

# Paw Prints

Name: *Mr. Ian Murray, Mrs. Irene Gonzalez,  
Ms. Karen Birke, Mr. David Malca*

Date: **February-March Edition**

# Russian-Ukraine Conflict

By Enrique Leyva, Victoria De Leon Regil, and Kelley Wyatt

The Russian military began its full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022. It has been over a month since then. Russia and Ukraine have been under high tension for months, even years. According to Open Access Government, a quarterly digital publication, “Since 2014, the world has seen uprising tensions between the bordering nations.” In 2014, Russia sent a military operation to Crimea (a region inside Ukraine) to attempt to take full control of it. It is controversial as to whether Crimean lands belong to Russia or Ukraine today, as both countries claim to own this region. The year is 2022 and Russia and Ukraine’s diplomatic relations have not recovered.

## Russian War on Ukraine, 2022

Russian President, Vladimir Putin declared war on Ukraine on February 24, 2022. According to Whitehouse.gov, “The Biden administration has been clear that the United States desires a relationship with Russia that is stable and predictable.” China, the world’s second leading country in GDP (Gross Domestic Product) as reported by Worldbank.org, has been a long-term ally with Russia but has opted to stay neutral in this time of war. According to Foreignpolicy.com, “The Russian Ministry of Defense said on Tuesday it had opted to ‘drastically reduce hostilities’ in the direction of Kyiv and Chernihiv.” Russia and Ukraine continue to have peace negotiations to build trust and diplomatic relations between the two countries, so that a peace treaty may be formed. As for now, while the war continues, the United States and other European allies have sent military support in form of weapons to Ukraine. Wwww.cfr.org states, “Since Russia launched a full-scale military invasion into Ukraine on February 24, 2022, fighting has caused over nine hundred civilian deaths and pushed millions of Ukrainians to flee to neighboring countries—the majority of whom have arrived in Poland, a NATO country where U.S. troops are preparing to offer assistance to refugees.” NATO countries refer to all countries signed into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization originally created to protect Europe against any possible Russian invasion. The website Nato.int provides information on the member states of the alliance.



Joe Biden speaks on the Russian war with Ukraine  
Photo Credit: Aleksandra Szmigiel/Reuters



Ukrainian soldiers ride on a military vehicle outside Kiev  
Photo Credit: Vadim Ghirda

# Russia's History With Ukraine

Dec, 1, 1991 - Ukraine gains independence from the Soviet Union. (Which later dissolved into Russia)

Feb-Apr, 2014 - Russia sent military to the Crimean peninsula of Ukraine, while the country was dealing with internal issues. By March, Crimea was secured by the Russians.

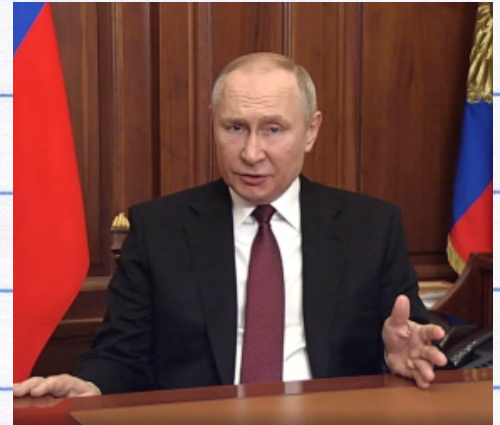
Apr, 29, 2019 - Vlodymyr Zelensky, originally a comedian, gets elected to become Ukraine's president through majority vote. He currently leads Ukraine amidst this war.

Feb, 24, 2022 - Russia declares war on Ukraine. The U.S imposes economic sanctions against Russia, and military equipment and assistance to Ukraine.

March, 29, 2022 - Russia opts to significantly lower military activities in Kiev, the capitol of Ukraine. Kiev was Russia's original main target.

Apr, 4, 2022 - More than 4 million Ukrainian refugees have fled Ukraine according to worldvision.org.

Feb, 24 - Apr, 5 2022 - The war with Russia and Ukraine has lasted 42 days and has not yet ended.



Russian President, Vladimir Putin, gives a speech regarding the war in Ukraine.

Photo Credit: Kremlin.ru

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# What's Trending?

