

THE PAW PRESS

Ballantyne Elementary School Charlotte, N.C.

Spring/Summer 2023

PRINCIPAL ROGERS CONQUERS YEAR SIX!

BY THE PAW PRESS

The Ballantyne Paw Press is passionate about all things Ballantyne, including our Principle! We are so lucky to have someone like Principal Rogers leading the way. Can you believe this is her fifth year as our Principal? With how much life has changed we had to celebrate this anniversary. So the Paw Press team looked at previous interviews and worked together to think about what we wanted to know most. Check out her full interview below and don't forget to say congrats!

Q: Why did you choose to be a principal?
Principal Rogers: I have always loved school. My grandmother was a teacher. I was a 4th grade and a 6th grade teacher. I loved the students in my class and the teachers I got to mentor and support as team Lead and Department Lead. I wanted to continue to help more and more students so I became a teacher coach and a literacy and academic facilitator at an elementary school and a middle school. Then, I decided I wanted to help even more teachers and more students so I became an Assistant Principal at an



Principal Rogers and her original Ballantyne Bear

elementary school and a middle school. Then, I decided 6 years ago that I wanted to help even more teachers and more students and more families so I became the Principal of Ballantyne Elementary School—the largest K-5 elementary school in CMS.

Q: Who was/were your mentor(s)?

Principal Rogers: I have had some pretty

special people in my life that have helped me learn to be my best self. My 1st grade teacher helped me make friends when I was really, really shy and didn't talk in class. My 3rd grade teacher helped me learn that tests can be fun and exciting because it is an opportunity to show your family tests can be fun and exciting

because it is an opportunity to show your family and the world what you know. My 5th grade teacher challenged me by accelerating reading and math lessons. I wanted to be like these teachers. When I was a teacher, my mentor was my principal. She helped me learn new ways to teach. She believed in me and let me try new things. I worked with her at 3 different

-See Rogers 5 on Page 3



Ballantyne Students on their way to class

Photo Credit: Whyatt Culbreth

READY AND RISING FIFTH GRADERS

BY SIYA DAMA

If you ask me how I feel about becoming a successful BES graduate and a rising middle schooler, I would say that I'm pretty excited! Middle school has a lot of benefits, and once you become a 6th grader you'll find your rhythm. I also think that because middle school is a huge step from elementary, we should appreciate everything that Ballantyne has given us! The rising middle schoolers who are about to graduate from Ballantyne aren't just graduates. They're people who have learned how to work with purpose, effort, and perseverance. They're

people who've learned and demonstrated 7 Habits and know how to balance school and their lives. They're people that, well, are ready for middle school! I interviewed two fifth graders, Aidenn and Gaby, from Ms. Moore's class. Here's their insight, or better said their views, of middle school -

Q: What benefits do you think middle school has?

Aidenn: In middle school, you could choose your own classes, it's bigger in size than Ballantyne, and you have different teachers teaching different subjects."

Q: Do you believe BES has

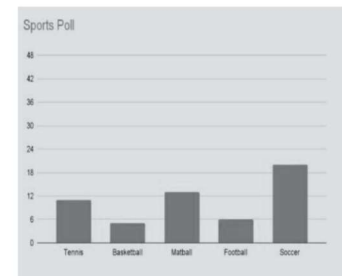
prepared you for middle school and how?

Gaby: Yes, because I learned new things that I didn't know before, and the material was understandable and easy to comprehend."

We're all feeling the excitement rippling over 5th grade like a wave. So it's important to understand that rising middle schoolers from BES are walking away with the essentials that they need for middle school. All of these graduates are Ballantyne Elementary school's greatest achievements and we couldn't be more proud!

A PITCH PERFECT B.E.S. POLL

BY ADHRIT BASHETTY



GOOOOALLL! 'He shoots! He scores!' 'Down goes Frazier! down goes Frazier!' Iconic sports lines like these are a part of sports history. Sports that bring people together across generations and forge new relationships. Here at Ballantyne Elementary, we are very passionate about all sports. But which sport could the school favorite?

Inquiring minds at the Paw Press wanted to solve this mystery. So, we asked almost 50 students at school which sport topped their list. Their choices were soccer, football, matball, basketball, and tennis. Check out the results above and compare your favorites with your friends!

COMMENTARY



Tea Time With Divya

BY DIVYA SHARMA

At Ballantyne we're not just learning, we're growing up. It can be fun, boring, and overwhelming. Here at the Paw Press we understand, and created this advice column to help students feel better about the stuff that bugs us.

