Staff Spotlight: The Legendary Mr. Crystal

By Issac Stachkunas
Staff Writer

“The goal of the teacher, is to help their student exceed them.”

Mr. Crystal is a man that wants to help. Here at AAE, he has not only put his time towards the school website, mentorships, visitors, press releases, and the digital displays around the building, but also towards trying to limit the population gap between males and females in STEM. Though his official job description has evolved significantly within the duration of his current career, he will be remembered as a helping hand. He began working for CREC as a Magnet Theme Coach in the middle school. The goal of this position was to help integrate STEM concepts into the curriculum. His qualifications in STEM came primarily from his first career after high school, the Navy. Specifically, a Radar technician aboard the U.S.S. Independence. The experience gained from this job led to his exploration in the field of data processing, but ended up hitting a crook along the path. After taking a job at a summer camp, Mr. Crystal was reminded of something essential to him making it this far, help from those who taught him. In his youth, Mr. Crystal lived inside of an intense home environment. This, coupled with frequent moving, left him feeling isolated from most of the other kids. It was his teachers that motivated him and got him involved with school. It was the effort of these people that made a man who cares about making education a better experience for students.

He is going to be leaving our school at the end of this year. While he truly loves making learning a better experience, he feels that it is time to move on. His exact plans for the future are unknown, but it will likely involve spending time with his four daughters, as well as finding new ways to assist people.

“My favorite thing to do is to help some find an unknown potential of themselves.”
Celebrating The World On Earth Day

By Ben Parke  
Junior Editor

There is one issue that is unavoidable. One that will affect every country, every human on this planet it is the fight against climate change. It's a battle that will define the contours of human history and if no review mechanism is codified under international law, then symptoms will start to manifest on Earth.

It's time that the fierce urgency of this issue is understood and the world becomes more concerned about community rather than individuality.

Earth Day has attempted to draw people's attention towards these issues and call for support for environmental protection policies. Celebrated on April 22nd, 193 countries have coordinated global events which focus on the environmental issues that the world faces. However, Earth Day has largely been unsuccessful. Every year, the world extracts an estimated 55 billion tons of fossil energy, minerals, metals, and biomass from the Earth, all causing pollution.

The world has already lost 80% of its forests, 27% of our coral reefs, and we, as global citizens, have a garbage island floating in our ocean, mostly comprised of plastics. Every hour, 1,692 acres of productive dry land become desert and the problem is that there is no end to the destruction. The world is dying. And simply reducing, reusing, and recycling is not the solution to the problem.

The objectives of Earth Day must be met with large corporations and nations banding together to ratify treaties that will preserve the world for future generations. Since this issue will not be solved by one country or one man, it must be a collective effort and to reverse the effects of climate change every man, woman, and child must be willing to sacrifice just a little, so that their grandchildren and great grandchildren will have clean air to breathe and water to drink.

Ramadan: Understanding The Islamic Practice

By Ben Parke  
Junior Editor

Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, and Hinduism are religions that people understand. One religion that is misunderstood - Islam.

This year from May 15th to June 13th (also the ninth month of the Islamic calendar) will be observed as a month of fasting; this commemorates the first revelation of the Quran to Muhammad, the final prophet. Annually, the holiday is celebrated for 29–30 days based on the sightings of the crescent moon.

As one of the five pillars of Islam, fasting is obligatory for adult Muslims except for those who are elderly, ill or pregnant. Fasting from dawn until sunset, Muslims cannot engage in sexual relations and must refrain from smoking, eating, and drinking while also avoiding sinful behavior such as swearing and fighting. A time of spiritual reflection, improvement and increased devotion, Ramadan is to many Muslims the holiest month of the year.

However, many muslims aren't free to practice their religion. The number of assaults against Muslims in the United States rose again in 2016, surpassing the number recorded in 2001, the same year of the September 11th terrorist attacks, according to a Pew Research Center report about anti-muslim crimes.

In 2016, there were 127 reported victims of aggravated or simple assault. Anti-Muslim intimidation increased as well with 144 reported victims, compared with 120 in 2015. Crimes that damage or destroy property, including vandalism rose from 70 cases against Muslims in 2015 to 92 last year and the statistics go on.

Islam is an Abrahamic faith, along with Christianity. Both believing in the existence of Jesus. This problem of religious persecution is embroiled in a long-standing tradition of post-Civil War racial violence and generalizations dating back to pre-colonial America.

Islam is a religion of love, peace and happiness, and to judge a group based on the actions of one sect, is extreme and unjust.
The Class of 2018 marks the final year of GHAMAS. The half-day program has graduated hundreds of alumni, whose lives have been transformed by the extraordinary academic and social experiences of this academy.

We, the final members of this renowned program, dedicate this editorial in honor of GHAMAS, so that its near twenty years of history may be cherished in our memories.

