

Franklin Towne Charter

TOWNE TIMES

FEBRUARY 2024

Philly, FTC Rise to get out the vote

Local city officials visit Franklin Towne to encourage young voters

by Gabby Torres & Abby Pennisi, '24

This past February, Franklin Towne was lucky enough to host the first location of the Philly Rises tour in the 215 gymnasium.

The FTCHS Social Studies Department welcomed Philadelphia representees including City Commissioner Omar Sabir, PA Youth Vote's executive director Angelique

Hinton, NAACP Philadelphia Branch President Catherine Hicks, Philadelphia City Commissioner Seth Bluestein and State Representative Danilo Burgos, representing the Octavius Catto Taskforce, which celebrates Catto's legacy by advocates for voting rights.

Furthermore, the students and staff were joined by the Philly

Phanatic, seniors, and NHS members to learn the importance of their vote, especially as young adults every year choose not to vote.

Many younger voters believe the weight of an individual's opinion is insignificant, thus affecting their decisions.



Commissioner Omar Sabir speaks to a crowd of Franklin Towne students with other officials/ Photography Department

However, students were informed about election workers for the upcoming election. the lasting influence the next generation of voters will have, and how every one can play a part in deciding the future of the country.

From the dedication and enthusiasm of the representatives, students were encouraged and empowered to take charge in their lives and responsibilities, several speeches being made to encourage the idea that "your vote counts," no matter your gender, race, beliefs, or background.

Both students learning about the voting process and ones planning for the next

and effectively cast their vote and fight for what they believe in. Before the presentation started City Commissioner Omar Sabir gave a speech repeating the goals and purpose of the Philly Rises tour. PA Youth Vote spoke about their mission to make young adults more comfortable with and aware of the importance of voting.

Students over 18 were given information about registration and the opportunities to become poll

workers for the upcoming election.

When the speeches finished, students were given the opportunity to go to the auditorium for a chance to get a more in-depth presentation from PA Youth Vote Executive Director Angelique Hinton and others.

Abigail Pennisi, Gabby Torres
Staff Writers

PHILLY RISES

THE IMPORTANCE OF VOTING



Members of the Cheerleading Squad performed at the event/ Photography Department



The Phillie Phanatic and Drumline/ Photography Department



Commissioner Sabir speaks to students/ Photography Department



The Phillie Phanatic joins the Dance Team / Photography Department



The Phillie Phanatic and Ms. O'Donnell share a moment/ Photography Department



The FTCHS Step Team performs for local city officials, students and staff/ Photography Department

ACADEMICS

HIGHLIGHTING THE STUDENTS OF FTC

Franklin Towne's Poet Laureate

by Gabby Torres, '24

Franklin Towne has brought up countless bright, ambitious, and successful students, both in and outside of the classrooms. Today, however, FTC highlights one student in particular who is in the process of publishing her first collection of poetry before the age of eighteen.

Gabriella Szgeti-Goncalves is a Franklin Towne senior who has been writing poetry for the last year and a half. Wanting to “live life to the fullest” and give support to people who may be experiencing similar challenges, she decided to submit her pieces for publication this past fall.

Pulling inspiration from her American Literature teacher, Mr. Cunningham, and J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*, Szgeti-Goncalves has chosen to focus her upcoming collection, *Untold Truths*, on the unusual process of growing up. Her poems will speak to the emotional process moving on from childhood, and choosing to truly live, rather than just walking through life.

The young writer says that she hopes that her poetry can reach and help many fellow transitioning teenagers, as well as anyone working through adversity, to realize, “You're not alone.” Writing from personal experience, Ms. Szgeti-Goncalves is not only teaching her readers that it's okay to talk about your own experiences, but to make the most out of every opportunity.



Poet Gabriella Szgeti-Goncalves will publish her first work in March

“I hope that whomever reads my books understands the message within each poem, and that they consider the words I've said and relate to them,” Szgeti-Goncalves says. “Knowing they aren't alone, or even understanding how to move forward with life.”

Gabriella Szgeti-Goncalves is proof that no matter how old you are, or what you may have been through, nothing is out of reach. And as told by her poetry, everyone should remember to “live life to the fullest.”

Gabby Torres, '24

Staff Writer

Franklin Towne Introduces:

Towne Character Champions

This year, Franklin Towne has introduced a new initiative to strengthen the community it has strived to build over the past twenty years.

The school's mission statement reads: “Franklin Towne Charter High School is a college preparation program willing to do whatever it takes to provide a warm and encouraging family-like atmosphere for all of our students.”

