

Shark Bites



5th Edition

March 7th, 2017

Gulf Coast High School: 7878 Shark Way, Naples, FL 34119

Make Sure You're Up to Date on Graduation Requirements!

By: Katie O'Brien

Seniors cannot wait for college and are ready to be done with high school. However, there are many requirements that they must be met. There are different diplomas that people can get. There is the standard 24 credit diploma, Scholar Designation, Merit Designation, and 18 Credit ACCEL. Each diploma may require something more or less than the others.

The English requirement is the same across the board. Each student must have four English credits. This includes English Language Arts one, two, three, and four. The honors English, AP, AICE, IB, and dual enrollment will suffice for the four credits.

For the math, students should have four credits. One of the credits must be Geometry or its equivalent. Another credit must be Algebra 1 or its equivalent. Students must pass the Algebra 1 EOC or have a comparative score on PERT. The EOC counts for 30% of the final class grade. For the scholar designation, students also need one credit in Algebra 2. For all diplomas, the Algebra 2 EOC counts for 30% of the course grade. For the scholar designation it is also required that the student have one credit in Statistics or an equally rigorous level 3 course.

For science, students must have three credits. One credit must come from Biology 1. There must be two equally rigorous courses

and two of three must have a laboratory component. The Biology 1 EOC counts for 30% of the final class grade in all diplomas. To get the Scholar Designation a student has to pass the EOC. They are only exempt if taking an AP, IB, or AICE class and earn the minimum score to get college the credit. For the other diplomas, an industry certification may substitute for one science credit. If taking a rigorous computer science course with a related industry certification, that may also count for one science credit.

The requirements for Social Studies are the same for each diploma. The only exception is that for the Scholar Designation, students must pass the U.S. History EOC. Each student should have three Social Studies credits. One in World History and one in U.S. History. As with other courses, the U.S. History EOC counts for 30% of the final class grade. Students should also have taken 1/2 of a U.S. Government course and 1/2 of an Econ course with Financial Literacy.

A World Language is only required for a Scholar Designation. It requires two credits in the same language. The other diplomas do not require a world language. However, it is required for admission to state universities.

For every diploma, there is only one credit required for the performing arts, speech and debate, or eligible practical arts course spec-

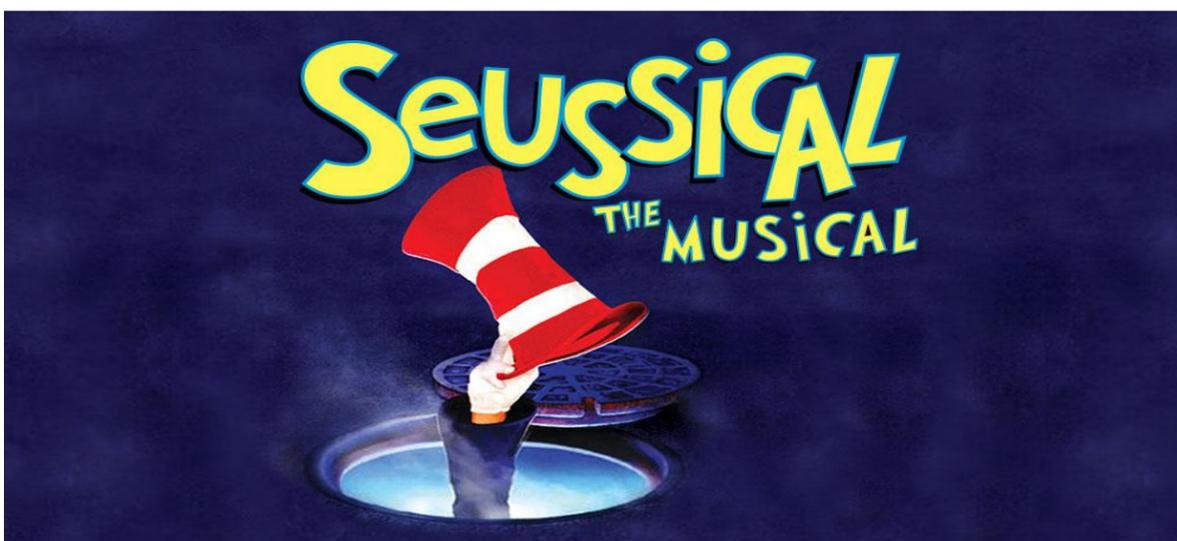
ified in the Florida Course Code Directory.

A physical education credit is not required for the 18 Credit ACCEL. There is only one credit required by the other diplomas. It must be the H.O.P.E. course or a Personal Fitness and physical education activity elective.

For electives, there are eight credits required for the Standard 24 Credit diploma. Only six are required for the Scholar Designation. This diploma also requires that at least one credit be in AP, IB, AICE, or a dual enrollment course. The Merit Designation requires eight credits and students must have one or more industry certifications. The 18 Credit ACCEL only requires three elective credits.

In total all diplomas requires 24 credits except for the 18 Credit ACCEL diploma. For all students they must have a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or higher on the 4.0 scale. Every diploma also requires that students pass the 10th grade ELA assessment or ACT/SAT. All of them except for the 18 Credit ACCEL also require one online course to be taken.

The list of requirements may seem overwhelming, but many students have already accomplished these requirements without even knowing. Before you know it the year will be over and all the stress and hard work will be worth it.