Everywhere around the school students wonder how they can do better with different things. Which is okay because that sometimes happens to me too. A few students asked for advice on the subjects listed below.

Q: How do I connect with my teacher because it is frustrating?

A: By the middle of the year, you usually are able to connect with your teacher and get to know them better and they'll know you better. If you still haven't built a connection by that time, it would probably be ok to talk to them or a counselor.

Q: How do I not get distracted while in class?

A: Sometimes I can get distracted by stuff on my desk or by friends in my class. But I tell myself how

important it is to listen to the teacher. So I suggest keeping stuff off the desk and just keeping your eyes and ears on the teacher.

Q: How can I stop procrastinating?

A: Procrastinating is really hard to deal with, but it's doable. I would suggest that you work for 30 minutes and then take a break for 10 minutes and then start working again and keep repeating this pattern. If this doesn't work, keep trying.

Q: How can I be true about myself?

A: I suggest that when you meet new people to be true to yourself and show your real interests and don't try to be someone who you aren't.

Q: How can I choose my friends wisely?

A: I would suggest that you choose friends that like you for you and that you like them because they are being themselves. But remember we're all changing and growing. It's ok not to connect with everyone and to be different from other kids.

Beautiful School Art Also Tells Story

BY SIYA DAMA

When I walk through the halls, or into the bathroom, or even when going to second specials on a "B day", I always walk past wonderful art pieces! It makes me wonder about the story behind the artwork we see! Fantastic pieces such as the humongous Texture Rainbow in the Media Center, the Trait painting in the front office hall and, of course the Character Tree all catch my eye. There is a silver plaque that talks about the trait paintings and I just had to learn more. It all started when I noticed something these art pieces share that

shines through them. The Rainbow piece is a symbol of creativity and community. In the Character Tree, I see a representation of clubs supporting passion and BES. I love how Ballantyne can represent itself in so many different ways. The rainbow art piece, as Mrs. Zelinski calls it, is a memory tapestry. It was actually created by a visiting artist using a 300-year old loom! The items sewn in aren't just random either. They are items that 4th graders, 5th graders, and teachers felt represented themselves. See what I mean? Follow me as we delve deeper into

Ballantyne's Art History! While researching this story I learned that the Trait paintings were done by students before the school opened. Then there's the Character Tree! This beautiful tree was done by another art teacher and

Mrs. Zelinski. The tree's small wooden leaves are covered in paintings of perseverance, caring, and more. One wooden leaf that really touched me showed someone pushing a friend in a wheelchair out of a hospital. I asked a fellow BES student what she felt the Rainbow art piece portrayed. She told me, "I think it shows all the character traits we see in the halls through its colors. It also represents our community (at Ballantyne Elementary) through it. Some could see it as a symbol of synergy, perseverance, and

these art pieces will inspire or have an effect on younger grades, and he told me, "I think that, yes, it will have an effect on younger grades because it motivates them (that you should demonstrate these character traits) and offers an idea that helps them reach a goal they've set and are working towards." There's one thing I absolutely love about Ballantyne's art is that it makes you think. It makes you wonder. So, in the end, I just knew there was something hidden behind the true meaning of these art pieces!



The Character Tree

Photo Credit: Ellie Rivera

you should face your fears. To get a little deeper insight, I asked an older effort." Another student I interviewed said her favorite art piece was the Bravery Trait painting because it showed that student whether they think

behind the true meaning of these art pieces! This isn't just part of Ballantyne's hallways or school. It's part of the bigger picture- our community.

Ballantyne Holds First Ever House Book Contest

BY ADHRIT BASHETTY

Have you ever had a book you couldn't stop reading? Do you remember the first time you read something? Doesn't it feel warm and exciting?

Well then, I bet you were excited about Ballantyne's Book Contest! Our school holds this contest every year and, this year it was a house competition. Houses were first introduced last year through the fifth grade. Now that they are school wide, it's an even better way to connect with new people and achieve goals.

This year, the school houses went hard and smashed the goal! People submitted books, such as Harry Potter and Diary of a Wimpy Kid. As a school, we actually managed to surpass over 2,900 books!

Over weeks of valiant effort, victory can only be claimed by one winner! Altruismo locked in first place with 997 total books. Second place went to Revêur, who followed very closely with 854 books. Third place was claimed by Isibindi, with 630 books, and Amistad came in last with a total of 459 books. A good job to all the houses, and a gallant effort to everyone that participated.