In keeping with this idea, Franklin Towne will celebrate students who exemplify the key values and characteristics of respect, trustworthiness, and fairness. February showcases the students who

demonstrated the characteristic of respect. These students received a certificate from their teacher that will not only highlight their success, but will also grant them a dress down day.

Franklin Towne Charter High School students were introduced to the words of “If Not Me, Then Who...” on January 11. The Travis Manion Foundation has been redefining America's national character through their veteran-led mentoring program. At Franklin Towne, we proudly honor students who exemplify respect in every aspect of their lives. These awardees consistently demonstrate kindness, empathy, and consideration for others, fostering a positive and inclusive environment within our school community. Their commitment to respect serves as an inspiration to their peers and leaves a lasting impact on our school culture.

CONTINUED ON PG. 4

ACADEMICS

HIGHLIGHTING THE STUDENTS OF FTC

Towne Character Champions: Respect

While Franklin Towne celebrates all of its students successes, this month Towne would like to congratulate the following students: Thomas Hayes, Nasir Shaw, McKayla Hernandez, Abbrielle Self, Dylan Vellon, Daniel LaSalle, Ava Lester, Ryan Patterson, Crystal Heredia, Dariel Gutierrez, Braedyn Clinton, Natalia Carrasquillo, Inis Lamaj, Raheem Sams, Natalie Andujar, Enis Durdia, Kaylin Glanzmann, Alondra Velez-Ferrer, Gianna Rodriguez, Michael Wiley, Joseph Hagan, Bella Mozitis, Hunter Stewart, Allan Ortiz, Jetsagel Rodriguez, Jada McIlhenney, Misael Navarro, Natalie Zhao,

Jaylin Cortez, Quinn Nguyen, Ashanti Stackhouse, Aiden Bucia, Hailey Thornton, Serenity Einsig, Brandon Leaks, Jolynne Rdesinski, Emily Taylor, Dominic Tran, Juan Saez, Lyla Bechtel, Stephen Phillips, Joe Hill, Mahriya Mount, Charlei Torrence, Michael Moore, Julia McGuire, Sara Viscontto, Gianna Mendys, Arianna Vahsen, Kayla Egrie, Aydeson Payams, Lacey Gallagher, Thomas Drages, Damien Garcia, Angel Carrasquillo, Ezekiel Mendez, Addison Fine,

Kylee Scott, Evan Potter, Neri Zuhnio, Hailey Noguerras, Catie West, Kaili Johnson, Ed Cavanaugh, Dillon Hammel, Sarah Diviny, Ann Bernard



Congratulations to FTC's first Towne Character Champion recipients.

ACADEMICS

HIGHLIGHTING THE STUDENTS OF FTC

Franklin Towne seniors set to Explore new beginnings

As college acceptances continue to come in, Franklin Towne would like to call attention to some future LaSalle Explorers. As with every college senior, Towne wants to wish them luck as they prepare for the next step in education.



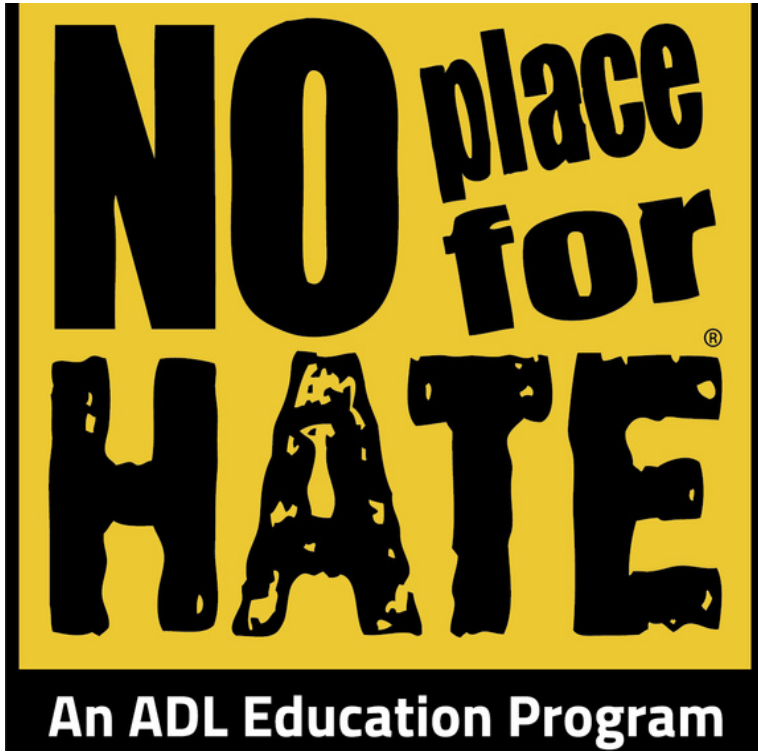
The following seniors have been accepted into LaSalle University:

David Adeleye, Evan Bisch, Breianna Bishop, Aleksander Bojko, Olivia Braszczyńska, Rosa Burgos, Marvin Cruz-Lino, Salena Desantis, Kaylee Dougherty, Angelie Dwyer, Savannah Goral, Arionna Gormisky, Adrianna Hall-Salley, Gianna Koch, Natalia Kozłowska, Lymari Loftus, Kennedy MacIntosh, Carter Maddox, John Mahoney, Sophia Malinski, Erin Markert, Matthew McCullough, Ezekiel Mendez, Lunisa Muzhaqi, Santino Nazario, Adrian Ortiz, Allan Ortiz, Michael Ostaszewski, Alexander Pokora, Ava Potter, Rick Quinones, Jack Reid, Avaiya Rodriguez, Liani Sanchez, Sadie Stanicky, Tabitha Stein, Christopher Tacuri, Alana Terrey, Dominic Tran, Grace Tsang, Joseph Wade, Lea Whalen, Jade Young

Franklin Towne congratulates these students and all seniors as they march closer to graduation. Remember, as you receive your admissions or other post-high school plans, be sure to update your counselor so you can be part of the upcoming newspaper.

NO PLACE FOR HATE

CREATING AN INCLUSIVE SPACE



Franklin Towne students talk about their time in No Place For Hate

by Abby Pennisi, '24

No Place for Hate is an organization dedicated to breaking away from stereotypes and creating a bully free school environment. To many No Place for Hate is a way to make a change, so others aren't bullied like they were, and it is a way to prevent hate and bias from taking place in our school. Senior member Emma Dahl says she joined to "spread awareness and knowledge about harmful stereotypes". With plans like possibly changing the Prep Zone into a more comfortable environment and asking students to help create posters, No Place for Hate is making a difference one step at a time.

No Place for Hate has big plans to make not only FTC but many other schools in the US a place where no one feels left out and everyone is treated with kindness and respect. Senior Patricia Palanik says, "No Place for Hate represents a hope for a better future". No place for Hate will continue to push towards their goal by implementing things throughout the school like new murals and holding activities to inspire the students of FTC. Senior Meiara Stanton encourages other students to join saying "if you are someone who ever felt left out or different, No Place for Hate may be the place for you".

Abby Pennisi, '24
Staff Writer

Franklin Towne welcomes Dr. Pickens from the Mayor's office

by Zara Khan, '26



On January 17th, the No Place for Hate members talked to Dr. Josie B. Pickens (Mayor Cherelle Parker's Chief Diversity Equity and Inclusion Officer) to run a school wide No Place for Hate meeting. They had conversations on diversity, equity and inclusion in and out of school and talked about the importance of MLK Day. Students and Staff were invited to FTCHS's auditorium after school hours to participate in the event. Dr. Pickens shared her experiences with Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

she will play to make Philadelphia a more diverse and inclusive place.

She also discussed different ways students and staff can make Franklin Towne a more inclusive community. It was an informative meeting with conversation among students and staff in the crowd.

Franklin Towne student plan to take what was learned from Dr. Pickens and expand that message throughout Towne. The meeting was also joined by Randi Boyette and Rachel Greenberg, representatives from the Anti-Defamation League (ADL).

Zara Khan, '26
Staff Writer

BEST BUDDIES

Franklin Towne celebrates Friendship Day through the Best Buddies program

by Jacob Hudson, '24

Best Buddies is an international program created to help students build relationships and understanding with all people. This program includes many events that members get to partake in, such as after-school bingo, friendship bracelet making, and exciting field trips for members.

This program is open to anyone who would like to participate in it, email or see Ms. Gilborges with any questions.

As part of Best Buddies, February 14th was Friendship Day. It was a day where people could celebrate their close relationships with the people they care about. Candy Grams were given out for \$1 a piece to send a message to the people close to you. Students played Friendship Day Quizzo in the classroom, and at the end of the day students and teachers gathered to make Friendship Bracelets.