By Matthew Wheeler, Samantha Almonte, Rose David-Adelee, Nikolai Williams

## Super Bowl Sunday: What Was Better, The Game or the Halftime Show?

The 2022 Super Bowl between the Rams and Cincinnati Bengals was a very close game. It was held at the SoFi Stadium in Los Angeles, California. The game ended with a 20–23 score, with the Rams winning. Many people thought it had the best halftime show in the history of the Super Bowl. So good, in fact, that the question "What was better, the game or the halftime show?" was brought up. An Indian Ridge flag football coach, Coach Hesterman, says that he loves football, coaches' football, and therefore was there to watch the game. He doesn't really watch the halftime show. He believes that the Rams won because they had a better defense than the Cincinnati Bengals. He preferred last year's Super Bowl more than this one, especially because he is a huge Tom Brady fan. Coach Hesterman obviously knows a lot about this topic and enjoys the game more than the music. Arianna Vassell, a 7th grade Indian Ridge student, preferred the halftime show. She watches football almost every day and would love to play. Her favorite performer was Marry J. Blige. "She has a very angelic voice,"

Arianna said



Photo Credit: Shanna McCarriston

Half time show performance with Eminem, Dr. Dre, Mary J. Blige, 50 Cent, and Snoop Dogg at the Super Bowl 2022.

## March Madness



Photo Credit: Brian Spurlock  
March Madness court for the final four teams.

The 2022 March Madness is now here. March Madness is the men's college basketball tournament. It starts March 15th and ends April 4th. There are 68 teams playing in this year's tournament. Gonzaga is the most favored team right now and has the greatest odds of winning with a six-to-one ratio. But who is really going to win? Mrs. Hill, a big basketball fan, was interviewed about March Madness. She thinks that the Gonzaga basketball team is going to win the tournament because they made it to the top 16 for many years. Mrs. Hill explains that they have a great program and team, and is therefore not surprised about the results. Ms. Hill isn't rooting for any team, she says, "I do not really have a favorite, I just want everyone to be happy." Xavier Christy, a 6th grade student at Indian Ridge, was also interested in this topic. Although he believes Gonzaga will win, he is rooting for the USC Trojans. Xavier states, "So far, I think the Dukes are doing the best in March Madness."

## Kicks for Days



Photo credits: Sayed Daood  
These shoes are the 9th most expensive Air Jordans.

Dior Jordans were created in 1985. They have made a comeback, and are now a new fashion trend. Dior Jordans are very expensive shoes that cost over \$2,200 and can go up to \$16,000. Although the shoes are very off budget for most people, they are very stylish, and most people want them. Tobias Aguilar, a 7th grader at Indian Ridge, is also a basketball player for the KNC basketball travel team. He has many shoes because he plays basketball. He has 16 different shoes and his favorite shoes are Travis Scott's Jordan 1 and his blue Kyrie 7s. Tobias has gotten lots of complements like “Nice shoe style” or “you seem cool”. He plans on getting Rick And Morty x Puma MB.01 Shoes.

Photo credits:  
NowHipHopShoes  
These  
mis-matching neon  
bright shoes are  
made by LaMelo  
Ball.  
Lemo.



## Put Your Records On!

Music is one of the most stress-relieving activities and can help with anxiety, boredom, comfort, and just really feeling what is being played. The lyrics always have a meaning to them and can have something the listeners can relate to or want to relate to. In the month of February, the popular sounds are “Heat Waves” and “Stay”. You may have heard this, on Spotify or TikTok, two of the largest platforms on the internet. “Heat Waves” by Glass Animals has over 1.1 billion streams. It was released in 2020 but was getting popular not too long ago. This song is about someone failing at their love towards someone and feels like the other individual does not deserve them.



Photo Credit: Glass Animals  
The album cover to a new hit.



Photo Credit: The Kid Laroi  
One of the album covers to the new “Stay”  
song.

“Stay” by Kid Laroi, featuring Justin Bieber, has over 1 billion streams. The meaning behind this song was about pleading with their love interest not to leave. Fun Fact! This song was a complete accident; the writers came into the studio and were not supposed to be writing anything, but they just practiced and produced this popular hit!

