees making the food behind the counter, showing off the foods' authenticity. I

found the falafel, in particular, to be better than Cava's. I always get falafel at any Mediterranean place that offers it, and mezeh's blew my mind. I used to think that Cava had great falafels, but after trying mezeh's, I can't ever go back. On the outside, it felt more roasted and crisp, and on the inside, it was green, which means that it includes lots of natural herbs like parsley, cilantro, and mint. The dark surface and green interior reminded me of Dubai chocolate, and I couldn't stop thinking about that when I saw their falafel ad that played while we waited in line. Cava's falafels are not green on the inside, but you see nut pieces instead, as it consists of more walnuts and pine nuts. Cava's falafel definitely seemed drier with less flavor, speaking to my preference for mezeh's overload of green herbs that powered its flavor (go Dubai chocolate!)

Additionally, mezeh offers more variety in their drink options. While Cava has a selection of four house-made juices, mezeh has over 10 selections with both carbonated and non-carbonated house-made juices. As someone with a great appreciation for carbonated drinks, mezeh undoubtedly carries the drink department.

Having never heard of mezeh before, despite its 14 Maryland locations, it was much better than I had expected. With more diversification in all its ingredients down to the grains, greens, toppings, and sauces, mezeh is the better choice compared to Cava if you want to expand your taste buds with a new set of ingredients that are of higher quality. That does come with a slightly higher price, however, with my mezeh order totaling to \$15.35 and my Cava order totaling to \$14.20. Still, I am already seeing mezeh becoming the new spot for students to grab something quick due to its closer proximity compared to other fast-casual restaurants. I know mezeh will surely be my new go-to spot now, and I don't see myself growing sick of it.

“67”

>>>Continued from page 1

of 67 is that it is impossible to define.”

According to Dictionary.com, the slang word originated from the song “Doot Doot (6 7)” by rapper Skrilla. It gained further traction when the term was picked up by basketball players on TikTok and a young boy named Maverick Trevillian, whose viral video gave him the legacy as the “67 kid.”

From there, 67 was left to the mercy of young imaginations.

Gen-Alpha, 67's biggest fan, spans from birth years 2012 to 2025 (though some sources claim 2010–2024), while the older generation, Generation-Z, spans from 1997 to 2012.

This sets current Centennial High School students — birth years 2007–2011 — at the cusp of the two generations.

Gen-Alpha, as well as the younger members of Gen-Z, grew up in a very different world from their parents. Sharing birthdays with major technological innovations and apps like the iPad, Instagram, Snapchat, and later TikTok, today's teens were raised with technology constantly at arm's reach. This concept is one that older generations find mind-boggling, but to the younger generation, it is as normal to them as brushing their teeth.

This restructuring of childhood and subsequent rewiring of young minds has created a generation of "screenagers."



Photo by: Emma Liu

And the slang words they throw around? Such as rizz, Ohio, and gyatt? Nothing more than "brainrot."

Ironically enough, both Gen-Z and Gen-Alpha seem to embrace these terms.

To them, 67 is the epitome of brainrot, and that is the whole point. Like an inside joke, it serves as a way of bonding with others who join the laughter, and a way of distinguishing from those who stare blankly. Slang is, in a way, a brand of identity for a generation, and has been for some time. The English language is constantly evolving, and there will always be older folks who roll their eyes at the new lingo.

"Adults don't necessarily understand it, but it's because [kids] don't necessarily want adults to understand it," Sociology and history teacher Mr. Ahearn explained, who is known among students as a champion for modern trends. "It's a way of signifying that you're of a generation that is different than the generation before."

New slang helps people make sense of new realities. A crazy world needs crazy words to describe it.

"I love that people continue to reinvent language to fit the needs and meaning that they have," Mr. Sharbaugh, one of Centennial's English teachers, said during an interview. "The fact that children are continuing to use language to express and create a community that's different than the older generations, I think, is powerful."

The Centennial High School community certainly has

but now you can't count without the whole class doing a hand motion. It's goofy, but a little frustrating."

Some students, however, go all in. "67 is my life," Sophomore Ariana Newberry said, laughing.

Although there has always been a pattern of the new generations creating new words, the evolution of language has been drastically accelerated. With the world globalized by technology, in particular by social media, a new word can gain traction and reach large audiences easily.

The same thing goes in reverse; a word can be someone's entire vocabulary one day, and "cringe" the next. Just like how slang like "skibidi" eventually lost traction, it is almost a guarantee that 67 will too.

