



## West Middle School 7th Grade Girls Basketball

by: Audriana Steeby-Hernandez

West Middle School girls basketball has had an excellent season. The orange team for 7th grade ended the season with a record of 11-1. The orange team has had a memorable season, all the girls have had outstanding performances. They suffered an unfortunate loss to Crestwood, but they persevered and continued to have an amazing rest of the season. Shoutout to Coach Crandall and Coach Amo for all their hard work to have an amazing season.

As for the girl's black team, they had a great season as well. They ended the season with a record of 11-1, with a crucial loss to Grand Haven. Yet they still continued to power through the season. Another shoutout to Coach Amo for leading the 7th-grade girls black team to victory this season. I asked Payton Boelema how she thinks her team did this season as well as how she thinks her team persevered and she said, "We had really good team culture, we did really good at working together, we made more of our layups, and we did better at communicating then at the start of the season."



## A Review: Percy Jackson on Disney +

by: Will Nielsen

The new Percy Jackson show on Disney+ is great for the whole family, with new episodes coming out every Tuesday at 6:00 pm. This show follows the journey of Percy Jackson, son of Poseidon, Grover Underwood, a boy with goat legs, and Annabeth Chase, daughter of Athena, as they attempt to save Zeus' Master Bolt which was stolen from Olympus. At the time of this article, there have been 8 episodes released and more coming soon. The Heroes of Olympus follows the books quite well, but like usual, the books are better than the Hollywood version. Everything about the show is exceptional, with realistic scenes, acting, and special effects. I recommend this show to anyone who likes fantasy shows and if you have read the books. I give it a rating of 4.6/5 stars and think it is worth watching. Here's what 7th-grade student Aaron Hage says about the show; "I would give it an 8.5/10. It's one of the best books to show adaptations in a while. It is still not perfect, but it is a good show and worth watching."

# WMS Boys Swim and Dive

by: David Cummings

You may not have known that WMS has a Boys Swim/Dive team, but we do. This is a sports option in the winter. This two-month competitive sport starts in January and concludes at the conference meet at the end of February. We have 8 regular meets in addition to the conference meet. This year the team is composed of a total of 17 swimmers, twelve 7th graders and five 8th graders. The main coach is Holly Morren. She coaches alongside Clint Sterkenberg, and diving instructor Erica Wysocki. Practices and home meets are at the Byron Center High School Aquatic Center.

Swimming consists of four strokes: freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, and butterfly. Freestyle is the most recognizable stroke. The swimmer is on their stomach and their arms are alternately going back and forth in a forward direction while their legs are kicking.

Backstroke is similar to freestyle in that the swimmer's legs are kicking. Their arms also alternate, however, the swimmer is on their back.

In the Breaststroke, the swimmer is on their stomach. They're taught that arms go out in front of their bodies, like cutting bread, they move outward, like they're spreading butter.

The Butterfly is also performed on their stomachs. The legs dolphin kick and the arms go above the head and out slightly. To finish the stroke, the arms come back in.

Diving is where athletes jump off the diving board and land in the water, hands or feet first after performing an acrobatic move. There are many different types of dives, each having a different level of difficulty. A panel of three judges scores each dive, ranging from 0-10. Each diver attempts each dive once and performs five dives in a competition.

Meets consist of nine swimming events and one diving event. Each swim event/race has different lengths and strokes. Each athlete can only swim in three events or two events if they're also diving.

Swimming is a team sport, but points are based on each swimmer's or diver's performance. Points are awarded for first to fifth places for individual events and first to third places for relays.



# WMS Girls Swim & Dive

by: Audriana Steeby-Hernandez

The West Middle School Girl's Swim and Dive season ended earlier this school year. The team had an excellent year. The swim team finished with a record of 6-1 and the Eastern Division Conferences were held on December 14th, 2023. The Divers' Conference was held on Dec. 13th at Valleywood Middle School, and swim conferences were held on Dec. 14 at East Kentwood High School. Conferences included teams from area schools including Wayland, East Grand Rapids, and Forest Hills. The season's best 50-yard Freestyle was 25.49 seconds.