# Win a Giant Bag of Candy!

By Sanya Ahmed

We have a challenge for you. Solve this anagram and win a giant bag of candy!

Throughout the newspaper, certain letters are bolded.

1. Find all the bolded letters.

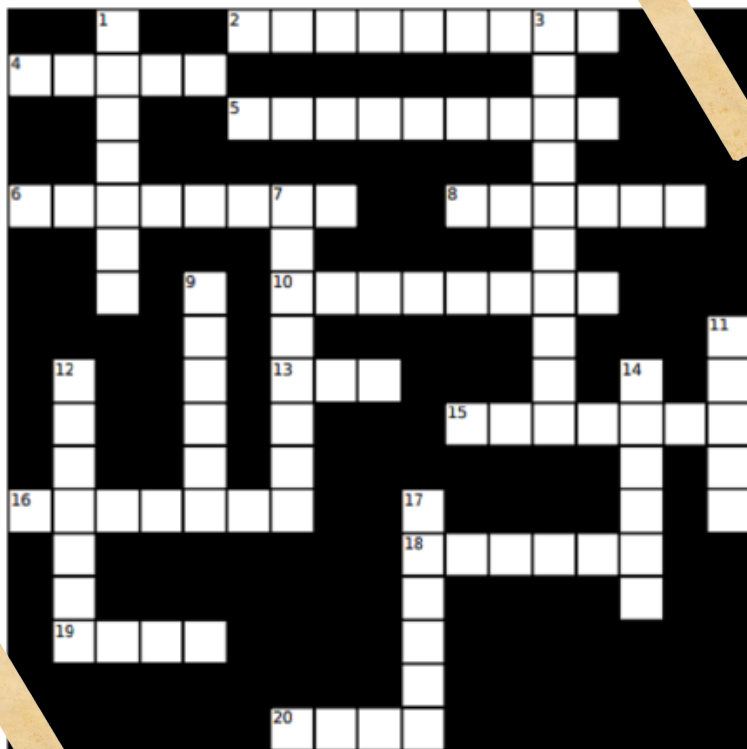
2. Unscramble the letters to get the solution.

3. Bring your answer to Ms. Didier's room (206-207)

Hint: The answer is a pun, containing a question and an answer.

## Spring is here!

By Sanya Ahmed and Arianna Combs



### ACROSS

2. Starts as a caterpillar
4. Sandy Relaxation
5. Water that is falling from the sky
6. Used to protect someone from water
8. Grassy area that has variety of plants
10. Only comes out during the daytime
13. Insect that produce honey
15. Type of shoes that are used during hotter weather
16. Colorful plants that can be used as décor
18. Pool of water on the floor
19. Shiny yellow pieces worth lots of money
20. Slimy animals that live on land and water

### DOWN

1. Colorful arch.
3. Supernatural being in an Irish folktale
7. Can produce good luck if it crawls on you
9. Nice cool wind during the Springtime
11. Type of flower that is red
12. Young tree
14. Shades of colors that are usually lighter
17. Next break for school.

# Cryptogram!

By Lylah Fine

Use the key below to uncover the secret messages! The color under each letter in the key shows what color each letter represents.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
Red	Orange	Yellow	Light Green	Green	Teal	Light Blue	Purple	Dark Blue	Pink	Dark Green	Yellow	Light Pink	Olive	Black	Dark Blue	Brown	Grey	Light Grey	Light Green	Pink	Brown	Teal			

1. [Light Green] [Purple] [Light Pink] [Dark Blue] [Green] [Red] [Light Green] [Brown] [Teal] [Light Pink] [Orange] [Green] [Red] [Purple]

2. [Light Green] [Green] [Red] [Light Blue] [Green] [Yellow] [Light Pink] [Orange] [Green] [Olive] [Purple] [Yellow] [Light Green] [Light Green]

3. [Blue] [Light Pink] [Grey] [Yellow] [Pink] [Purple] [Dark Blue] [Dark Green] [Purple] [Dark Blue] [Brown] [Light Blue] [Green] [Orange] [Green] [Brown]

# Spring Scramble!

By Tobias Aguilar

Enjoy a little break while you unscramble these spring related words!

