Middle School Starts Year Off With New P.A.W.S. Program

Pogue Regan
Grade 6

The P.A.W.S Program is an initiative for Freedom Area Middle School to, hopefully, make the students behave better. P.A.W.S stands for positive attitude, accountable behavior, wise and respectful choices, and successful students. The P.A.W.S program intended purpose is to make the students behave more appropriately. If a student behaves appropriately, he or she will get a P.A.W.S card. This program was planned for a whole year, and is expected to go on for many years to come.

To be eligible to win, you must have one or more small P.A.W.S cards and put the cards into the three clear boxes outside of Mr. Smith’s office. Cards will be pulled every Friday and the winners’ names will be called during the morning announcements. Some of the prizes for the small cards include an iTunes gift-card, your choice of school supplies, and lunch passes that allow you to go to the front of the line during lunch.

Another part of the program that is noticeable would be the blue tape, dividing the halls in two. The rule is to stay to the right. This is to make the hallway traffic flow smoothly. When asked if the blue tape was working, Mrs. Boyd, a fifth grade teacher, told us that she thinks that the tape is working excellently. Mrs. Boyd said that the middle school will most likely keep the blue tape for many years to come. She told us that as of now the blue tape is an experiment mainly to see if it will improve hallway behavior. Mrs. Boyd says she hopes that they don’t have to move it to the high school because she wants the high schoolers to have some more independence.

Brenna McIlvain, a 6th grader, told me she thinks the blue lines are inconvenient because of students trying to get to class on time. Some students get impatient and slam others lockers. Brenna still thinks that P.A.W.S is making students more positive, but doesn’t think it’s going to make students behave better.

Isabell Bonzo, a 5th grader, thinks otherwise. She thinks that the blue lines are helping with the traffic. She also thinks it’s making some students behave better and become more positive. Finally she told me that it may change less obedient students’ behavior towards the end of the year.

Mr. Smith stated that the Principal’s 100 has prizes that are mostly related to food. They include pizza parties, ice cream, movies and much more. Mr. Smith’s goal is to hand out at least 200 cards all year. He had said that it was important to best fit the needs of students as well as to promote the program into the community. If a student gets a Principal 100, at the end of the year, they have a chance to win Beats, a speaker, a flat-screen TV, an iPad mini and an Instax camera on Olympic Day.
Rachel’s Challenge Comes Back for a Second Round

Erin Harp  
Grade 8

Have you ever stood up for someone? Have you ever had someone stand up for you? Well, here at Freedom Middle School, that’s what we’re trying to achieve; having students who are brave enough to stand up for one another without fear of being picked on for doing so. Rachel Joy Scott was a high school student who was killed in the Columbine high school shooting in 1999, the largest high school shooting in American history.

On Monday September 11, we held an assembly describing Rachel Joy Scott’s life; her goals, dreams, ethics, and most importantly, her compassion for others and her ideas for others to have the same compassion as well. All of the students have been challenged to take on the five challenges; dream Big and believe in yourself, be kind to others, practice positive gossip, show appreciation to those you love, and be the answer. The overall goal is the students will all treat each other with kindness and compassion all the time. The staff is going to help the students achieve this by doing different activities, which the FOR club members are in the process of planning. We will also have posters and banners to promote the challenge.

As the school year goes on, Mrs. Suleski and Mr. Perkins are hoping to have far fewer issues with students having to come to their offices because of bullying issues or problems with other students. According to Mrs. Suleski, she will know when she has achieved her goal when, “students don’t see coming to school as something to dread, but as something where they can spend time in a place where they feel like they belong.” So if you see someone sitting alone at lunch, or someone being picked on by other students, go sit with them, go help them, and you might just start a chain reaction.