Before conferences, I asked Allison Clay how she thinks this year has been going for Swim. She said, "It's going great. Only lost one meet. I'm really proud of us!"

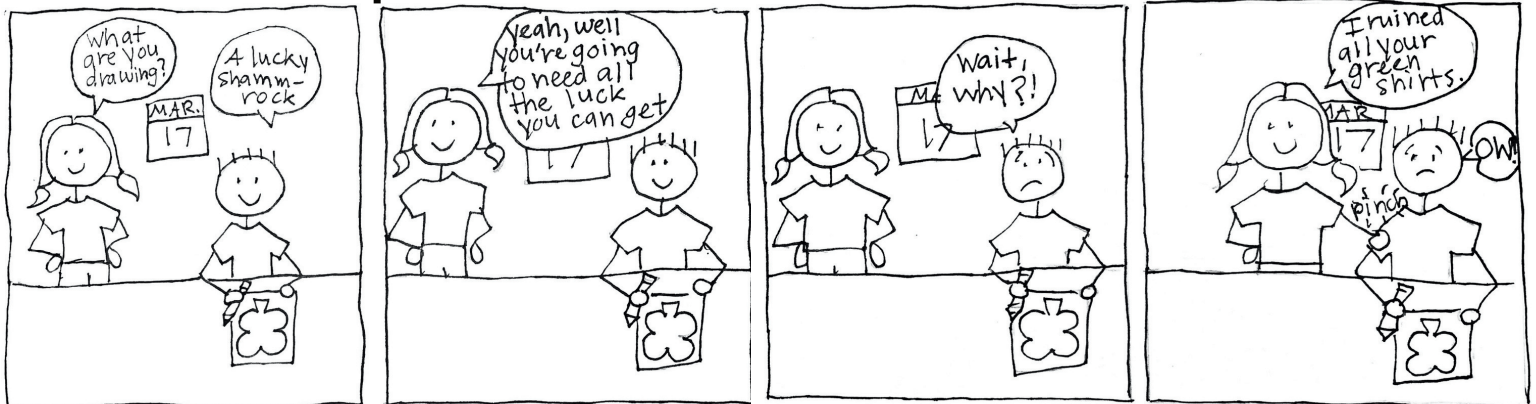
I also asked RuthAnn Schmadel and she said, "I think it's going great. [We have a] very great team and we are very strong and really good swimmers."

I asked Coach Holly Morren, and she said, "It's going super well. We have had lots of time improvements, really good team culture this year."

For the divers, I asked both Lilly Terpstra and Paige Winkle how this year has been going for divers and Lilly said, "Good we are improving from last year."

Paige said, "Good. I got first in all meets except one, and we had lots of good improvements." Paige Winkle took 2nd at the Diving Conference on Dec 13th. Byron Center, as a team, took second place in the conference on Dec 14th. This season is Coach Holly's last season as the middle school swim coach. We want to thank her for all of the hard work that she put into the swim team. Thanks for another great season!

# A Comic Strip



Comic Strip by Addie Ashby

# Looking Forward to Summer in Michigan

by: Landon Jenkins

Michigan is home to some stunning summer getaways. If you want to relax and enjoy the beauty of Michigan, these three locations are a must-visit:

1. Mackinac Island - Located in Lake Huron, Mackinac Island is famous for its Victorian-style buildings, horse-drawn carriages and scenic views. You can try some delicious fudge, take a walk around the charming streets or simply unwind and take in the peaceful surroundings. Activities you can enjoy include biking around the island, horseback riding, or playing golf. You can also visit Fort Mackinac, which was built by the British in the late 1700s, and learn about the island's history.

2. Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore - This destination is a must-see for nature lovers. The park has towering sand dunes that go up to 450 feet above Lake Michigan, crystal-clear lakes, and miles of hiking trails. You can climb the dunes, take a swim in the freshwater lakes, or hike through the lush forest that surrounds the area. At Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, you can enjoy a variety of outdoor activities, such as hiking, swimming, fishing, and kayaking. You can also take a scenic drive along the Pierce Stocking Scenic Drive, which offers stunning views of Lake Michigan and the surrounding dunes.

3. Traverse City - This charming city is located on the shores of Lake Michigan and is famous for its vineyards, breweries, and cherry orchards. You can take a tour of the local vineyards, taste some of the finest wines, or pick your own cherries fresh from the orchard. With its natural beauty and laid-back atmosphere, Traverse City is the perfect place to relax and soak up the warm Michigan sun. You can explore the lively downtown area, which has many art galleries, boutiques, and restaurants. You can also visit the Grand Traverse Lighthouse Museum, which offers an interesting look into the region's maritime history. And of course, no trip to Traverse City would be complete without trying some of the area's famous cherry pies and other cherry-infused treats.

In conclusion, Michigan has plenty to offer for those looking for a summer getaway. From the tranquil ambiance of Mackinac Island to the adventurous terrain of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, or the relaxed atmosphere and delicious offerings of Traverse City, there is something for everyone to enjoy. Make sure to add these stunning destinations to your travel list and experience the beauty of Michigan for yourself.



Photo Credits: Allison Moore

## A Quick Thought on Mental Health

Madison McConnon

"Mental health problems don't define who you are. They are something you experience." - Matt Haig

Mental health is consequential. It determines the way we think, the way we act, and the way we socialize with others. At some point in everyone's life, they will experience a mental health issue. Whether it's at school, home, or work; it can show up as sadness, anger, anxiety, or even depression. It's important to try and standardize talking about your mental health, so you aren't struggling with the burden alone. Remember, it's okay to ask for help! Even if you think that no one will understand, many mental health experts in this world can help. It's up to you to ask for it.

Sometimes we are the cause of our mental health problems. We can overthink, or do things that can impact the way we look at ourselves! Here are a few examples of how you could be affecting your mental health:

1. Obsessing over things you can't control.
2. Taking on too many projects at one time.
3. Keeping secrets or information from your parents.

If you feel like your mental health is suffering because someone is bullying you, seek help from an adult! Remember a key factor: People who are hurting, like to hurt other people. Statistically, kids bully other kids because their mental health is suffering. Here are a few possible reasons why -

1. They might be bullied by siblings (or other family members) at home.
2. They could have a very rough home life financially.
3. They are jealous or could be unhappy for some other reason.

So try not to take it too personally, because it's probably about them, not you!

Remember - getting enough sleep, proper nutrition, and exercise are also very crucial to your mental health. The better you feel, the better your attitude and outlook will be! Sometimes just taking a deep breath and a little 5-minute break can do wonders!