1. smolbssso

Answer: blossoms

2. lmonobgi

Answer: blooming

3. diesias

Answer: daisies

4. hechlpreuan

Answer: leprechaun

5. tpsoru

Answer: sports



# National Sports

## Run Fast or Be Last

By: Addison Brawner and Alyx Lattanzio

Track season is approaching! Tryouts were March 1st- March 8th and final callbacks were March 10th. Kylie Tirado, a 7th grader, tried out for everything and is hopeful she made callbacks and excited to see if she made the team. With excitement comes doubt. Peyton Allen, a 7th grader, tried out for sprints because she was fast and tall but did not feel like she did well because, "I didn't use my arms to build speed." Tobias Aguilar also tried out for track and was on Cross Country. He said that both sports are similar but there are many different track activities. With call backs so soon, we are sure that this season will be exciting.

## Lia Thomas Makes Waves

By: Julia Savin

**CONTENT WARNING-** this article may trigger strong feelings.



Photo Credit: Hunter Martin  
Lia Thomas is breaking barriers in the competitive swimming community.

Lia Thomas is a transgender swimmer who is making waves in competitive swimming. She wants, "to show trans kids and younger trans athletes that they're not alone." Thomas has been smashing records since the beginning of the season, and is overjoyed to finally be living her truth and participating in the sport she loves. Transgender means that a person doesn't identify as the sex they are assigned at birth. Some people oppose Thomas being allowed to compete on the women's team. According to Nancy Hogshead-Makar, a four-time Olympic medalist, "The rules should follow the evidence, and in this case it is clear: Thomas should not be in head-to-head competition with biological females." Some critics of Thomas believe that since she went through male puberty, she has an advantage over her cisgender competitors and should not be allowed to compete in women's sports.

Cisgender means that a person identifies as the sex they were assigned at birth. People who are assigned male at birth tend to have an 11% or higher swim speed than people assigned female at birth. Thomas' critics say that because of this advantage, she is unfairly winning competitions with cisgender female swimmers. An anonymous transgender boy in 7th grade says, "A transgender person should be allowed to compete on the sports team that represents their gender. It isn't fair to force a transgender person to compete on a team that doesn't represent their gender." As stated by Lia Thomas, "I'm a woman, just like anybody else on the team. I've always viewed myself as just a swimmer. It's what I've done for so long; it's what I love. I get into the water everyday and do my best." For more information on gender, check out the Broward County Public School's website under the search "transgender" or "LGBTQ+".



# Best in the Field

By Arianna Vassell and Julia Savin Edited By Julia Savin

Moving on to the football world, Los Angeles Rams coach Sean McVay was offered a \$100 million dollar contract with Amazon. Amazon is looking for a expert commenter for Thursday Night Football broadcasts. But on the other hand, sports channel ESPN had words from McVay saying that he wasn't pursuing any television opportunities. He is only focused and committed to one thing, which is helping his Rams defend their Super Bowl title. But, what did Amazon want with Sean McVay? Well, according to Fox News it's because Amazon wants a big name, and McVay gained a lot of fame for leading his team into winning the Super Bowl. With McVay refusing Amazon's offer, they'll be hard pressed to find an anchor for their new show, especially since Troy Aikman and John Lynch have also all refused the position.



Photo Credit: M. Terill, Fox News  
Sean McVay refused a television opportunity from Amazon.

# Soccer Survivors

Written By Arianna Vassell Edited By Julia Savin

The situation between Ukraine and Russia has taken a toll on a lot of things, including sports. Brazilian soccer players are begging for help from their government. "There's no fuel, the border is closed, the airspace is closed. There's no way for us to get out," FC Shakhtar Donetsk's Marlon Santos said. Soccer fans and players send their hopes and prayers during the Brazilian's tragic situation. So far, there has only been one soccer player that has spoken out on Ukraine's invasion. Shakhtar's Junior Moraes states that, "The situation is one of despair." Ukraine is making this situation harder and harder for everyone but Brazil's embassy says it will work harder to protect Brazil's citizens.

Quotes and information from: Fox News



Photo Credit: @Maycon/Instagram  
Brazilian soccer players stuck in Ukraine plea for help.