Mrs. Sacco Helps Sixth Grade Remember September 11

Alexa Davis  
Grade 6

Mrs. Sacco, a kindergarten teacher at Freedom Elementary, had a relative in the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack in New York City. She shared her experiences of that day with the sixth grade class on Sept. 11 of this year, the 16th anniversary of the attacks. Mrs. Sacco’s niece, Adriane Scibetta, was an accountant for the company Cantor Fitzgerald. The company worked in the North Tower, on about the 100th floor. Adriane had a vacation day planned, but decided to work on 9/11. She wanted to work that day so she could go trick-or-treating with her kids. Her kids, named Gabriella and Vincenzo, were four and one years old. On the morning of 9/11, Adriane called her husband, Charles Scibetta, and said she didn't feel right. Mr. Scibetta asked her what was wrong and she didn't know, she just said she doesn't feel right. 9/11 was a horrible and frightening day in America’s history. So many people lost their lives because of the terrible people that crashed planes into the Twin Towers. A lot of families lost loved ones in the terrorist attack, like Mrs. Sacco and her family. When Adriane died, she got a street named after her. Mrs. Sacco helped sixth grade remember this event, one that we all will never forget.

Photo Credit: Jacob DiCenzo  
The Rachel’s Challenge speaker explains Rachel Joy Scott’s legacy to the student body
Smithmyer’s Health Classes Start the Year Off by Giving Back

Carter Altvatter
Grade 7

During the first few weeks of school, the girl’s health class has learned about community service. What is community service? Community service is performed by someone or a group of people for the benefit of the public or its institutions. Community service isn’t always done voluntarily; it can be required by government for citizenship, courts may demand it, and schools may mandate it. For example, Freedom High School requires a graduation project and National Honor Society requires a community service project. The girl’s health class took the time out of their day to clean up around the campus to help make the schools look nice.

Kickball Intramurals Begin with Sixth Grade Tournament

Mason Lewis
Grade 6

The annual 6th grade kickball tournament has officially begun! The first match of the season was Smithmyer vs. Matsook. Matsook’s team took home the gold with the winning score of 11-9. It was a thrilling game indeed, ladies and gentlemen. The second game of the season was Kovalic vs. Gregg. The art teacher’s team came in first with a score of 5-2. The game was a home-run indeed, folks! The tournament so far has been a smash-hit! The two winning teams will go against each other real soon, there will be more to come in the future, for now, let’s congratulate the two teams so far. Don’t forget to give the other teams a pat on the back for their contributions to the tournament.

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NJHS: What is It?

Josh Pail
Grade 8

The National Junior Honor Society recognizes students who have good character and have a GPA of 3.9 or higher. It recognizes the top 5% of students. One of the purposes of NJHS is to teach students how to be a leader. There is strict criteria that must be met in order to be honored as an NJHS student. Students must apply to be inducted to the NJHS. The application process includes a written essay that describes how the student demonstrates being a good leader and citizen, explains their community service, and demonstrates good character. Students must also demonstrate good scholarship by having a cumulative GPA of 3.9 or higher. References from non-family members are also required as part of the application. All applications are evaluated by a panel of teachers who decide if the applicant meets all of the NJHS criteria.

Eligible students will be invited to apply at the end of the first 9 weeks and the induction ceremony is held in November. There is no cost to apply or be inducted to the NJHS. The NJHS does service activities like canned food drives, penny drives, or help where needed. They also visit nursing homes. Any student interested in the NJHS can speak to Mrs. McKim or Mr. Smith for more information.

Summer Reading Rewarded

Logan Bickerstaff
Grade 6

Thirty students completed the Summer Adventures in Reading Program over the summer. On Wednesday, Sept. 27, the FMS Parents planned a big ice cream party to reward the participants. This was held in the cafeteria during Bulldog Time. The participants had to read at least two books over the summer, and then write what they thought about the book to participate for the program.

Pep Club Raises Money for Victims of Hurricane Harvey

Sara Harp
Grade 5

On September 1 and 8, Miss Heiman, Pep Club adviser, held a fundraiser for Hurricane Harvey with the help of the Pep Club kids. In all, $685 was raised for hurricane relief. $450 of this was for people affected in Houston and it was sent to J.J. Watt's foundation. J.J. Watt is a football player in Texas who started a website called www.youcaring.com/JJwatt. $235 was raised for animals and it was sent to the SPCA (Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals). The students who donated could choose which organization they wanted their money to go to. The fundraiser ended on September 8. Miss Heiman said that she is proud of the money that the students donated and she wouldn’t do anything differently.

The Bulldog Barker Staff

Erin Harp
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Carter Altvatter
Art & Features Editor

Josh Pail
Photography Editor

Alexa Davis

Sara Harp

Mason Lewis

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