

Why are we asking you to invest in athletics at Pioneer Springs?

Next Friday, February 23 we will host our first annual Under the Snow Moon Art Social and Auction to raise money to improve our athletic field. We are asking you to give back to our community and invest in athletics by supporting this fundraiser because athletics are an important part of Pioneer Springs' mission. Participation in athletics—be it in PE class, or in an after school team—fosters the growth of the whole student, and helps students to learn how to function as a member of a community of learning.



- **“Exercise not only changes your body, it changes your mind, your attitude and your mood.”** (author unknown) Participating in PE and athletics not only helps students strengthen their bodies and move with more agility and ease, it also gives them the opportunity to experience the mindfulness benefits that come with movement. Additionally, core strength supports academics by giving students the stamina they need to focus and learn and is a prerequisite for fine motor skills. PE and athletics, then, are essential to the development of the whole child because of the physical, social-emotional, and academic benefits that come from regular physical activity.



- **“I have failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed.” (Michael Jordan)** People learn and grow through failure, which means that safe failure is an integral part of learning. For many students, sports provide a safe opportunity to fail. Some students feel that they are better at sports than academics, and are, therefore, more likely to push their boundaries and take risks in PE. This risk-taking transfers to academics, allowing students to take academic risks that they might otherwise shy away from. For other students, trying new physical things can feel risky. When our PE teachers, Ms. Tosha and Mr. Josh, work with those students on pushing their boundaries, they teach them not only how to push the limits of what their bodies can do but also give them valuable strategies that allow them to push their boundaries in other ways as well.

IMPORTANT DATES & ITEMS TO NOTE

- 19 Feb: President’s Day - **NO SCHOOL** for staff & students
- 20 Feb: Staff workday - **NO SCHOOL** for students
- 23 Feb: K-5 End of Trimester Celebration
- 23 Feb: Under the Snow Moon, 7pm-9pm
- 26 Feb: Board meeting, 6pm
- 26-28 Feb: 8th grade Barrier Islands field trip
- 29 Feb: Holistic Tea: Hands-On Math & WINGS (PTO) Meeting, 5pm-6:15pm
- Register here for Summer Camps!

Join us for our first evening Holistic Tea on Thursday, February 29. Learn how you can support your child’s growth as a mathematician through fun, engaging activities. Play with other Pioneer Springs families as we explore games, activities, and more! Tea will be provided, so bring your own mug and a pastry to share.
5:00-5:45, Holistic Tea; WINGS (our homegrown PTO meeting) from 5:45-6:15.

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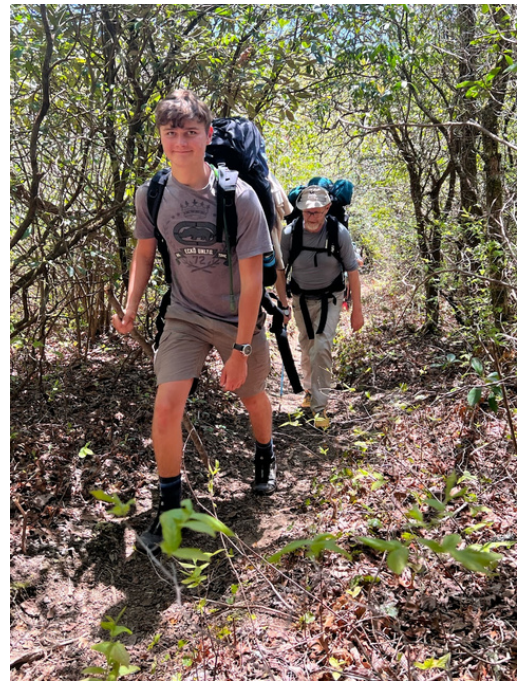
Photograph by Fionn Holt, 9th grade Photography student

- **“The best thing about sports is the sense of community and shared emotion it can create.” (Bob Costas)** Athletics require teamwork. Sports provide opportunities for shared victories and the reflection that comes with shared defeats. Additionally, the broader community supports the sports team by cheering them on and celebrating their accomplishments. Academic learning, likewise, is often most effective when students work collaboratively. Additionally, as a community school, teaching students how to work together, how to celebrate

together, and how to learn from defeat together is central to our goal of fostering an understanding of how to be a part of a community—a team—in each of our students. The adults in our community serve as the coaches and cheering section for academic learning, as well. PE and athletics provide a joyful and dynamic setting for students to learn how to be in community together.