# Activities &

By: Anna Acosta-Henandez, Keven Cabrera, Kaylie Gonzalez, Isabella Pardo, Kyra Vaccato

## Making History by Honoring History

Students of Indian Ridge Middle school recently contributed to the Black History Month Talent Show from 6:00-8:00 PM on February 23rd, 2022. Ms. Bullard, the host presented a speech honoring the students and teachers who participated in the talent show. Some of the talents of that night included singing, poem reading, dancing, and many more. Sixth grader, Jayde Lebrun states, "I was a poet and model in the show. I loved doing poetry. I know this show will inspire many other African American students to be proud of their skin color. This is our month to shine, and we should honor it every year by doing something like this!" Students like Jayde are critical to today's society by helping other young, colored students to feel beautiful in their own skin. Ms. Bullard then played an interactive trivia game with the audience where she gave clues on famous African American celebrities and let the guests in the crowd guess. The trivia questions included, Kobe Bryant, Will Smith, Chadwick Boseman, Morgan Freeman, LeBron James, Michael Jordan, and many more. The band of Indian Ridge Middle School performed Old Town Road, which was made by black creator, Lil Nas X, showing their support. Ms. Bullard, an 8th grade entrepreneurship teacher here at Indian Ridge Middle School, helps the students at our school to feel proud and comfortable in their own skin. The Talent and Fashion Show was an amazing opportunity to learn about and show diverse cultures, backgrounds, ethnicities, and races, that some middle school students might not have knowledge on.



The incredible voice of Adelaila K. Cabrera, a 7th grader, who sang "Lean on Me," surprised the entire crowd.

Photo Credit: Celine DeMingo



After the Talent and Fashion show ended, Ms. Bullard and other participants collaborated in a group photo.

Photo Credit: Keven Cabrera

Black History Month

# Organizations

By: Anna Acosta-Henandez, Keven Cabrera, Kaylie Gonzalez, Isabella Pardo, Kyra Vaccato

## Walking Through Moments of History

Fashion Week has come early to Indian Ridge Middle School! On February 23, 2022, students came together to honor Black History Month with fashion and flare. The showcase ran from 6 p.m. and ended at 8 p.m. It was held in the auditorium featuring the fashion show, talent show, IRMS cheerleaders, and IRMS band. Ms. Bullard, an African American teacher at Indian Ridge Middle School, was the director of the entire event. Ms. Bullard wanted to bring together students and highlight African American heritage. Black History Month is all about celebrating African American heritage and culture, and the fashion show perfectly portrayed that. The fashion show presented students wearing stunning outfits for all occasions. The show brought together many students to celebrate and be proud of their culture. Audition sign ups were held in the cafeteria and auditions were held on January 26, from four to five p.m. in the cafeteria. From there Mrs. Bullard chose students to perform in the talent show, fashion show, or manage backstage. Since then, every Wednesday from four to five p.m., Mrs. Bullard trained students to walk the runway and deliver an exceptional performance. Students from all grades invited their family and friends to watch their debut. As well as displaying African American heritage, students and staff have had an incredible time putting together this showcase. 7th grader, Arianna Vassel, states, "I loved being a model and stage director. Not only did I get to work behind the scenes, but I also got to walk the runway too! It was super fun working on this event since it is important for people to know they are represented. We only get one month to honor Black History and we did a fantastic job doing so." Students like Ariana are crucial to schools since they are the ones who are representing African Americans with passion. Mrs. Bullard, students, and staff have worked twenty-four-seven to perfect the Black History Month Fashion Show, and they did a phenomenal job!



These African American students love to walk the runway and pose, while being proud of who they are.

Photo Credit: Celine DeMingo



Two girls in very fashionable outfit, having each others backs.

Photo Credit: Celine DeMingo

Talent & Fashion Show!