Coming to an Auditorium Near You!
Featuring Gulf Coast's
Drama Department

April 21st-23rd
7pm

April 27th-29th
7pm

April 29th
2pm

Photo courtesy of Taelynne Masshardt



Stay in the Know: School Dress Code

Tops:

No Halter Tops
No Tube Tops
No Muscle Shirts
No Midriff Showing
No Backless Shirts

Shoulders Covering Must Be Two Inches
Tops Must Be Three Inches Below The
Waistband

No Bare Skin Should Be Exposed At The
Waist or Abdomen Area
Clothing Must Cover The Chest

Bottoms:

No Short Shorts
Shorts, Skirts, and Dresses Must Be Finger-
tip Length
Leggings Must Not Be Seethrough

Footwear:

Safe Footwear Must Be Worn At All Times
No Rubber Flip Flops
No Bedroom Slippers

Other:

Hair Shall Be Clean and Neatly Groomed
Hair Color Should Not Interfere with the
Educational Process
No Hats
No Hoods
No Head Coverings

Clothing Shall Be Free Of Inflammatory,
Suggestive, or Other Inappropriate Writing,
Advertisement or Artwork



Features

Singing Their Hearts Out: Singing with the Glee Club

By: Sophia Vellozzi

The Gulf Coast High School Glee Club is “chord-inating” an exciting year filled with an abundance of fun and enjoyment. Each and every member of the Sharkapellas is especially anticipating an opportune and climactic remainder of the year. The Sharkapellas work diligently in their meetings every Friday after school. However, before they were accepted into the club, they had to audition to prove their proficiency in music. Now that the students are selected, they hone in on their technical skills as singers while engaging in warm-up exercises and learning to read new compositions of music. Within the ensemble, there are a total of four sections: the sopranos, altos, tenors, and basses, with the sopranos having the highest notes and the basses the lowest. Regardless, each section is a fundamental piece of the entire group that would be unable to function efficiently without the other. The Sharkapellas are comprised of a captain, vice president, and supervisor. Ariane is captain with Ms. Tara Buonamici as the supervisor. Ms. Buonamici is both the orchestra and chorus director at Gulf Coast High School, and is the glue that holds the ensembles together. Without the collaboration and ideas of both Ariane and Ms. Buonamici, there would be a lack of organization and cohesiveness within the group. The Glee Club specializes in singing modern pop music. Currently, they are learning a Pentatonix Daft Punk Medley. Sharkapella Samantha Carbone explains, “I thoroughly enjoy singing music that is current and relatable. So far, the group is working very hard on the new medley composition in order to master it.” Additionally, they sing exclusively in a cappella. A cappella is a musical term meaning to sing without an accompaniment, soundtrack, or any instrumental melodies playing simultaneously with their singing. The talent is clearly palpable in this group of musicians. Many performing opportunities are available to the talented students. Glee Club Member Samantha comments, “In March, the Sharkapellas may sing at a marathon race to cheer on the runners, while promoting school spirit.” Back in December, the Sharkapellas “wowed” the audience at the Breakfast with Santa event held at the Riverstone community country club. Performing at various functions is a fantastic way to show the community the exceptionally strong music program present at Gulf Coast. Gulf Coast High School is truly fortunate to have a phenomenal music director such as Ms. Buonamici, along with the overwhelmingly talented singers of Glee Club. Remember to mark your calendars for the Sharkapellas next performance, for it is going to be one you cannot miss!

IN GC’s Library: Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close by Jonathan Safran

Jonathan Safran Foer is an American novelist widely known for his most popular works: *Everything is Illuminated* (2002), *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (2005), and *Eating Animals* (2009). Despite his incredulous success, he did not originally aspire to be a writer. While attending Princeton University, author Joyce Carol Oates recognized his extraordinary writing ability and turned his life around. After graduating from Princeton with a degree in philosophy, Foer pursued writing as a career, and he now teaches creative writing classes at New York University.

He was awarded the National Jewish Book Award in 2001 as well as the Guardian First Book Award in 2002, both for *Everything is Illuminated*. In 2010, Foer was included in *The New Yorker*’s “20 under 40” List, and in 2013 he was appointed to the United States Holocaust Memorial Council. *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* was adapted into a film in 2011 and features well-known actors and actresses such as Tom Hanks, Sandra Bullock, and Viola Davis.

Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close features a style of writing known as ‘visual writing,’ in that it contains many intertwining storylines, small, additive pictures, and ends with a fourteen-page flipbook.

This is the story of nine-year-old Oskar Schell, whose father died a year prior in the September 11, 2001 terror attack on the World Trade Center. He dis-

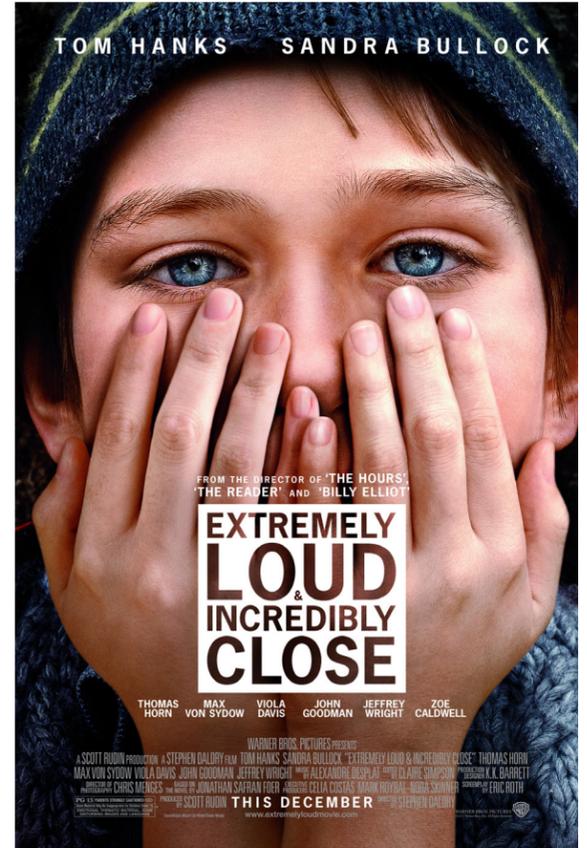
covers a key that belonged to his father, and he is inspired to search all around New York City for whatever information he can find about the key and his father. At such a young age, the loss of his father causes Oskar to suffer from insomnia, depression, panic attacks, and he often inflicts injuries upon himself.

Oskar finds the key inside an enveloped labeled “Black,” so he resorts to contacting everyone with the last name of Black in the hopes of finding the lock in which the key belongs. In a city as enormous as New York, the search takes place over the course of several months. He finally comes in contact with a woman named Abby Black, and she believes her ex-husband, William Black, may be able to provide Oskar with some answers.