In short, PE and athletics are essential for helping us to achieve our mission. Currently, PE classes and athletic practices take place on the mulch field and blacktop in front of the Hive. The mulch field limits how students can move and the sports they can play. Our athletic field plans include an artificial grass field—which is more sustainable than natural grass—and surfaces that allow for sports including pickleball, cornhole and basketball. To make our athletic field improvements a reality, we need your help through participation in our *Under the Snow Moon* fundraiser:

- Enter our raffles. Prizes include a \$500 Amazon gift card.
- Bid on class collaborative art projects.
- Join us for the Under the Snow Moon Social and Art Auction. (tickets on sale through Sunday, February 18)
- Spread the word—tell your friends and family about the raffle, and encourage them to participate!



Our annual Toss n’ Sauce FUNdraiser is right around the corner! This year, we are opening this beloved event up to all ages. We are excited that students will have the opportunity to compete in shenanigans-infused cornhole. Because it is now an all-ages event, alcohol will no longer be served at Toss n’ Sauce. Want to help plan the fun? Contact Heidi (heidim@pioneersprings.org) to join the planning committee. If you are looking to socialize with other families at an adult-only event, come to Under the Snow Moon.

Staff spotlight



Josh Perdue

Written by Christian Mayer, a 12th-grade Journalism student

Photograph by [Emmett Brzozowski](#)

Mr. Josh is a beacon of energy and enthusiasm at Pioneer Springs, where he serves as a health and physical education teacher. His passion for healthy living and physical activity is contagious, and students like Sophie Slimick, an 11th-grade student at Pioneer Springs, are drawn to his engaging teaching style. She says, "His energy is very engaging, and we can tell he truly cares about what he is teaching." Mr. Josh is dedicated to teaching the fundamentals of health and fitness and hopes to expand the school's elective offerings to incorporate more opportunities for students to explore these areas.

Beyond his health and physical education role, Mr. Josh also teaches photography, showcasing his diverse interests and talents. His decision to join Pioneer Springs was driven by his love for nature and the outdoors, aligning perfectly with the school's spirit.

In his free time, Mr. Josh enjoys disc golf and basketball, demonstrating his commitment to an active lifestyle. He is a devoted supporter of the Pioneer Springs Basketball team, known as the Hellbenders, and proudly considers them his favorite team.

Overall, Mr. Josh's presence at Pioneer Springs is not just about teaching; it's about inspiring students to lead healthy, active lives and encouraging them to explore new interests and activities. His dedication to his students' well-being and passion for his subjects make him a valuable asset to the school community.

Senior Spotlight



Christian Mayer

Interviewed by: Nick Marsh, 12th-grade Journalism student
Written by: Sophie Slimick, 11th-grade Journalism student

“When bad things happen, good things are coming your way.” –Christian Mayer

This is Christian Mayer’s first year attending Pioneer Springs Community School, and looks back fondly at a time last semester when he performed a break dance with his dance class for the PSCS World Heritage Day. After graduating high school, Christian hopes to work for a while before pursuing a psychology major. He has a passion for helping others that he wants to incorporate into his career. He hopes to have a job helping children in the American Ninja Warrior program, a profession that benefits him but also incorporates his devotion to the assistance of others. Besides break dancing, Christian also enjoys chess and track. If he had any advice to give underclassmen, it would be: “Consistency is key because when you lose motivation, consistency will bring it back.”