# Jaguar on the Spot

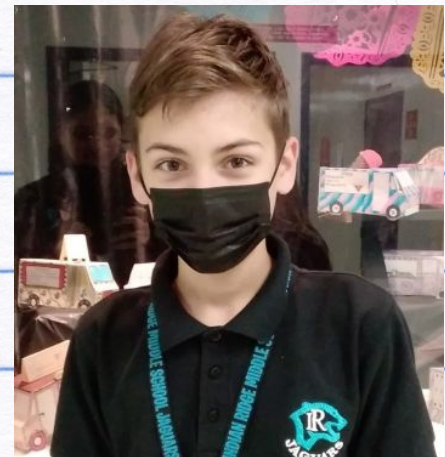
By Amiyah Blandon and Morgan O'Steen

Recently, the Broward County School Board issued a mindfulness mental health mandate. Once a week, the students can participate in a mindfulness video and learn how to control their emotions. Many students have differing opinions on the exercise. Do you find the mindfulness mental health mandate helpful?

17% yes



7th grader, Christian Morales, thought that the mandate was helpful. He told us, “[My] stress comes from the expectations from peers.” The Broward County school-wide health mandate has helped him with his stress. He pays attention to the mandate most of the time and believes it is helpful to other students as well. Although, he thinks schools should try do more to help with students’ stress, such as helping kids be more respectful of other kids’ boundaries. 6th grader, Jadya-Alexa McCormack, explained that she feels stressed due to the amount of homework that she gets and expectations from other people. After the mindfulness health mandate was created, she found it helpful, and her stress decreased. “I think our school could give us less homework or more time to do it,” she states. 7th grader, Valerie Martinez, agrees that schools could give less homework to students in order to relieve stress. Although some students do find the mandate helpful, many have opposing opinions on it.



Christian Morales says the mandate helps with his stress.  
Photo Credit by Amiyah Blandon

# Jaguar on the Spot

By Mishary Hossain and Rolando Tomasini

Mindfulness exercises often are not helpful for students, and for some students, it is not worth 10 valuable minutes taken from class time. It can put more work on teachers and doesn't intrigue or motivate the students to take part. Kids can feel a lot of stress because of pressure from parents and school, but are mindfulness activities the right way to go?

83% no

Amber Lam doesn't find the mindfulness exercises helpful.

Photo credit by Amiyah Blandon



The exercises that the videos show can be boring for many students, although doing these stretches are helpful. They aren't all that action-packed. David Arutyunyan, a 6th grader, remarks that he does the exercises every time they are announced, but they get repetitive and boring. Mindfulness activities can also appear to some as useless. In some situations, the stretches are done incorrectly or not many results are shown. This can demotivate students to follow the exercises. In that way, some recognize this to burn 10 minutes of class time. It gives students a 10-minute break, but it isn't to its full potential. Also, a lot of kids may sneak in devices and waste these 10 minutes that were originally designated for relieving stress. Although, some might not. 7th grader, Amber Lam, explained that she listens and pays attention to the videos that are displayed, but she doesn't do the exercises. Additionally, too much class time is delayed, and this can end up putting a lot of hardships onto teachers. This is because with the 10 minutes taken off from class, teachers have to fit the whole lesson into less time. The majority of students do not like the mindfulness activities, but some do. Ask yourself, do you find the mindfulness mental health activities helpful?

By: Kennedy Elstein, Kendra Spitaleri, Darasan Bispham, Angelina Mauro

## When Will The Flowers Bloom?

Groundhog Day is a traditional day that has been around since the year 1887. To this day, not many truly understand the meaning of the day. To break it down, Groundhog Day is celebrated every year on February 2nd. This tradition originated from the Dutch, but is now also celebrated in Northern America and Canada. Here's where the groundhog comes in! The groundhog is meant to come out of its burrow to share its prediction on whether spring is coming or there will be six more weeks of winter. Unfortunately, Punxsutawney Phil the groundhog that passed away this tradition, passed on January 30th 2022, but his legacy carries on! Students should be off on Groundhog Day so that they could understand why it's celebrated, and why this day is so important. Many should also use this day to pass this special celebration for many generations to come and keep the legacy of Groundhog Day.



Photo Credit: David Maxwell.  
Punxsutawney Phil, the groundhog that comes out of its burrow every year to carry on the traditional holiday of groundhog day!