The connected subplot features a series of letters. One set is from Oskar’s grandfather to his father, and the others are written by Oskar’s grandmother, addressed to him. The final feature, a flipbook, depicts a man falling from the World Trade Center, but he appears to be falling up toward the sky.

Oskar may be only nine years old, but he is extremely determined to retrieve the answers to his questions. How does Oskar’s journey end? Does he find what he is looking for? Discover the answers to these questions and many more in the heartwarming yet tear-jerking novel, *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*.

Photo Courtesy of Google Images



Deca: Road to States

By: Pamala Peralta

Deca, also known as Collegiate Deca, on the college level, and previously known as Delta Epsilon Chi and Distributive Education Clubs of America; is an international association of high school and college students and teachers of marketing, management and entrepreneurship in business, finance, hospitality, and marketing.

The GCHS Deca club is one of the most interactive clubs on campus. This club gives students the opportunity to develop their leadership skills for their everyday lives. Shawn Kelly, is the advisor of the club and also the teacher for the marketing class and business management. “Deca is the perfect club for kids with outgoing personalities and a drive for marketing,” said Kelly, the club advisor. There are different positions when it comes to directing the club, students with more experiences take on the responsibilities of planning the events and helping out the advisor. The charges to join the club are only 20.00 dollars for the whole year not including extra charges for different events. All of the fees go directly to the Deca association for different events and as a fund for the club

in general. The different associations also add money and funds for the club, members of the club that go to state and regional pay the fee of 20.00 dollars also.

Deca helps our community by approaching students with a sense of community and a better understanding of our economy. Students learn how to be leaders, how to deal with different types of economic situations and how to understand a business structure. This club helps the community by giving its time and and giving the community the opportunity to be together and come up with different ways to help us do better in their businesses. Deca focuses on the entrepreneur side of the business and different ideas that students might have and teaches students how to develop and increment their ideas. “I want this club to grown and I want students to really learn and take this as a life experience.” said Kelly, the club advisor. Currently the club has 50 members and

are trying to have a limit of members and to stay within those 50 members. Some of the members have been in the club for several years now and are planning to stay and take it further in their college careers. Deca also offers certifications that are a good way to obtain jobs in businesses and that you can use in the future as a reference for a job. Deca is the perfect club for students interested in marketing, business and public speaking. If you are interested, please see Mr. Kelly and he will provide you with all the infor-



Photo courtesy of GCHS



Congrats
to the
Model United Nations
Team
for Placing
First at FGCU!
Go Sharks!

Basking in the Limelight

By: Sophia Vellozzi

The Gulf Coast High School Drama Club has had a fantastic year of performances and shows. It is closer to the end of the year, and the students are preparing for the culmination of the worthwhile experiences they have had so far. The year is not over quite though, and the most important performance is yet to come.

The Drama Club is preparing to perform and compete at the state-wide competition this year. All of the students involved are thoroughly excited for this experience. However, the Drama Club is unfortunately not funded for this event. Determined to go to states, the Drama Club has decided to hold a showcase on Friday, February 10, to raise the necessary money for their well-deserved trip. The grand showcase was held in Gulf Coast High School's auditorium. The students in drama club sang solos, duets, and acted in an upbeat and fun manner. That evening was a true success for the Drama Club.

Mr. Michael Massari is the drama director. Drama student Rylee comments, "Mr. Massari is such a fun teacher. I've learned so much from him already and I've become even more interested in drama since the beginning of the year." Drama is an overall enjoyable course and is a fantastic way to meet new people with the same interests. Most of the students have met many new people that they say they would never have come to know if it were not for drama. It is a class that allows the students to simply be themselves, and, of course, have an abundance

of fun.

Aside from Mr. Massari's talented drama club, he has a class completely dedicated to drama and theatre. Currently, the class is reading the comedy *Taming of the Shrew* by William Shakespeare. The comedy takes place in the countryside of England and is about a prank by a lord who tells a poor man that he is of nobility. From this foundation, the story unravels into one of comedic lines and laughter. After the drama class has completed analyzing the composition, their final assignment will be to pick a scene and act it out in groups. Drama Student Katie O'Brien explains, "Everyone is very excited to act out the scenes; we are all looking forward to it." The excitement is clearly palpable in the drama class.

The technical class for drama is taking an entirely different approach. They are completing the Seussical set design for the spring performance. The design is one of bright colors to resemble Dr. Seuss' books. This is yet another crucial as well as exciting performance that all members of drama are thoroughly anticipating.

Combined, the drama class, drama club, and the technical class are ready for the end of the year that is rapidly approaching. Remember to support the GCHS Drama Club at the state-wide competition, and mark your calendars for the multiple must-see performances that are approaching.

Programming is Art, Too!

By: Maddie Morey

The Foundations of Programming class at Gulf Coast High School is a course that creates trained and skilled programmers. Students are taught the basics of computer sciences, how to create programs, and how to understand computer code. Gulf Coast's All Girls Foundations of Programming class is unique as there is a bond between the students that allows them to achieve more than the average team. When asked what has been accomplished this year in the course, Carolina Verde responded, "Being in this has made me accomplish a lot. All the girls that are taking this class gather together." Since the beginning of the year, the programming students have been working hard to design and code different computer programs. Their hard work has paid off as multiple students in the class have been presented with an Award for Aspirations. Additionally, the students have successfully constructed an application designed to help geometry students by informing users of the volumes of shapes that are now available in Apple's App Store. Currently, students are working on a program modeled after a game of Tic-Tac-Toe.

When thinking of creativity, one may imag-

ine an artist or a sculptor but computers permits teens to use their minds in the same way. The class allows students to use get creative and bring their ideas to life. Anything you can think of, from simplistic games to complex computer applications, can be coded to become a reality. Foundations of Programming student, Carolina Verde explained, "What I like about the class is that you can take a simple idea, such as creating a game or website, and you can make it unique in your own way by using your imagination." Moreover, the benefits of learning to program have increased exponentially in the past decades. There has been a rise in the use of computers to do everyday tasks that used to be done by hand. Computers are more accurate and efficient than systems done by humans alone. The reality is that the use of computers will only expand in the future. Training students to program allows them to work in fields related to research, engineering, computer sciences, and more. The students at Gulf Coast have already used their skills to construct so much this year. It is exciting to see what the girls of Gulf Coast's Foundations of Programming course will think of next!