Carson Kaylor

Interviewed by: Nick Marsh, 12th-grade Journalism student
Written by: Sophie Slimick, 11th-grade Journalism student

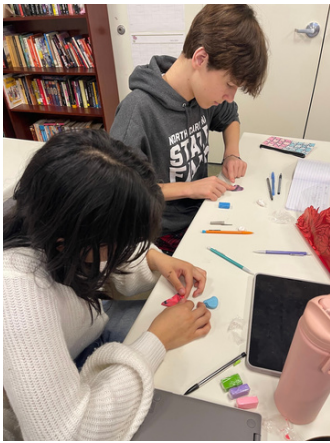
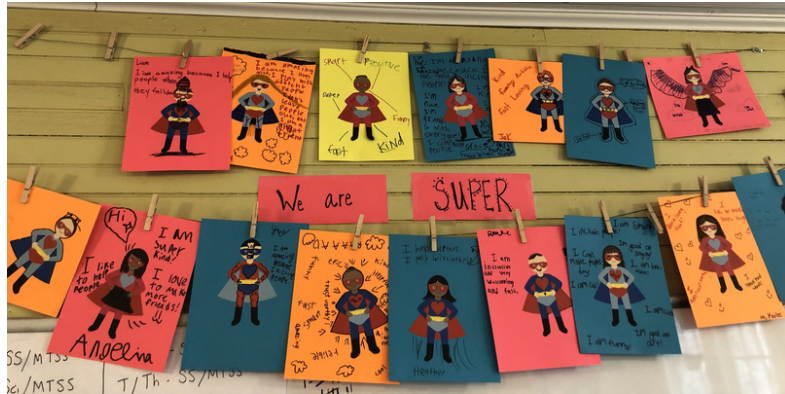
“You cannot fear what you cannot comprehend.” –Carson Kaylor

Carson has been a student of Pioneer Springs since 8th grade. Although he has a busy schedule working for the Charlotte Knights during the spring and summer, he balances this with his role as the secretary in Student Government and competing in archery competitions. He will attend Tennessee Tech in August of 2024 and hopes to work up north after graduating with a degree in turf management. He advises others, “Don’t overload your schedule; take time out of school to just relax or hang out with friends.” Carson’s positive memory of Pioneer Springs was a time in 10th grade when he participated in the Reach for The Trees run because it was a break from schoolwork and a great time spent with friends for a good cause.



Show Your Heart Day

On Wednesday students across campus celebrated Show Your Heart Day by taking time to show appreciation to their classmates by sharing notes and affirmations. They also showed their love to our campus community through campus service projects ranging from clean-up to making bird feeders.



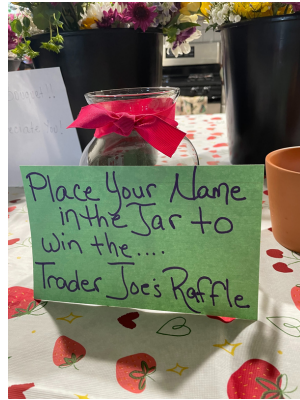
Show Your Heart Day



A Student's Eye View, a photographic essay by Fionn Holt, 9th grade photography student



Thank you WINGS for Spreading the Love

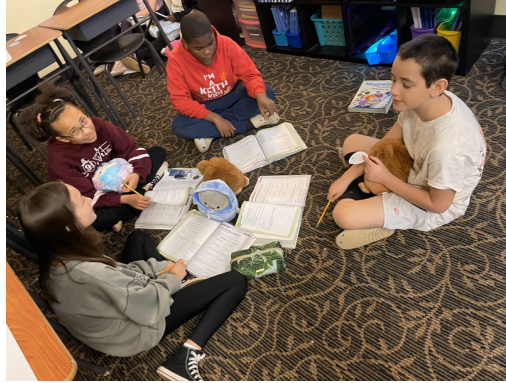
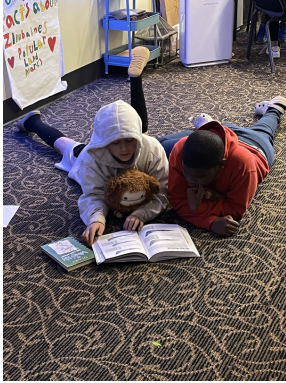


On Tuesday WINGS together with the fourth and fifth grade families hosted "Spread the Love", a staff appreciation event that included a yogurt bar and flower bouquets for each staff member.