## You Are Just "Write" For Me!

Valentines Day is a holiday celebrated on February 14th around the world. On this special holiday, couples exchange gifts such as candy, flowers, and other important gifts to show loved ones how much they are cared for. This holiday originates in the Roman festival of Lupercalia, and has been celebrated for thousands of years and is a very important holiday that is held once a year. Students should be able to have the day off from school on Valentine's Day to be able to spend the day with their friends, family, and loved ones. They will be able to have a full day to express their love and exchange gifts to show how much they love their favorite people. Even though we already get a half day for this holiday, students still having school on this day can prevent gift giving for only half of the day and they will have to wait until the following year! This particular occasion should not only be celebrated by adults and couples, but also by students as well.



Photo Credit: Candy Warehouse  
These delicious candy hearts are a classic Valentine's Treat Day treat suitable for every sweet-loving person!

**Want to vote which holiday should get the school day off?**

**Click the link below and complete the survey to submit your answer!**

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdGB-y-BD-OJlEVyc1DAI2qHKaSkLx2-9NhxLYG446clrbDyw/viewform?usp=pp\\_url&entry.220302186=Valentine's+Day](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdGB-y-BD-OJlEVyc1DAI2qHKaSkLx2-9NhxLYG446clrbDyw/viewform?usp=pp_url&entry.220302186=Valentine's+Day)

## Feeling a Little Green?

Everyone knows Saint Patrick's Day, The green theme, the amazing parades, the pinching, and the lovable leprechauns. but under all the celebrations is the culture. Few people understand the culture behind Saint Patrick's Day and schools being open on the day doesn't help that. Saint Patrick's Day is a feast day of Saint Patrick, a patron saint of Ireland. Originally celebrated with religious feasts and services, Saint Patrick's Day became a celebration of Irish culture when it reached the United States alongside Irish immigrants. Many of the iconic symbols for St. Patrick's Day, like the Shamrock plant and the leprechauns, are actually known in Ireland as fairies and sacred plants. Students should have the day off so that they are able to get a taste of the Irish culture and Irish students can have the day off to celebrate their culture.



Photo Credit: Doha Madani

Saint Patrick's Day parade in Dublin, Ireland. All the beautiful cultural music and the iconic color green is what makes Saint Patrick's Day a day worth looking into.

## Fool or Get Fooled!

April Fools' Day is celebrated every year on April 1st. The origin of the holiday is unknown; however, it is believed that it dates to the late 1500s when France changed its calendar to the Gregorian calendar from the Julian calendar. People who failed to believe the new year started on April 1st; not January 1 were considered "April Fools". The holiday started to spread across the globe and the tradition would be to play a prank on your friends and loved ones, then say "April fools!" after the joke. One of the very first April Fools jokes started in France by pinning a paper fish to ones back to resemble "poisson d'avril" which is French for "April Fool," the fish would be used to symbolize a young, easily caught fish and a very naïve person. Students should have the day off from school on April Fools' Day to have the entire day to play pranks with their friends and family and joke around with them! Allowing kids to stay home can let them have the full day to enjoy a fun and silly day that only comes once a year. No matter what, you will still get fooled even if you decide to not play a prank!

Photo Credit: Crush Pixel

Several well known toilet paper companies played a hilarious April Fools' Day prank that they made toilet paper for left handed people!



# Informational Text

Layout- Sophia Sierra & Gabby Larson, Research- Kheira Marouf, Akshay Bhradwaj, and Gabby Larson, Pictures & Captions-

## Skating to Success!

29-year-old Florida native and lifelong roller skater became the first ever black woman to win a Winter Olympic gold medal for Team USA. On February 13, 2022, Erin Jackson won the gold medal in the Women's 500-meter speed skating event at the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics. She had almost missed out on qualifying for the Olympics after she slipped during the U.S. Trials in this event, but her teammate and best friend, Brittany Bowe, gave up her spot for Jackson to continue and compete. Jackson won the gold medal in the Women's 500-meter speed skating event at the 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing, China, and bested the field by 0.08 seconds with a time of 37.04 seconds, and became the first African-American woman to win an Olympic medal.