Photo courtesy of Google Images

"GEECs" Changing the Future of Engineering!

By: Danielle Higdon

People around the world aspire to change the world, one step at a time. The GCHS GEEC club, a contributor to CCPS's STEM program, aspires to do just that with their knowledge and love for engineering.

GEEC stands for girls entering engineering club. In other words, girls who strive to change engineering and technology. According to the website, "Through the Girls Entering Engineering Club (GEEC), we hope to encourage girls everywhere to pursue what they are passionate in no matter what obstacles they face. We want to create world-class problem solvers who can take on the challenges of not only global issues but also everyday life. Collectively, we want to inspire, empower, and educate girls in all areas of STEM." STEM is a CCPS program that wants children to get involved in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. They hold events, create projects such as a solar powered car, and attend field trips. STEM-related field trips enhance a student's education by providing exposure to valuable opportunities outside of the school experience with the support of a teacher. STEM-focused field trips students attend include the Baltimore Aquarium, Maryland Science Center, Science on a Sphere, MESA Day • and Inspiring Scholars Day.

But, STEM is more than just memorizing the periodic table or mastering calculus. Crit-

ical thinking, collaboration and creativity are essential components. One goal of STEM education is to teach that science, technology, engineering and math are necessary in all aspects of our lives, from daily errands to the international economy. Another goal of STEM education is to emphasize the idea that these disciplines are only accessible to some. They aren't just for scientists, technology experts, engineers and mathematicians. Every field—from social work to Hollywood—uses STEM in some capacity.

According to the Collier County public school website, it states "STEM education has been around for years but it's received more attention recently from both the private and public sectors. The White House also recognizes that STEM education is crucial to keeping the U.S. competitive and innovative. In late 2009, President Barack Obama launched the Educate to Innovate program to "move American students from the middle to the top of the pack in science and math achievement over the next decade."

The fact there is such focus on STEM has led to parents, educators, business leaders and students searching for valuable resources. Consider this the starting point of an innovation for women and the business industry.

Spotlight On Clubs: New Astronomy Club at Gulf Coast!

By: Zya Crawford

Whether you are interested in perusing a career in astronomy, or just want to know more about the space around you (haha get it?), this club is right for you! The engineering teacher Mr. Depuy in room 6-172 is starting a new club next year. Mr. Depuy has taken the time to answer some questions about the club to give students more insight about what they will be a part of, and we'll even learn a little bit about Mr. Depuy along the way.

Q: What activities do the students do?

A: One of the things we will learn about is taking pictures of deep space. We'll start with the moon, and then move on to other nebulas and galaxies.

Q: What do you hope to achieve with this club?

A: For students to have a better understanding of things beyond our atmosphere and to know more about careers they can pursue with engineering and astronomy.

Q: What would you tell a student on offense about joining?

A: We use expensive equipment, like a \$2,000 telescope for example, and with that to help them decide what career they

want to pursue in engineering and astronomy.

Q: What inspired you to start this club?

A: I was fortunate enough to graduate from MIT last year, and I became more in-

terested in astrophotography, black holes, and gravitational waves. I wanted to share this with students because I thought they would find space phenomenons like these interesting as well.

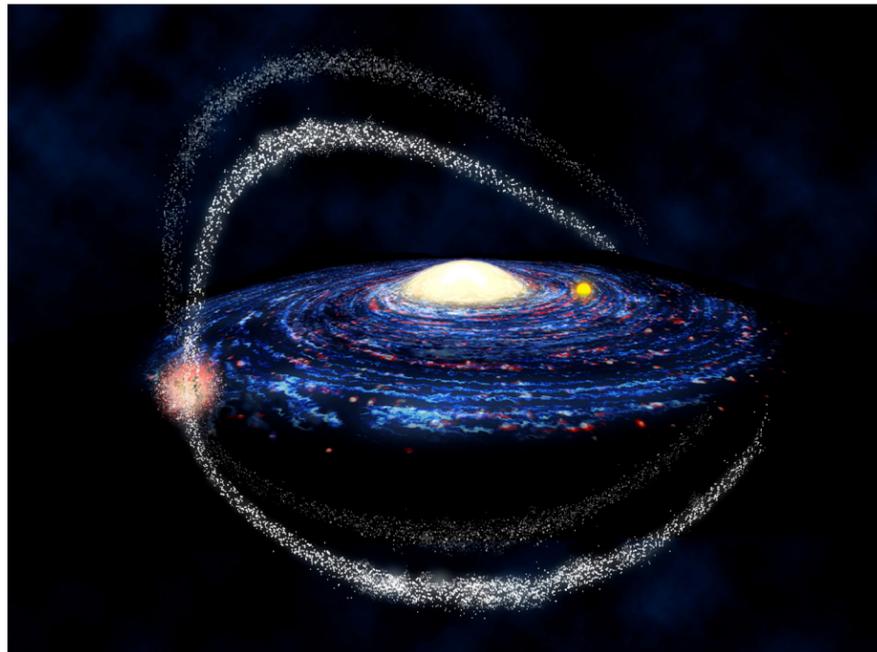


Photo Courtesy of Google Images

Q: How would this club help benefit those wanting to pursue a career in engineering or astronomy?

A: This club will help give students a foundation of knowledge of what astronomy and engineering has to offer.

Q: Have you been a part of a club similar to this in high school?

A: No, I got my real experience with astronomy at MIT. We learned how to look through telescopes at deep space. Looking at things bigger than us in pictures versus reality are two different things.

Q: Would you consider working with other schools?

A: Absolutely! There's an astronomy club ran by Collier County that we'll work with this as well. They have shown interest and they'll help get us going, then we'll go from there.

Q: Any leadership positions within the club?

A: There will be. I try to leave it to the club. I like it when they set their own rules.