In the late 1990s, Trinity College faced a dilemma: rising crime rates in the neighborhoods bordering the campus deterred prospective applicants of the College. Thus, in 1996, Trinity announced a bold $6 million commitment to a grand neighborhood revitalization plan, supported by Hartford and the State. Fellow members of the Southside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance matched Trinity's commitment, and in 1997, ground was broken on 15 Vernon Street to begin construction of the Learning Corridor.

Due to this unique history, GHAMAS had a close connection to the College; after all, we had been located right next to its campus. In fact, in the initial stages of development, the Academy's first classes were held in Trinity's classrooms.

The grand vision of the Learning Corridor was to provide exceptional educational opportunities to students of all backgrounds, who can prosper in the diversity and share passion for learning; through this, a long term urban revitalization was envisioned.

The culture of early GHAMAS was truly one of a kind. Enthusiasm for academics, passion of various hobbies, and a kind and open social dynamic characterized the small, tight-knit Academy.

Described by many teachers as having a “college feel,” a trust was placed on these motivated students that gave them many freedoms: no passes, no hall duty, collaborative commons areas, and no bells. In fact, Jeffrey Osborne, the first director of the Academy, intentionally replaced construction funding for bells for better laboratory facilities so that students can pursue their independent research projects. The principle everyone followed was “you act like adults, we'll treat you like adults.”

The exceptional faculty that joined the program in its early years also contributed to this “college feel.” Applicants for the STEM teaching positions needed to hold a Master's or Ph.D. in their subject. Mr. Jones recounts a peculiar moment in his interview, when he was asked what he believed to be the greatest milestone in mathematics in the past ten years. He later learned that his answer – the proof of Fermat's Last Theorem by Andrew Wiles – made him stand out as a true math enthusiast. This passion shared by the faculty was passed down to the students.

Above all, what made GHAMAS shine was its student body. It was a haven of learning: students of all backgrounds came together to an open and accepting environment where they truly pursued hobbies and subjects they loved. Student-run clubs prospered, independent study projects took off, and a warm, exciting atmosphere of enthusiasm surrounded the close-knit community.

We asked some teachers what they will remember about the GHAMAS program as its final year concludes. A common theme in their answers was the energy, maturity, and academic spirit of the student body. They will fondly look back on teaching students who stayed after class to ask countless questions beyond the course material, who were eager to pursue their own independent research projects, and who brought the Academy the academic recognition it deserved.

We dedicate to GHAMAS our utmost appreciation for what it has given us. The GHAMAS student body has now moved on to the nation's best universities and to impactful, exciting, and fulfilling careers of our future engineers, doctors, lawyers, business leaders, With the treasured memories of its beloved alumni, Goodbye, GHAMAS.
Math Team Qualifies For States

**By Rishika Maitra**  
**Editor**

Six members of the AAE Math Team represented our school at the annual Connecticut State Association of Mathematics Leagues (CSAML) meet. The team qualified for states after an excellent season in the upper Euler division of the Capital Area Math League (CAML), placing fourth. At CSAML, it was announced that sophomore Devesh Kakkar, junior Ben Keilty, and senior Keshav Vedula were selected to join a team representing the state of Connecticut at the national American Regions Mathematics League (ARML) competition in Pennsylvania.

These three students are joining a team of just 50 high school students, out of the 450 students who took the qualifying test. During the state meet, Devesh Kakkar and Keshav Vedula earned perfect scores, with impressive individual scores by team members Jocelyn Gartley (senior), Ben Keilty, Rishika Maitra (senior), and Manav Ramprasad (sophomore).

Finishing strong with a perfect score on the final team round, the AAE Math Team came in second place in their division, earning themselves a place at the New England Association of Math Leagues (NEAML) competition and a trophy for the school.
The length of the title of this opinion is just as cramped as the event on April 20th.

The International Coffee Book Fair House Night was a very packed night, with not one, not two, but three events in one. This setup was different than other years, where each of these events usually had a night of their own.

People who participated and planned both events feared that having them on the same night would affect one or the other. This was definitely a legitimate fear, as prior to the actual combination of events, I felt that many of us were really unsure of how it would come out.

I was witness to both events being planned out, and it would be difficult to say that there was no skepticism or conflict between both sides. The final schedule of the night placed International Night in the middle of Coffee House, which gave the former only about an hour for food and music. Initially, there was concern about the amount of time available and how the work within National Honor Society would be divided. With the setup of International Night being chaotic as it is, organization was even more important. I could see how both NHS and Student Council were doing their best to make sure the night went according to plan.

Despite any issues that arose and mixed sentiment in the air, the night went off fantastic. Watching people perform and show off their amazing talents and then enjoying a diverse range of food and music was truly a unique experience that I am sure many people enjoyed. Personally, I found that each event transitioned into the other smoothly, and that all the acts in the Coffee House had enough time to perform. The intermission improv between the first and second set of performances was my favorite part of the night for sure.