While there won't be another reading competition for quite some time, we sincerely hope that people will be reading a lot during summer vacation. So good luck to everyone, and make sure to do your BES-T.



The House book count

Photo Credit: Ellie Rivera

Ballantyne's Diversity Knows No Bounds

BY DIVYA SHARMA

Walking through the halls of Ballantyne Elementary, you'll see faces from all around the globe. From Ecuador to Taiwan, the school is a colorful tapestry of culture and tradition. It's really cool to see and nice to think of just how lucky we all are.

I spoke with an Ecuadorian student who told me that her homeland is "a multi-ethnic country with people of indigenous, African, and even European heritage." That sounds like a rich culture bursting with color and flavor. Meanwhile, a student from the Dominican Republic

told me, people of indigenous, African, and even European heritage." That sounds like a rich culture bursting with color and flavor. Meanwhile, a student from the Dominican Republic told me, "Our country believes in Roman Catholicism and other christian denominations." That was something I never knew. A Sri Lankan student told me, "Our culture is known for cricket, holistic medicine, religious icons such as the Buddhist flag, and other cultural exports



Our Eclectic Community

Photo Credit: Whyatt Gulbreth

like tea, cinnamon, and gems." With so much to learn, it's easy to see the beauty of our community and get excited by the idea of cultural exchanges happening at school. But it's not just how unique our cultures are that's interesting - it's also the shared values that bind them together. Kira from Russia told me, "Our culture is quite collective and

creating a sense of global community that's truly special. As we continue to share our school, let's share our cultures and traditions. In this way we can open new pathways to understanding and empathy - a lesson that's necessary both inside and outside of the classroom.

inclusive." While Elina from Ukraine described her culture as, "Our culture is extremely generous and hospitable." You can see these values reflected in the warm and students interact, creating a warm and welcoming atmosphere that makes this school a special place to be. There's so much to learn about each other's cultures. For instance, did you know Also, The Dominican Republic has influences from Spain, Africa, and native Taino people. Sri Lanka reflects diverse range of cultures, including Indian, Arab, and European influences.

Now I see BES as a place where students can discover the world through one another,

Principal Rogers

From Page 1

schools in CMS. She encouraged me to be a principal so that I could make a greater impact on students. This is when I went back to college to be a principal. When I was ready to be a principal, she helped me find just the right school for me!

Q: How do you balance work and life?

Principal Rogers: I balance work and life by trying to practice Habit 7-Sharpen the Saw. I work very hard at school. Then, when I get home I eat dinner with my family, read, and try to exercise by riding my bike, running, or walking.

Q: How are your own kids since we last asked about them?

Principal Rogers: My kids are growing up! When I became the principal of Ballantyne Elementary, my daughter Haley was in 4th grade and my son Tanner was in Kindergarten. Now Haley is in 9th grade in High School and Tanner is in 5th grade. They both work hard at school and on the softball and baseball fields. Haley loves listening to music and Tanner collects Pokémon.

Q: Which of the 7 habits is your fave?

Principal Rogers: I love all of the 7 habits. I actually believe Habit 8 is my favorite though. Habit 8 is Find Your Voice and Inspire Others to Find Theirs. People who have found their voice focus on expanding their circle of influence, being trustworthy, building trust, blending the voices of others, and creating a common vision. They align goals and systems and empower others. I feel to be a good leader and be the best principal for BES, I must live and practice Habit 8 daily.

Q: What are your future plans for the school?

Principal Rogers: PTA started Popcorn Friday. The PTA loves to celebrate our

A Spotlight on Special Pets

Mrs. Woodcook's Class Fish



Both Photo Credits: Chayce Pollard

BY ADHRIT BASHETTY

Did you know you could have a pet squirrel, a bearded dragon, or even a pet spider? One of the tiniest pets in the world you can own is the brahminy blind snake that's only 3 inches long. At our school, some students and teachers actually own these types of pets!