There you have it Sharks! New and exciting opportunities await for you to be involved at Gulf Coast.

K is for Kids Continues to Help Build Strong Readers!

By: Katie O'Brien

It all started when two brothers saw that teachers and fellow classmates were in need. The brothers went to Laurel Oak Elementary. One was in kindergarten and the other was in 2nd grade. They are now both in college. When they were younger they told their mother, Karen Clawson, about the students and teacher's needs. She soon began volunteering. A year later Clawson had started a book drive for the library. With support from parents and staff the Clawson's initiated a Fun-raiser called, "Bring a Book, Bring a Friend." Clawson soon launched K is for Kids after many schools and non-profits asked her to organize something to help the children.

After her children became older and were leaving elementary she made Bring a Book, Bring a Friend a month long event. K is for Kids was also launched at North Naples Middle School. K is for Kids came to high schools once people saw the need for students to gain leadership skills and earn community service hours. Now there are many sponsors and high schools involved. The wonderful teacher sponsor for Gulf Coast is Ms. Stephens. She is an English teacher and the sophomore class sponsor.

The K is for Kids foundation has differ-

ent and exciting ways of raising money for their young readers. One way is by hosting a fashion show. This idea came from Eric Clawson and Alexis Martin, both from Gulf Coast. The first show was held in December of 2011. Barron Collier and Collier County Public Schools have a partnership, so the fashion show is now held at Barron Collier. The most recent show was early

this month.

This organization has grown so big, that it has attracted people such as Mayor Bill Barnett. Student leaders from different high schools came together to meet with the mayor. Jose Chang, a sophomore at Gulf Coast was one of those lucky leaders to meet with the mayor.

Not only does the organization raise money and books, but there are other opportunities that are geared to help teens. One of these was called Ladder for Leaders. It was founded in 2013 at Gulf Coast. Their motto is "Climb higher. Help others." This helps teens in business administration and communication. This allows students to build upon their resumes and portfolios. Student leaders who are graduating help future student leaders.

One small act of helping a few teachers and students has turned into an organization that has helped many children of all different backgrounds. Younger students are becoming better readers and older students are bettering their future by gaining skills that are not always taught in school.



Photo Courtesy of Google Images



Photo courtesy of GCHS

Spotlight on Model UN Student: Jenia Browne

By: Olivia Paccione

Model United Nations, more commonly referred to as MUN, is a nation-wide club that involves competing against schools around the United States. Gulf Coast's MUN team has brought home numerous titles and gavels, a certain kind of prize that is awarded in competitions, over the years. Typically, you would see an upperclassman carrying home these trophies, but this year, freshmen Jenia Browne grabbed the reins of this club and blew her opponents away. Her peers are in awe at her success, so Jenia has answered a series of questions pertaining to MUN and her accomplishments within the club.

Question: Have you ever participated in something like Model UN before this year?

Answer: I did scholar bowl in seventh and eighth grade- that's the closest I got to something like MUN.

Question: What aspects of Model United Nations inspired you to join?

Answer: My sister had mentioned the club before. I've always had an interest in politics. It is also an enjoyable way to go around the United States with friends while doing something that we gain from as people.

Question: What do you feel that you have gained so far?

Answer: I've gained a larger grasp on how the world works. When creating solutions to the problems presented, you must think about human rights, funding, and international relations. Even if your country wants something, you must compromise.

Question: How are the competitions ran? What processes do you go through?

Answer: Essentially, when your school is preparing for a competition, each student is assigned either a country and position which is general assembly room, or a character and position known as crisis room. After, each student writes a research paper called a position paper about their potential solutions and their countries position on the topic. Once you enter the committee room, you usually vote on which topic to discuss first, and then begin a debate. The room is led by the chair, usually a college student, and co-chairs referred to as the Dias. These are usually the people who judge you. A debate can happen formally, in which only one person can speak at once, or informally, in which delegates roam and discuss solutions. The goal is to form a draft resolution, a paper that describes what actions your committee will recommend to solve the issue at hand. Finally, the draft resolution becomes a working paper.

Question: What obstacles have you encountered while preparing for a competition?

Answer: A lot of time it's hard to do such an involved club throughout the school year, and sometimes it feels like a hassle. It's also nerve racking to be going against a room of kids who you don't know!

Question: Does everybody attend the competitions?

Answer: Not always! We have a travel team within the team that goes to farther away are more competitive competitions.

Question: Which teams are you apart of?

Answer: I am apart of both the travel and large team

Question: You've obviously had great amounts of success in this club- what do you owe that to?

Answer: I've had a lot of juniors and seniors, along with the coaches, really help me figure out how the club work. Overall, having supportive people around me helped me succeed.

Becoming so successful in an activity that is predominantly run by upperclassmen has proved that no matter how big or small, anybody is capable of great things here at Gulf Coast High School. Congratulations to Jenia for her outstanding accomplishments within Model UN.

Animals Need Our Help Too!

By: Katie O'Brien

The animal alliance club aims to help animals in need. This club is perfect for the animal lovers who are also looking for volunteer hours. During meetings, the club discusses any new upcoming events. Earlier in the year the students in the club volunteered at the Humane Society and they hosted an adoption event there. Volunteering with animals is a rewarding experience because just knowing that you helped an animal find a forever home is truly heartwarming. Not only did you help an animal find a home, but a family find a lifelong companion.

In joining the animal alliance, you not only get to meet furry friends, but new human ones too. Volunteering with others you may not be familiar with, allows you to make new forever friends. Volunteering with animals may even lead you to a professional career in that

direction. Working with animals also allows people to gain more experience with them if planning to adopt in the future. Volunteering in general makes people feel happier that they have done something nice, and have given back to their community.

In addition, the cute animals just make the experience all the more enjoyable. Taking care of animals requires a huge amount of responsibility. Responsibility, is just one of the many skills one learns when joining the animal alliance club. Another skill is being able to work well with humans and animals. Volunteering experiences can also be put on resumes. Therefore, if employers see that you have worked with animals, it shows how well you can work with others, how responsible you are, and how caring you are. Being a part of the animal alliance club can also lead to other volunteering opportunities.