The staff enjoyed their yogurt, loved their bouquets, and felt very appreciated.

A huge thank you to WINGS, the fourth and fifth grade families, and Holly Martin, the staff appreciation coordinator, for showing our staff your love!

Classroom Happenings



Fifth grade celebrated the great growth they've had in reading stamina with their squishmallow reading buddies! Thank you Silver family for arranging the donation.



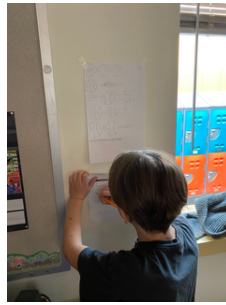
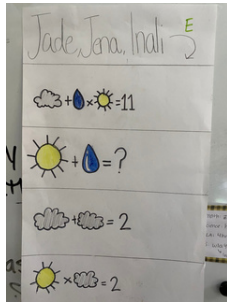
Shannon O'Connor's Honors Chemistry students performed a polymer lab this week. Polymers are large molecules made by bonding (chemically linking) a series of small molecules together like building blocks. For example, Styrofoam is one of the 6 main types of plastic used all around us. It is made from the hydrocarbon styrene and air is blown into it making a foam. An example of a natural polymer would be starch, often called a complex carbohydrate.

In the lab for synthetic polymers, students investigated the physical properties of the 6 types of plastics (#1 - 6 found inside the recycling symbol printed on the bottom of containers). They determined the densities of these plastics by investigating whether the plastic would float or sink in 3 different solutions with different densities



Ms. G's fourth grade students have been studying paleontology in ELA, and they did a dig of their very own through hands-on learning.

Classroom Happenings

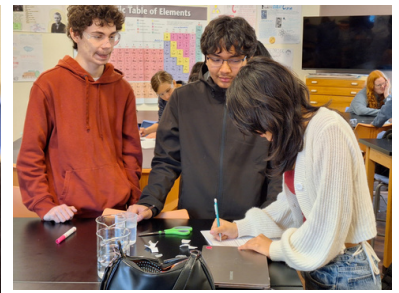
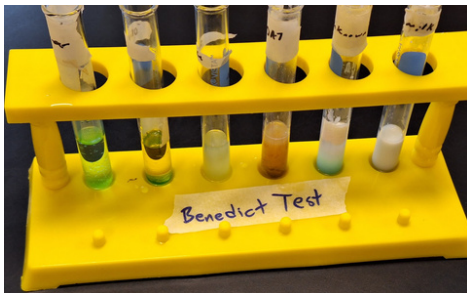


Ms. Stacey's 7th grade students practiced their algebra skills by solving picture equations.



Mr. Randolph and Ms. Susan installed a middle school collaborative art project at the high school complex.

Ms. Jill's class working on their collaborative art project for Under the Snow Moon.



Shannon O'Connor's high school Honors Chemistry students looked at 6 liquidy foods to determine the presence or absence of 3 of the 4 classes of biological polymers. The test for lipids used a paper towel to see if the samples left an oil stain. The test for complex carbohydrates used a solution called Lugol's solution. If the sample has starches in it, the solution will turn black. The test for simple sugars requires using Benedict's solution and heating the sample in a hot water bath for 5 minutes. Orange and red colors indicate that a lot of simple sugars, like glucose and fructose, are present. The test for proteins uses a Biuret reagent which starts off a rich blue and turns purple when proteins are present. We did not conduct a test for nucleic acids; the 4th group of biological polymers.