This is one of the reasons Dictionary.com's selection of 67 might be controversial. Should a word of a few months be chosen to represent an entire year? Why not words with more long-term implications, such as tariff or tradwife, which were both on the 2025 shortlist?

On the subject of recording slang words, Ahearn notes, "The dictionary's there to give meaning to things so that people can understand the world around them."

After all, compiling dictionaries is a form of compiling history; a way of preserving the thinking of people throughout time.

The only problem is, 67 seems to be an expression of the absence of thinking.

"My fear is that the term 67 might be reflecting a shallowness; a lack of depth, in the appreciation of language," Sharbaugh voiced. "Words like 67 dismiss the idea that there needs to be, I guess in my opinion, a meaning or substance to what language is."

But to Ahearn, there is still substance to be found in 67. "Even though you might say it doesn't really have a meaning, it does have a meaning in the capacity where it's your generation defining itself from other generations," Ahearn said. Not all words necessarily need to have some profound meaning. Some are just fun — simply for the sake of being funny.

"We have such a serious world," Sharbaugh said. "Maybe people just need a little 67 in their life."

## Flag Football Touches Down in HCPSS

Haley Hunt  
News Editor

Starting the fall of 2026, Howard County public high schools will be kicking off girls flag football. The rapidly growing sport is in part thanks to the Baltimore Ravens leading this movement in Maryland.

"Girls Flag Football is rapidly growing in popularity, and we are excited to add it to our already outstanding athletics program for the 2026-2027 school year," Bill Barnes, HCPSS' superintendent, said in an exclusive Wingspan interview over email. "HCPSS thanks Dr. Ball and our partners in Howard County Government Recreation and Parks, the Baltimore Ravens and Under Armour for supporting this fantastic program."

With the support of the Baltimore Ravens and other parties, HCPSS gains one more fall sport for female students to get involved in.

According to Baltimore Ravens' Senior Manager of Marketing and Football Outreach, Adam Rudel, "beginning this year, through our partnership with Howard County Public Schools and the Howard County Department of Recreation & Parks, student-athletes will have the opportunity to compete in this fast-growing sport."

Thanks to the collaboration of the Baltimore Ravens, HCPSS and the Department of Recreation & Parks, girls scored another win.

"Together, we're building a future where every girl who wants to play has the chance to suit up and be part of the game in Maryland," Rudel said in an exclusive Wingspan interview over email.

A trial run of the season is scheduled to begin fall of 2025, but not through HCPSS.

According to Centennial High School's Athletic Director Rebecca Clark, "Rec & Parks is going to help us out with registration and getting everything organized for us, so practices and games might not take place on Howard County School property."

Coaches and players have been rounded up in eagerness for flag football's debut.

For current seniors, this will be their only chance to play flag football in representation of their high school.

Two coaches will be leading the very first team, business

and economics teacher Kristen Taylor and Albina David. The roster consists of 22 girls from a variety of grades.

The very first game was Nov. 15, a close game that the Eagles won 7-6. Immediately following the first game came the second as a doubleheader, which was another close game but victory just escaped the Eagles with a 9-12 loss.

"The issue with the second game was Atholton had

Even at a disadvantage, Centennial's team is eager and bursting with potential. At both of the games, a touchdown was scored for the Eagles. Maliyah Edmunds, a freshman, marked her name as the very first girl to score a touchdown in Centennial's name.

Flag football has been steadily growing, where it once was an obscure club, now its state championships occur at the Baltimore Raven's own stadium.



Photo by: Evan Ruiz-Lebron

white jerseys with white flags, so their flags blended into their jerseys," Taylor said. A pristine example of why a trial run was necessary.

"That is our goal: to be at M&T stadium next year," David said.

## A Hole in One: Ryan Kane's Drive to Success

**Blythe Zheng**

*Feature Editor*

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Friday night football games, volleyball highlights, and soccer shutouts are phrases all too common among our student body. What shouldn't be overlooked, and should be given equal recognition, are the athletes of Centennial's very own golf team.

Senior Ryan Kane has been on Centennial's team since his freshman year, and throughout those years, he's become a figurehead for Centennial's varsity golf team.