Once someone is out of high

school and decides to go on to work with animals, they will have a lot to learn as opposed to someone who has already done some volunteering. By being in the animal alliance, members are making others aware of ways to help our furry friends.

There are tons of animals in need of help. According to the ASPCA, about 7.6 million companion animals enter shelters each year. By volunteering, students are helping these millions of animals find homes, and escape a shelter life.

The animal alliance club continues to help animals in various ways. This is not just a club to earn volunteer hours, but an opportunity to help change a life.



Photo Courtesy of Google Images

Calling All Future Medical Professionals!

By: Katie O'Brien

Gulf Coast High School's Medical Academy is learning an abundance of useful information about the field of medicine that will direct them to an appropriate career choice for each individual student. The class is especially useful for students who are unsure if becoming a health care worker is right for them, or for those who undoubtedly know they want to explore the field. The students adamantly believe Medical Academy provides that strong foundation needed to pursue a higher education.

Currently, the students are studying the personal and professional qualities of a health care worker. This section includes the fundamentals of being in the field. They are specifically learning how to respect patients and adequately follow order. With this comes the terms such as "self-motivation, empathy, and dependability." This applies not only to working in the medical field, but also to navigating life and becoming a helpful, generous individual.

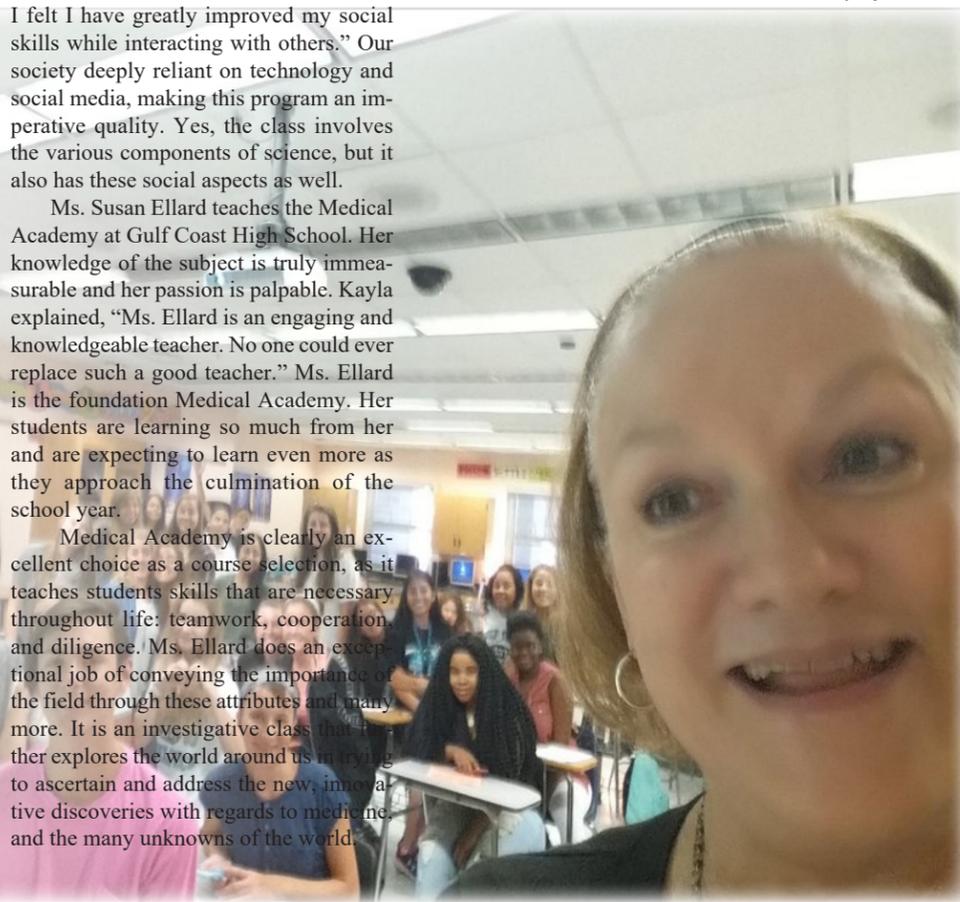
Medical Academy is undoubtedly useful in teaching social skills in today's society. Student Kayla Mathai commented, "Medical Academy has been a fantastic way to meet students with the same interests as I have. Additionally,

I felt I have greatly improved my social skills while interacting with others." Our society deeply reliant on technology and social media, making this program an imperative quality. Yes, the class involves the various components of science, but it also has these social aspects as well.

Ms. Susan Ellard teaches the Medical Academy at Gulf Coast High School. Her knowledge of the subject is truly immeasurable and her passion is palpable. Kayla explained, "Ms. Ellard is an engaging and knowledgeable teacher. No one could ever replace such a good teacher." Ms. Ellard is the foundation Medical Academy. Her students are learning so much from her and are expecting to learn even more as they approach the culmination of the school year.

Medical Academy is clearly an excellent choice as a course selection, as it teaches students skills that are necessary throughout life: teamwork, cooperation, and diligence. Ms. Ellard does an exceptional job of conveying the importance of the field through these attributes and many more. It is an investigative class that further explores the world around us in order to ascertain and address the new, innovative discoveries with regards to medicine, and the many unknowns of the world.