BEST BUDDIES®



Jacob Hudson, '24
Staff Writer



Mr. Saracino takes in the wonderful friendship bracelets / Photography Department



Students became friends and made sure to show it with their bracelets / Photography Department



Ms. Levins helps put together a student's friendship bracelets / Photography Department

FRESHMEN & SOPHMORE FORMAL

Freshmen and sophomores gathered to dance and enjoy their first formal school dance

by Zara Khan, '26

Franklin Towne had the Freshmen and Sophomore Formal Dance on February 23rd, 2023. Students and staff worked hard to make the day as fun as possible, and it worked. There were snacks, music, a photo booth, and dancing.

Those who attended the dance said the day was memorable. Attendees noted that the vibe was amazing and the music was on point in getting people on the dance floor.

Be sure to purchase your tickets next year for the next Freshmen and Sophomore Formal.



SPORTS

Boys Wrestling

By Jacob Hudson, '24

On February 24, 2024, the wrestling team competed in Districts at St. Joseph's Prep. They went in strong and with a solid game plan.

While not all the members made place for Regionals, Jimmy McFadden and Donny Campbell ended up in fifth place and were able to secure a place in Regionals on March 2, 2024.

When asked about his last season as a Franklin Towne wrestler, a long-time senior team member Ryan Sullivan said, "the journey has been quick but so much fun and it couldn't have ended better."

Girls Basketball

By Jacob Hudson, '24

The conclusion of the girl's basketball season has left the team with great experiences, but also great sorrow. Like many of the other sports teams, the basketball team had to say goodbye to some important players for this season as they will be graduating this coming summer.

A senior player Asyah Hampton was interviewed on what she thought of her final playing season. "It was a great opportunity to be able to play for this team for so long," Hampton said.

Hampton went on to say, "Bonds were built with the teammates and it paid off; we were able to celebrate victories and process losses and improve our game. The environment here was amazing and only time will tell what's in store for the next season."



The 2023-2024 Girls Basketball Team / Photography Department

Cheer

By Jacob Hudson, '24

The Cheer Team had their last match of the season and they stuck to their routine perfectly, and landed in second place.

With the ending of that last match, many cheer members basked in their final moments as a Franklin Towne Cheerleader.

One member, Emely Rosa, said she's "sad it's over, but being a cheerleader was



The 2023-2024 Boys Wrestling Team / Photography Department

Boys Basketball

By Jacob Hudson, '24

The recent basketball season came to a close this month having both new beginnings and final chapters for some players.

The team went on to play an impressive and immersive season, scoring many victories with some of the most hard-working players out there. The seniors had to say goodbye to their beloved final season at Franklin Towne, one in which they enjoyed immensely and are sad that it's over.

Senior Joe Hill said of his final season: "It was a great season...I enjoyed meeting the younger players and hope they carry on the legacy through their remaining playing years here." Furthermore, Hill said, "the environment of being in a place where everyone wants to see another person succeed was more than just basketball, it was a brotherhood."



The 2023-2024 Boys Basketball Team / Photography Department



The 2023-2024 Cheer Team / Photography Department

genuinely so much fun" and praised all her teammates, especially Captain Hailey. "I'm going to miss the sport and how much of an impact it had on my life."

FTCHS NEWS

Towne students help raise money through the annual Hunger Games

by Shannon-Marie Rolon, '25

The Hunger Games started February 20, 2024. Stop by and get your treats on every floor. With brownies on the second floor from the Math Department, or visit Caruso on the fourth floor with soups, soda, and more. You can get all your snack needs from Ms. Diviny on the third floor, as well. As if that were not enough, hot dogs or grilled cheeses are available at 215 during dismissal. Be sure to get your snacking needs and thank your teachers.

Towne Connections isn't merely just a part of Franklin Towne. It's the embodiment of empathy and solidarity, extending its arms to provide not just meals and shelter, but warmth, dignity, and a sense of belonging to those in need.

Every year, FTC engages in what is fondly referred to as their version of the Hunger Games. It's not a battle for survival; rather, it's a symbol of the school coming together, a reminder of the challenges faced by so many within the community.



The ever popular "Caruso Cart" returns for the 2024 Hunger Games / Photography Department

The Hunger Games will run from Tuesday, February 20th until Wednesday, March 20th to raise money. The idea of Hunger Games is to fundraise as much money in the time allotted.

Shannon-Marie Rolon, '25
Staff Writer

Black History Month is commemorated with a celebration at Franklin Towne

by Nyla Hawthorne, '25

Black History Month was officially recognized in 1976, a short period of time after the Civil Rights Movement in the 50s. This was a monumental event for the African American community because they were finally being seen after years of oppression.