# Around West Middle School

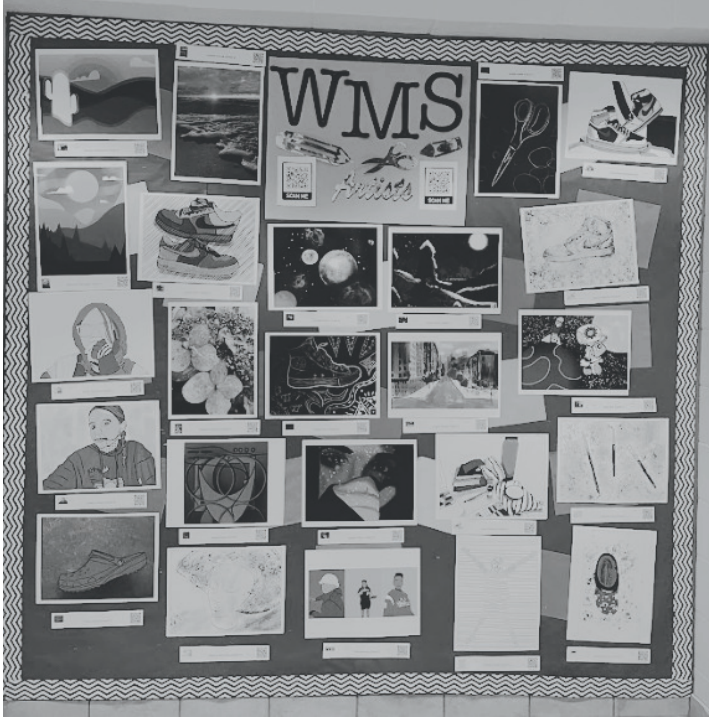


Photo credits: Allison Moore

# A Message from Links: What is Autism

by: Ella VanBuskirk

Autism (ASD) is a lifelong effect that is mostly recognized in early childhood. Children with ASD struggle more with communication. Some will use devices to help them talk.

Autism is a developmental disability caused by differences in the brain. Most of the time, autism affects the way you look, talk, or act.

“There needs to be a lot more emphasis on what a child can do instead of what [they] cannot do.” - Dr. Temple Grandin

Some things to things to know:

Most people with ASD have a harder time learning than the next, but there's a lot of stuff you can do to help. There could be a time when a child or an adult with ASD gets short with you while you are trying to help them, but there are ways you can work through it.

A person with autism could have a physical disability as well like having to wear special shoes so that they can walk on their own.

A person with autism could get overwhelmed with being around too many people or in too loud of an environment.

In the end, a person with autism is not as different from you as you might think. All you have to do is remember to treat everyone equally and spread kindness.

If you want to learn more about the LINKS program at BCWMS please email Mrs. Tromp (ktromp@bcpsk12.net) or talk to any of the teachers or students who work in the classroom. There are ways you can spread inclusion around BCWMS by making sure everyone is included and everyone feels like they have a role that they play in our school.

# “Thawing”

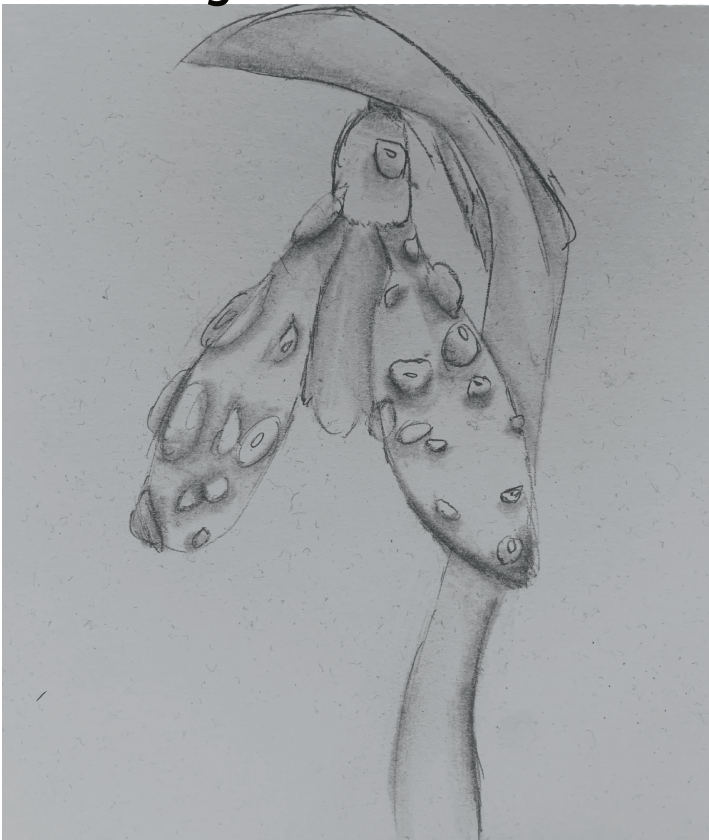


Illustration by Lexi Vander Ploeg



“Summer at Lake Michigan”

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