Photo courtesy of GCHS



SPORTS

Lady Shark Basketball Team Advances In The Playoffs

by: Maddie Morey

The Gulf Coast Sharks girls' basketball team has claimed victory in the regional quarterfinals of the playoffs against Sarasota High School with a score of 71-59. The Sharks had home court advantage in the matchup against the Sailors who hold a state ranking of twenty-first. In the first quarter, game play was back-and-forth as both teams battled it out for a lead. Gulf Coast showed resilience and held off the Sailors from gaining possession of the ball to keep scoring. Even as the first quarter came to a close, the Sharks continued to put in all their effort and moved with swiftness up and down the court. Gulf Coast left quarter one with a two-point lead over the Sarasota Sailors. When both teams returned to the court, the pace of the game continued to be rapid. The teams had different playing styles but seemed close to evenly matched in the first quarter. The Sharks remained collected and carried out their plays to increase their lead on the Sailors. The first half ended with a score of 27-23. At halftime, the Sharks refueled and appeared on the court again with energy

and confidence. Gulf Coast needed to get in an offensive mentality and put more points on the board in the third quarter to insure a win and focus on defense leading into the last quarter. The Sharks began to click, after a few minutes of balanced gameplay; Gulf Coast dashed down the court and outplayed the sailors to score continually throughout the quarter. Communication was a key factor for the Sharks strategy to increase their lead. The Sharks successfully ended the third quarter with a score of 51-37. In the fourth quarter, the Sarasota Sailors fought to tie up the game before the final buzzer. The game became even once again as the Sharks and Sailors battled to the end for the win. Gulf Coast remained steady and did not allow the Sailors to close in on the lead they had created for themselves. In the end, the Sarasota Sailors were not able to overcome the tactical Shark defense. The Sharks ended the matchup with a twelve-point lead over Sarasota. Next week, the Sharks will face the winner of another regional quarterfinal between North Port and Lakewood Ranch High. Good luck to the Sharks!



Photo courtesy of GCHS

SWFL Athletes Sign On to the Next Chapter of Their Lives

by: Danielle Higdon

Everyone has dreams, whether they're achieved or not. Athletes in both football and soccer and given four years of their high school careers of nonstop hard work and dedication in not only athletics but in academics as well. Six of our athletes signed off saying they committed to play for the college they committed to for their college career, three of the athletes to Division I programs. Football players Michael Mambuca, Carson Genal, Fermon Reid, Jadavian Leccima, and Ryan Carroll and soccer player Zoe Spitzer were celebrated during the signing day in the media center during lunch on February 1st, 2017. Michael Mambuca signed to be committed to College of the Holy Cross. "It shows how far we've come," Mambuca said. "When I was a freshman, terrible team. To turn it around – my class, the class before us and the class after us to continue the legacy – it's just a great thing to see." During high school, he played football as an offensive lineman and according to Naples Daily News, "At 6-5, 260, Mambuca was the rock of the Sharks line that led to a balanced offensive attack". At Gulf Coast's signing ceremony were two more football players. Defensive lineman Jadavian Leccima signed

with Northwestern Oklahoma State, a Division II program. Receiver Ryan Carroll committed to Ave Maria, an NAIA team in eastern Collier County. After starting and succeeding as a junior, Reid excelled lots as a senior. His 21 tackles for loss were the most among Class 7A defensive linemen, Coach Pete Fominaya said. Reid made the Daily News All-Area team, the All-Collier County Athletic Conference team, and the Florida Association of Athletic Coaches All-District team. Athlete Ryan Carroll (5-10, 160) caught 13 passes for 165 yards as a senior. Also a Gulf Coast lacrosse player, Ryan played a limited role with the Sharks as a junior, catching three passes. In eastern Collier County, Ave Maria competes in the NAIA. Last but not least soccer player Zoey Spitzer committed to FGCU. Spitzer verbally committed to FGCU as a sophomore. She gets to stay close to home and play for a soon to be Division I program. FGCU has won three straight Atlantic Sun Conference championships, earning a place in the NCAA tournament each time. The Eagles won a first-round NCAA game in 2015. "I love the atmosphere," Spitzer said of FGCU. "I love the coach and the teammates. I love the size of the school, the location. I have to work hard and be ready for (Division I soccer)."



Sharks Encounter Rocky Waves Versus St. Thomas!

by: Olivia Paccione

The tension could be felt in the crowd as the Gulf Coast girl's lacrosse team went face to face with the St. Thomas Aquinas team. St. Thomas Aquinas is well known for their adept athletics teams. The Sharks played a strong game as defense worked hard and the midfield ran up and down the field like a seesaw to play offense and defense all at once. All in all, it was a game to be proud of for the Lady Sharks. Senior Kenzie Carroll finished the game by scoring all four of the Shark's goals. Carroll worked at rapid paces to bring the ball into the back of the net as often as she could. Often, Carroll and fellow team mates, Julia Kolderman and Sarah Merriwether, would work together to move the ball past St. Thomas' defense. Within the first few moments of the game, Carroll seized the ball from St. Thomas, made a run to the thirty mark,



and passed to Kolderman. Kolderman then took a shot, but St. Thomas' goalie was too quick. During the second half, a similar situation was set up between Carroll and Merriwether when they worked together to gain possession of the ball and Carroll took an attempt at a shot, yet again the Aquinas' goalie was too alert to

allow the ball toward the net. Once more, in the last moments of the game, an impressive pass was made by Kolterman to Carroll, but as Carroll was making a run down the field, the ball was checked out of her stick. The Shark defense worked every second of the game to push St. Thomas attackers off the side of the field.

Photo courtesy of GCHS

Elizabeth Govern used advanced footwork to draw the opposing offender away from goalie Ellie Desorcy. Working around the goal, Desorcy contributed to the game by making several astounding saves on St. Thomas' attempts at making a goal. Despite the Sharks best efforts on the field, St Thomas took the win out from under Gulf Coast. Within the first fifteen minutes of the game, the score was 4-0 with St. Thomas on top. Still going strong, St. Thomas wrapped up the first half of the game leading 9-3. By the time the players left their field for their second water break, the score rose to 14-4. The game ended with a score of 16-4 with St. Thomas scoring two more goals in the back of the net. No matter what score was projected on the board, the Lady Sharks continuously proved their talents on the Friday evening.

A Tribute to Vera Rubin: Discoverer of Dark Matter

BY: ISABELLA NAPOLES

Vera Rubin: a name not recognized by many high school students, but one that is very well known at an international scale in the world of astronomy. Famed for her role as a pioneering astrophysicist, Rubin passed away on Sunday, December 25, 2016 at the age of eighty-eight. Her most notable contribution to science was her proof that dark matter, the invisible substance that makes up ninety percent of the universe does indeed exist.