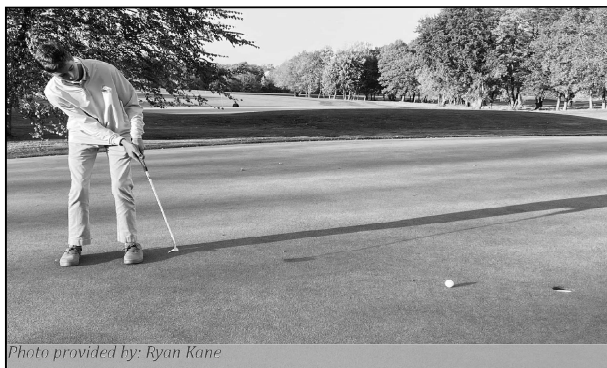


Photo provided by: Ryan Kane

Kane has played golf throughout his life, but he only seriously started pursuing it in 8th grade. "Golf's a very addicting sport," Kane said, "once you get over the first barrier of being able to hit the ball."

This year has felt different for Kane. "It's the most complete and competitive team I've been a part of," he explained. "We can go into every match knowing we have a chance to win."

Kane attributes much of that growth to head coach Robert Slopek, whose dedication has helped the team become more unified and competitive. "You can see how much Slopek cares about being a competitive program, and that mantra has really spread through the team," Kane said. "We've grown tighter because of it, playing together outside of practices on weekends or after school."

On a personal level, Kane

attributes his success this season to working on the mental side of his game. "It's very easy to spiral after a couple of bad shots, but that's what separates tiers of golfers, especially in competition," he said. "Being part of a team that wants to win every week keeps me grounded. It's a lot tougher to give up when you know your team is counting on you."

That team-first mentality has paid off. Centennial beat River Hill High School earlier this season and qualified four players for the counties, which are both firsts since 2010.

Kane will be joined by Senior Jathan Chavez and Sophomores Brady Stockdale, Ben Joo, and Makayla Robinson, all of whom have shown tremendous promise.

Next up are Districts, where the team will aim for a combined score of 333 or better to qualify for States.

Kane encourages anyone interested to give the sport a chance. "A lot of people give up early because it's hard to get the hang of," Kane said. "But once you do, it's so much fun." He also highlights how, with nine seniors, boys and girls, graduating this year, spots are wide open.

On a side note, Ryan reveals how by joining the team, "you get free golf and the chance to get better every week."

As Kane reflects on his final high school season, he offers some advice to future golfers. "It's truly amazing how much you can improve just by playing consistently," he said. "Golf is incredibly difficult, and you can't expect perfection. What matters is how you recover from bad shots."

With his final high school season coming to a close, one thing is clear: Centennial golf is back on the map, and the future looks bright.

## A Korean American Thanksgiving

**Calvin Lee**

*Staff Writer*

Arranged in perfect coordination on my brightly lit, brown wood dinner table are a variety of traditional Thanksgiving foods: a large turkey, skin golden brown, elegantly placed on a plate, a large pot of oven-baked mac and cheese, sausage stuffing doused in butter and garlic—foods that create an iconic image of the beloved American table.

Yet upon closer inspection, one notices that this is not a typical Thanksgiving meal.

Lying between the turkey and the sausage stuffing is a plate of bright red kimchi. Across the mac and cheese is a bowl of rice. At the far end of the table is a dish of steaming bulgogi, marinated beef. Korean food has made its way into my family's holiday meal.

In a community composed of many diverse cultures, the holiday is not celebrated the same way across the nation. The traditions, norms, and foods may differ from the classic image that typically comes to mind when thinking about this time.

For children of Korean immigrant parents, this holiday raises a scenario. Two contrasting worlds collide: one party grew up surrounded by a culture that celebrates Thanksgiving, the other grew up in a culture that did not. It is a unique blend that shapes the celebration of the day.

I spoke with Aiden Lee, a Korean-American student whose parents were born in Korea, to gain additional insight into how his family celebrated the holiday.

"My mom and my aunts, they moved here in middle school. And then my dad moved here after college. So none of them were really that big on Thanksgiving growing up."

Despite that, they now celebrate with a large dinner that Lee helps prepare.

"We'll have a lot of the usual side dishes, but instead of turkey, we'll usually have something like steak or some other meat because no one in my family really likes turkey all that much. Some years we'll do Korean barbecue. And then we'll always have some Korean side dishes."

My family's experience with Thanksgiving has always been somewhat "normal." Given that my parents were born in the States, I grew up celebrating the day every year with a large turkey meal. While my family and some Korean American Families alike hold fast to the classic spirit of Thanksgiving, we put a unique spin on it. Two different cultural foods are integrated into one meal, creating an occasion that is reminiscent of my upbringing in America as a Korean.

And so my multigenerational family gathers around the table, ready to share a meal that is overflowing with gratitude for the loving life we share.