Currently at Ballantyne, we have two teachers who have unusual pets. The lizard shown above belongs to Mr. Butler. Would you believe Mrs. Woodcook has two different kinds of pets - two gerbils and a goldfish. I myself have a

clever little betta fish. A fun fact about about betta fish is that they can breathe air. The hermit crab can also air just like my betta fish. I talked to Rushil, who's a student in Mrs. Dombkowski's class, who owns a hermit crab. He said, "We got the idea for a hermit crab after seeing one when we visited the Maldives. An interesting fact about our hermit crab is that they sleep during the day and are awake at night." That's called nocturnal! I also talked to Grayson in Mrs. Miller's class, who used to own an anole. It's a

type of lizard-like reptile. He said, "When I found the anole in our backyard, I kept it as a pet. An interesting fact was that it could change colors, from green to brown. When it was happy, it turned green. When it was scared, it turned brown."

Even if your pet is not unusual, all different pet types are interesting. This was a very interesting subject to learn more about. I really liked how the people chose their pets with love. To me, it doesn't matter if your pet is unusual or not, it depends on how special your pet is to you.



Mr. Butler's Class Pet Bowzer

Principal Rogers: I would love to see Ballantyne Elementary School become a Leader in Me Lighthouse School. This prestigious honor means that we are living and implementing the 7 habits at school and at home. This means that our school is working at the highest level with the best culture, academics, and leadership opportunities for all.

Q: Where did Popcorn Friday come from?
Principal Rogers: PTA started Popcorn Friday. The PTA loves to celebrate our

students! It takes a lot of parent volunteers to pop that popcorn for students each month.

Q: When did you get the idea for adding new things for the playgrounds?

Principal Rogers: Mrs. Sluder always wants kids moving and having fun! She is very creative and is always wanting to do more for you! Our PTA and parents also purchased new playground equipment a few years ago. Our 5th graders donated the concrete under the picnic tables so we can

sit under there and not get our feet muddy.

Q: Do you have any staff-shoutouts, if any?

Principal Rogers: I love to shout out the staff every opportunity I get. I have been in CMS for over 23 years and worked at other schools too. Hands down BES has the hardest working teachers and staff who truly love what they do (reach and teach all students), who they do it for (you), and where they do it (BES). We have the BEST Staff.

Meet Our Staff!



LEAD EDITOR
SNEHA VALLABHAJOSYULA



LEAD REPORTER
SIYA DAMA



LEAD ILLUSTRATOR
MEENAKSHI SUMAL



EDITOR
AVNI SALARIA



REPORTER
ADHRIT BASHETTY



PHOTOGRAPHER
WHYATT CULBRETH



REPORTER
DIVYA SHARMA



PHOTOGRAPHER
CHAYCE POLLARD



PHOTOGRAPHER
ELLIE RIVERA

Congrats to these wonderful students who worked all year to present this paper as a collaboration of hearts and minds. In my first year as News Team Director, I couldn't more proud. This paper reflects our amazing students and an incredible school. We hope you've enjoyed their work and if you'd like to join our team next year, be sure to lookout for the fall sign up.



Peanut butter Jelly... Egg?

Summer is Coming! It's time for pools, bike rides, and playgrounds. We at the Paw Press will be getting into all kinds fun this summer. But just in case a rainy day changes our plans, we've got a back up. Science experiments! We're sharing this one since it's a simple experiment thats loads of fun.

The Jelly Egg Experiment

Materials:

1. An egg (either cooked or raw... however brave you're feeling)
2. A tall drinking glass
3. White vinegar.



Procedure:

- Put your egg into a tall drinking glass.
- Pour vinegar into the glass until the egg is covered.
- Put the glass aside so no one drinks and/or spills it. It will smell a bit. Vinegar has a strong odor.
- Let the egg soak overnight. Make some observations! You should notice a lot of foam and bubbles. When it seems to have slowed, move on to the next step.
- Rinse the vinegar and foam out with water and then cover the egg again with vinegar.
- Wait for 6 days. That's a long time but do it; you don't want a half pickled egg in your hands.
- At the end of this time, rinse off the egg and pick it up.
- You should notice it feels slightly different than when you started... most noticeably it is missing the shell and has a weird rubbery feel to it. Shake it. Gently squeeze it.
- Test out your new creation in the sink by dropping it from a few inches and then some more.
- You now have a cool creation that can astound your friends and family. Place it back in the egg tray for some hilarity. The possibilities are endless.

Did You Know?

- An ostrich's eye is bigger than its brain!
- It is physically impossible for some pigs to look up.
- You probably know that snails are really slow but did you know that one nap can last for three years!
- Not only are sea lions adorable, they are also very musical. They are the only animals that can clap to a beat.
- You probably know that tomatoes are fruit but did you know avocados are too?