As a child, Rubin was fascinated by the night sky, so much so that she helped her father build their own telescope. This was when her passion for the heavens began. Later, she attended an elite private school called Vassar College on a full scholarship, and she was the only woman to graduate with a major in astronomy in 1948. At that time, Princeton University did not accept women astronomers, so Rubin simply turned the other cheek and went to Cornell University. She finally received her Ph.D. in astronomy at Georgetown University. Neta Bahcall, leading astrophysicist at Princeton's undergraduate astronomy program, recalls Rubin's perseverance, "Vera never gave up on anything."

After her studies, Rubin had been working alongside Kent Ford, an astrophysicist, when they discovered



something significant in the skies: gas and stars travel at the same speed no matter their distances from the galactic center. It was in the 1970's when Rubin and a group of other astronomers discovered the invisible mass responsible for the movement of stars: dark matter.

In 1981, Rubin was elected to the National Academy of Sciences, and in 1993, she received the National Medal of Science, which was the country's highest medal of honor for science at the time. In 1996, Rubin became the first woman since 1928 to receive the Royal Astronomical Society's Gold Medal. Although she never won a Nobel Prize for her scientific contributions, many in the field of astrophysics believed she

should have. The Nobel Prize was defined as recognizing "the most important discovery" in the category of physics. While Rubin knew her discovery of dark matter literally turned the world around, she did not mind that she did not receive the Nobel Prize. She simply focused on her passion and the effect her work had on society.

Aside from the world of astronomy, Rubin was a major fighter for sexual equality. She advocated for women to be able to be granted membership in the Cosmos Club, Princeton's private social salon. In the 1960's, she was the first woman to observe inside Caltech's Palomar Observatory. In a previous recollection of the story, Rubin recalled the

men being extremely offended by her presence, and they told her there was no women's restroom. She reacted by cutting a skirt out of a piece of paper and sticking it to the figure on the restroom door and cunningly remarking, "Look, now you have a lady's room." In 2002, Rubin proclaimed,

"I live and work with three basic assumptions: first, there is no problem in science that can be solved by a man that cannot be solved by a woman. Secondly, worldwide, half of all brains are in women. Finally, we all need permission to do science, but, for reasons that are deeply ingrained in history, this permission is more often given to men than women."

Not many students at Gulf Coast are familiar with her name, but Vera Rubin contributed more to the world of science in her lifetime than many can even begin to dream about. By proving the existence of dark matter, she answered endless questions that had remained unanswered until her discovery. She initiated a wave of scientific discovery and progression. At the same time, she advocated for the equal treatment of the sexes, and she even made some of the first steps regarding women's rights. Vera Rubin's passing will continue to be mourned by the world, but her work will always live on.

Spotlight On Culture: Chinese New Year 2017

By: Zya Crawford

February 11 marked the end of China's longest holiday, the Chinese New Year. Have you ever wondered how it all got started, and what really goes down at these celebrations? Well you're in luck, because you are about to dive into China's most influential holiday.

What is it?

Chinese New Year is the most important social and economic holiday in Chinese culture lasting 15 days. It is also the longest. Chinese New Year begins on the first day of the lunar calendar (January 28), and it is considered the beginning of spring so it is called the Lunar New Year and The Spring Festival (Mack). To enable residents to be with their families and friends, most employers in China give their workers at least seven days of vacation. Schools and universities are closed for an entire month (dogonews.com). Much like the Western New Year (January 1st), the biggest celebration is on the eve of the holiday and at the turn of the new year, firework displays are put on throughout the city (history.com).

Why?

According to ancient Chinese myths, the holiday begun because of the wild beast Nien (which also is the word for "year") that appeared at the end of each year, attacking and killing villagers. Loud noises and bright lights were used to scare the beast away, and the Chinese New Year celebrations were born (history.com). Today, people celebrate a year of

hard work and have a good rest, relax, travel with family, and to wish for a lucky and prosperous coming year.

Fun Festivities

On the days prior to the holiday, families will go shopping for new clothes and clean their homes, to symbolize a fresh start. Children receive red envelopes with "lucky money" and on New Year's Eve, are allowed to stay awake until late. Every light in the house is supposed to be kept on the whole night. At midnight, the whole sky will be lit up by fireworks and firecrackers. The old year is bidden farewell, the new year called xīn nián (Tradition Chinese: 新年, Pinyin: xīn nián, literally: new year) is welcomed (nationsonline.org). Residents also participate in parades, the highlight of which is the dragon dance. The traditional dance that involves using strategically placed poles to manipulate a colorful dragon made of silk and paper. Since the animal is considered lucky, communities try to maximize their good fortune by building the longest possible dragons (dogonews.com).

The Grand Finale

The celebrations end on the day of the full moon (February 11 for this year) with a Lantern Festival. As the name indicates, it involves hanging red lanterns in homes and temples. The 15th day of the New Year is known as The Festival of Lanterns and marks the end of the Chinese New Year celebrations (dogonews.com).

All types of lanterns are lit throughout the streets and often poems and riddles are often written for entertainment. There are also paper lanterns on wheels created in the form of either a rabbit (for luck) or the animal of the year (The Rooster for 2017) (history.com).

Of course, no festival is complete without a feast. While the menu varies, most meals will incorporate traditional dishes like long uncut noodles, which signify longevity, and whole chickens that symbolize family togetherness. Wealth and prosperity are represented by dumplings that look like ingots (ancient Chinese currency) and spring rolls, which resemble gold bars. Additionally, for big feasts, families will offer eight or nine food items because in the Chinese culture, eight represents success, while nine, symbolizes infinity. They will also avoid serving four dishes, because the word "four" sounds similar to the word death in Cantonese and is, therefore, considered unlucky (dogonews.com).

According to astrologyclub.org, the Rooster's fiery temperament will help add enthusiasm and energy to the general public and increase hopes for better prospects. While primarily known as the "Chinese" New Year, the joyous holiday has influenced it's neighboring Asian countries like Thailand and Singapore and even in cities all the way in the United States.

Xin Nian Kuai Le! (Happy New Year!)