I would like to commend those who were part of the planning and integral to making that night what it was. While there may be criticisms here and there about how communication may have been lacking, or that some details of the night may not have come full circle until the day of, I truly believe that both NHS and Student Council pulled through to make a night that everyone had enjoyed.

As graduation day approaches, and the school bells ring for the last time, it’s important to reflect on how much you’ve achieved in the last four years. When you entered this school, most of you were worried about how many pimples you had and how high your voice was, how tall you would be, and the earliest you could get your license, and while some of those worries have stayed, the class of 2018 has transformed into a considerate and hardworking group of individuals.

This year, we’ll have four students attend Ivy League schools, one a military academy, and many more who are going to great institutions or are pursuing careers that will give them more life experience and challenges than many of their peers. We have future astronauts, Wall Street stock brokers, doctors, engineers, military officers, store-managers, plumbers, technicians and more, and although signing day has come and gone and much of your life seems set in stone, there is still time to make mistakes, to change your mind, and discover who you want to be because that final day of high school is only the first day of your adult life.

I won’t lie, life will be hard. There will be rejections, loss, and failures, there will be times when you don’t want to get out of bed and others when you feel like you won’t achieve anything. There will be people who don’t treat you fairly and there will be people who get farther than you by cheating and manipulating others.

However, by being the bigger person, by working harder than everyone else, that’s when you will be successful and respected, by doing things the honest way. So, go out there and make mistakes, because although you’ve already achieved a lot, there’s a lot left to do, and you’re the generation, the class, that will make a difference.
By Jean Pasato
Junior Editor

Lending a Helping Hand to Homes

On Saturday, April 28th, AAE students participated in Rebuild Hartford as part of National Rebuilding Day 2018. During this annual event, volunteers repair, rehabilitate, and restore homes in neighborhoods. This year, volunteers helped to renovate over 21 houses in the Southwest Neighborhood of Hartford. Jobs of the day included installing new window panes and doors, mulching, planting new flowers and shrubs, raking leaves, installing fire alarms and electrical outlets, and cleaning out garages.

AAE Art teachers Miss Pebody and Mr. Wright both attended and supported students in their work. Some Aerospace alumni were also able to make it that day, continuing on the proud tradition of taking part in this national effort to rebuild homes. An event like this demonstrates how important it is to give back to the community and serve those who are in need.

As individuals, we can always offer help and give aid to one other. As a school community, the power of several students can go a long way to lend a hand to expand our world view and open our hearts.

Students Participate At Code Quest

Eight of our students competed at the CodeQuest computer science competition at Sikorsky. The students were competing on three teams against over 20 teams from the region and almost 2000 students both nationally and internationally. Our team consisting of John-Ryan Dunn, Keshav Vedula, and Ben Goodman won first place in the advanced division at Sikorsky and are awaiting the national results.

The other AAE/GHAMAS competitors were participating in their first year at CodeQuest, and put together a great showing as well including: Manav R, Vivian N, Luke Q, Aditya P, and Srikar G.

Students Win Congressional App Challenge

Gianna Guzzo, Marissa Guzzo, and Alexandra Smith (pictured with Congressman Joe Courtney) won the Congressional App Challenge with their App "Feel Good" to help alleviate anxiety in teenagers.

Richiez Wins Essay Contest

Senior Bryan Richiez won 3rd place for his essay “Mis dos familias” in the National Celebration of Spanglish Day Creative Writing Contest, hosted by Iowa University. His entry was selected based on its original and creative approach to the experience of living between Spanish and English. ¡Felicidades, Bryan!

Bryan attributes his success to his “school mom” as well as his mother. Richiez wrote, “Coming in as a freshman three years ago, I was scared to start this new chapter in life; pero con la ayuda de mis mamás, he logrado ser un school leader and a successful student athlete, sin olvidar where I come from. It is thanks to mis familias, that I can look forward to building a better future for myself and paving the way for others con dos casas to do the same.”
Students Learn: In Life, Choices Matter

By Will Hobson-Rhodes
Staff Writer

In the rush of a single overwhelming moment, better judgement can turn hazy, and consequences can become all too real. Such was the case for 22 year old Chris Stacey on the night of April 11, 2000.

While intoxicated, he was faced with a decision of whether or not to drive. He chose incorrectly, and two people were killed. Not only did he have to live with the guilt of that decision, he had to live for 30 years in prison, missing out on the remainder of his father’s life, the respect of his sister, and the emotions drowning his mother.

Over the course of this sentence, he came to a realization—while his past decisions had terrible consequences, future decisions could lead to uplifting ones. He began to volunteer, and promote this concept. Soon, he had a new friend, a new frame of reference, and finally, a family. 18 years later, on Friday, May 18th, he visited our school to tell his story, reminding us that sometimes the most powerful tools in life are optimism and utilizing opportunities.