## Before the Gold

Jackson was born in Ocala, Florida on September 19, 1992. Born to a loving and supportive family, Erin had many opportunities and accomplishments before this one. Jackson qualified for The World Games 2017 in Wroclaw, Poland, where she competed in inline speed skating in a variety of distances on road and track. She finished 24th out of 31 competitors. Funny enough, Jackson didn't start off skating, she actually spent most of her career roller skating. In 2016, she transitioned from roller skating to ice skating. It may seem strange that a skater who spent her life on roller blades would be an Olympian on ice, but Jackson quickly became a gold medal favorite. She made her Olympic debut four years ago in Pyeongchang, having to be switched to ice skating abruptly a year earlier. Team USA has not won since 1994, Erin Jackson finished her lap in an astonishing 37.04 seconds!

Jackson beams after the roller-coaster of emotions she was going through. A month ago, she had been devastated to know she didn't make the Olympics, little did she know, she would soon win the gold.



Photo Credit Getty Images

Photo credit Jean Catuffe



Erin Jackson skates off to victory with the American flag waving behind her.



# Text with Questions

Sophia Sierra, Questions- Gabby Larson, Writing- Akshay Bhardwaj, Kheira Marouf, & Sophia Sierra, Editing- Sophia Sierra

## Why is it Important?

Erin Jackson's story is incredible. Not only was she the first American to win that race since 1994, but she was the first ever black woman to win the gold! There are so many people that played a key part in her life and led her to that moment, but Brittany Bowe deserves to be recognized. She believed in her best friend so much that she gave up her own spot for Jackson. Erin Jackson has proved herself and joined the remarkable group of history-making black women.



Jackson didn't start off ice skating, in fact, she started roller blading. Here Jackson poses in her purple roller skating uniform.

The speed skating winners pose together after the competition. Erin Jackson won the gold, Kaja Ziomek won the silver, and Letitia de Jong the bronze.



Photo credit Getty Images

### Questions:

1. Who was the first Black woman to make it on to Team USA as a speed skater?
2. Who is Brittany Bowe?
3. How did Jackson get to the Olympics?
4. Where is Erin Jackson from?
5. What did Erin Jackson do before ice skating?
6. How old is Erin Jackson?
7. What medal did she win?
8. What was Erin Jackson's time for the 500-meter dash?
9. What mistake did Erin make that made her not initially qualify for Beijing?

# Upcoming Events

By Hayden Anton and Lily Shuman

Ultra Music Festival - March 25-27 at Bayfront Park, Miami

Lions Spring Festival-St. Augustine -March 26-27, 2022

Sunny Land Boat Festival, Tavares -March 24-27, 2022

Winter Park Sidewalk Art Festival -March 18-20, 2022

Miami Beach Live! -March 1-29, 2022

Luminosa: A Festival of Light -Mar 13, 2:00 PM - Mar 21, 7:00 PM

Miami Music Week - Fri, Mar 25 - Sun, Mar 27 Miami FL

Florida Renaissance Festival -February 5th - March 20th, 2022

The Beach Boys - Fri, Mar 25, 12:00 PM - Mon, Mar 28, 8:00 AM

Spring Break Shamrock Shuffle- Indian Ridge middle

Innings Festival - Tampa Sports Authority, Mar 19, - , Mar 20,

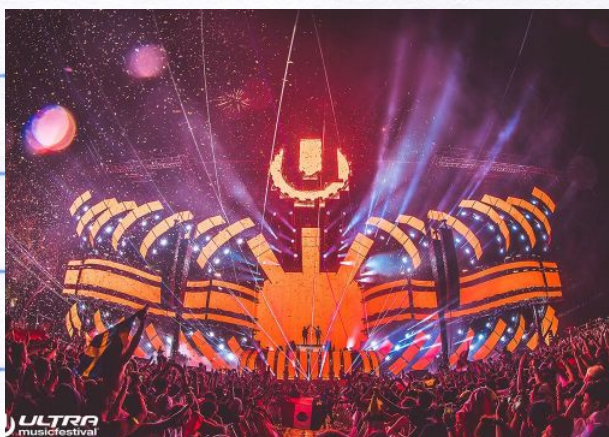


Photo by Ultra Music Festival

The Ultra Music Festival is a crazy event in Miami going on from March 25th to March 27th.



Photo by Stay Happening

Many people enjoy going to watch the Luminosa Festival of Lights, on March 13th - March 21st from 2-7pm.

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