Franklin Towne has recognized the importance of Black History Month and decided to celebrate it by allowing students to express themselves

The fourth floor is decorated in artwork made by students and includes pictures of important African American figures, drawings of the students themselves, and a banner consisting of the African flag colors going along the wall.

The history department was encouraged to talk to their students about Black History Month and express how people of color have been treated throughout history.

Many classes added Black history lessons to their curriculum.

For example, Ms. Vesper's Psychology class talked about how minorities were underrepresented in children's toys and how it had an effect on their self-esteem and mental health.

Ms. Jones' History class learned lessons on the Harlem Renaissance and how music was an important part of Black culture.

Ms. Jones also took initiative and designed the fourth-floor hallway and planned the event in the Student Union celebrating African American Culture.

Nyla Hawthorne, '25
Staff Writer



Black History Month Expo on the 4th Floor / Nyla Hawthorne

STUDENT ARTWORK

Each month, we would like to highlight student submitted artwork or writing. If you have something that you would like to submit, please email Mr. Cunningham (scunningham@franklintowne.org).

Please note that not all work submitted may be published.

"The best design software is
BeTweeN Your EaRs
.so keep it upgraded by
LOOKING 
ReAdInG

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and
? QuEsTiOnInG.
And learn to think with a pencil in your hand."
-Andy Gossett

A Candle Burns
By Aiden Bowe **Samuel Dowling**

In the stillness of the night,
A candle burns, shining bright,
Its wick a beacon, guiding the way,
Through darkness and shadows that oft betray.

The flame flickers, dancing in the breeze,
A tiny dancer, swaying with ease,
Its light casting shapes on the wall,
A performance for none yet seen by all.

The wax melts, a slow, steady drip,
A life consumed, with each tiny trip,
The flame still burning, unwavering and strong,
As if to say, "I will not be gone for long."

And yet, as the night wears on,
The candle's light begins to wane,
Its flame growing weaker, as if to die,
As the darkness claims the sky.

But in that moment, a sudden spark,
A rebirth of light, to chase away the dark,
The flame ignites, a fiery passion,
A symbol of hope, a flickering emotion.

For though the candle may burn low,
Its light will never cease to glow,
A testament to its enduring power,
To light the way in the darkest hour.



Samuel Dowling



Justin Lane

UPCOMING EVENTS



Best Buddies Friendship Walk

Franklin Towne's Best Buddies Chapter has created a team to walk in this year's Friendship Walk. This year's Friendship Walk for the Philadelphia area will take place on Sunday, April 28th at the KOP mall. Check-in begins at 8:00am, Opening Ceremonies begin at 9:00am, and the walk will begin at 10:00am.

If you're interested in being part of our team and walking, you can join by clicking the link at the bottom of the email that will take you to our team page! If you're unable to participate but would like to donate, you can do that by clicking the same link.

Once registered, you have the ability to create your own personal fundraising page that you can share with your family and friends to raise even more money for the Best Buddies Friendship Walk. There is no obligation to do this, but one incentive is if you sign up for the walk and raise \$50+, you receive a 2024 participant t-shirt at the walk. There are other incentives as well, such as Best Buddies Bracelets, shirts, back-

packs, water bottles, and much more.

If you'd like to learn more about the incentives or the walk itself, you can visit: [the website here](#). If interested in walking with us, here are the steps to join:

- Visit our team fundraising [page](#)
- Register for the Best Buddies Friendship Walk under our school name
- Start your own fundraising efforts for Best Buddies International!

Please join to help spread inclusion throughout the FTC community and around the world.

BEST BUDDIES



Junior Prom is almost here

Junior Prom is a wonderful event for all juniors to experience. All juniors are welcome to attend and dance and have one of the best and unforgettable nights.

Get your tickets as soon as they go on sale March 11. Tickets are \$50 and dinner will be included.

Save the date

JUNIOR PROM

April 12th
7pm-10pm
Tickets on Sale March 11th-22nd
\$50 per person
Dinner Included

This edition of Towne Times could not have been completed without the excellent work of our staff writers: Gabby Torres, Abigail Pennisi, Jacob Hudson, Shannon-Marie Rolon, Nyla Hawthorne, and Zara Khan.

If you would like to join for the next edition, please see Mr. Cunningham in room 355.

All of us here at Towne Times thank you for reading this edition. We look forward to next month.

-Mr. Cunningham