To conclude, the Choices Matter presenters demonstrated the effects of bad decision-making through a drunk-driving simulator and beer goggle walking test. While “under the influence,” it was not uncommon to see the front end of the car in a variety of strange objects, ranging from solid walls to school buses. In terms of simply walking under the same conditions, most students were lucky to remain upright, and some unfortunate others even found themselves sprawled out on top of nearby onlookers.
Outdoor Track

By Vivian Ngo
Staff Writer

This outdoor track season has been one with a lot of ups and downs, the downs mostly consisting of weather-related issues. However, despite all the setbacks, every member of the team was able to improve in their abilities, which overall contributed to the success of the season.

Two new coaches were introduced at the beginning of the season. The first, Coach Medinah Nabbaduka has a background as a Quinnipiac University cross country and track runner. Additionally, Coach Maurice Lloyd was a professional football player and a former CREC football coach.

This change in leadership from previous years threw track members for a loop, but the team embraced them with open arms. With guidance from the new coaches, and much effort, many members were able to beat their personal records and even qualify for the state championship meet.

Three out of the five members on the girls’ team qualified for the state championship. Senior Celia Chacko qualified for the 800 meter, 1600 meter and 3200 meter races. Senior Vivian Ngo qualified for the 300 meter hurdles. And, Wendy Garcia qualified for shot put, javelin and discus.

Records Set At CRAL Championship

By Chris Rinaldi
Guest Writer

Many records were set at the meet against Achievement First, Academy of Science and Innovation, Public Safety, Metropolitan Learning Center, and Parish Hill.

At the meet, the boys’ team came in 2nd place overall with 129 points. Everyone who ran or threw did phenomenally well and should be proud of all of the work that they have put in over the length of the season.

In the 100m, Edgar Rodriguez earned fourth place with a time of 11.96s, and Brendon Hunter set a new PR of 12.23s and was sixth overall. In the men’s 200m, Hunter also snatched sixth with a time of 24.94s.

In the men’s 400m Joseph Bode dashed through the finish in seventh place at 56.01s and set a new personal record, and Noah Swanson was right behind him also with a new PR at 56.29s.

The 800m also brought new records with William Hobson-Rhoades smashing through his record and clutching a close third at 2:17.18, and Baheer Akberzai raced through the finish at fifth with a new best time of 2:31.17.

In the 1600m, Jacob Karvelis did an amazing job setting a new record of 5:20.10 in fourth and Hobson-Rhoades was right behind him in fifth with 5:31.17 and new record.

Then the 3200m was a long eight laps with Chris Rinaldi running a 11:14.43 and taking the silver, Jacob Karvelis following up with a 12:06.22 in third also setting a new record for himself and Andrew Hall pushing strong in sixth with a time of 12:39.80.

Next, Thomas Ross should be commended for his extraordinary work in the 110m hurdles setting a new record of 19.48s and snapping up third. His amazing work in the 300m hurdles brough home the silver with 47.44s.

Moreover, the 4x100m relay team should receive a special congratulations for not only setting a new record of 47.10s but also for qualifying for state.

The men on that team are: Matthew Magold, Jonathan Ortiz, Edgar Rodriguez, Jude Watson. Then, the 4x400m team earned first place with a time of 4:01.27s. The men consisting of that team were: Jonathan Jacobs, Josiah Mendez, Thomas Ross, Joseph Bode. Additionally, the 4x800m team fought for first and finished at 9:18.43 led by Hobson-Rhoades, Rinaldi, Hall, and Swanson.

In shot put, records were smashed, with Donatay Batchelor throwing a 40’07.00, which not only was a new record for him, but also catapulted him into the state qualifications along with a shiny gold metal for being first. Also, Wendy Garcia threw a 30’02.00 and set a new personal record as well as qualified for the state competition, Princess Harmon threw a 20’09.00, setting a new record, and Princess Harmon threw a 20’09.00, setting a new season record.

In discuss, Batchelor came in strong with the silver for throwing an impressive 103’08.00. And, Garcia threw the javelin, a powerful 87’10.00, setting herself a new record while Harmon also set a new record throwing a 65’00.00. In the men’s javelin, Batchelor threw a 113’09.50, earning a gold and Jonathan Spafford threw a 94’05.00 earning fourth. In the high jump, Jonathan Ortiz jumped an impressive 5’08.00, meeting the qualifications for state and tying for second place.

Baseball

The Jets got their 4th win of the season against MLC on Thursday. Senior Ben Goodman took a no-hitter into the 5th inning and pitched the best game of his career.

Senior Donnie Kulowski had a walk-off hit with his first hit of the season.