

# The Hilltopper

Issue No 2. | October 31, 2023



Mr. Corey Johnson, Head of School



St. Johnsbury Academy Jeju Faculty on Foundation Day

## Message from HoS

Dear St. Johnsbury Academy Jeju Community,

History and legacy are important concepts in schools. Many great people have been involved in the process of making St. Johnsbury Academy Jeju what it is today. October 23rd marks Foundation Day at St. Johnsbury Academy Jeju. This Foundation Day represents the end of our 6th year of operation and the beginning of our 7th year.

It is a very rare thing in international education to find a place where a group of parents, students, educators, and staff has chosen to invest so much of their time and effort into growing a school from the ground up. Time is the most important commodity we have in this world; it is finite in its nature. What we dedicate our time towards speaks volumes about what we value. It is clear that so many of us value St. Johnsbury Academy Jeju, and want to see our school and community be successful.

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## Character, Inquiry, Community

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### Foundation Day

Our students and faculty have helped to build a school of excellence, and their time has left an indelible mark on the history of this prestigious campus. Foundation Day is a special day in the history of St. Johnsbury Academy Jeju. Understanding the history of St. Johnsbury Academy Jeju helps us understand where we have been and where we are going as a school.

As we reflect on the past we can see clearly into the future. Our foundations are set and our future is bright. As we build the next chapter of our history you all will have a major role to play in that process as we forge ahead in creating a school of excellence.

### Parent Teacher Conferences

Parent Teacher Conferences allow administrators, teachers, and families to gain a shared understanding of students' learning and work together as partners in meeting students' academic and social-emotional needs. Our October conferences were a great opportunity for our families to see the learning environments. These conferences were a major success this year and were an excellent opportunity to welcome families as active members of the school's community. Parent Teacher Conferences are a standard part of the school's efforts to build a strong partnership between parents and teachers. We hope that you had a wonderful experience.

# Curriculum, Teaching & Learning

## Meet Our Coordinators

I'm delighted to take on the responsibility of SJA Jeju Service learning coordinator. I'm well aware of how eager SJA students are to find volunteer opportunities. My goal is to provide students with increased chances to engage with the real world through the service opportunities and academic competition website that I oversee. To achieve this, I will regularly update the website with accessible events for students. I encourage you to visit the site frequently.

Service Learning Coordinator - Ms. Suzy Song

The Athletics and STEAM departments have worked hard over the last 12 months to launch our VEX Robotics Competition program. In our most recent tournament, our Middle School teams showcased their exceptional teamwork and technical skills, securing three out of the top four teamwork awards and the top skill award. This is a solid start to our program, as our students not only displayed their prowess in robotics but also the ability to collaborate effectively.

We look forward to continued success on November 25th, when we will host our first Middle School and High School Robotics tournament.

STEAM & Robotics Coordinator Jonathan Bennett



## Inquiry PD with TC2

Just before the Chuseok break, Garfield and Laura Gini-Newman from The Critical Thinking Consortium (TC2) returned to SJA Jeju for an enriching session on Inquiry-based professional development. Over the course of two intensive days, our teachers immersed themselves in the process of infusing their classroom curriculum with inquiry-based strategies. Individual efforts have led to more engaging units and lessons, while group discussions have facilitated the sharing of innovative ideas and effective teaching methods. As a result, students will be better equipped to explore, question, and analyze, ultimately enhancing their education and preparing them for a future where critical thinking is paramount. This ongoing commitment to curriculum allows us to model the SJA Mission of Character, Inquiry, and Community.



# Campus Operations, EdTech and Res Life

## Operations Highlights

The physical safety and security of our students, faculty, staff, and their families is a high priority and concern for SJA Jeju, and this year, several improvements were completed and in process:

- Gates installed, restricting pedestrian and vehicle access to Resident Life and Faculty Housing, along with ES and PAC buildings.
- Electronic locks on the "back" entrances to ES/MS/HS and Administration buildings. These doors now require school ID badges to enter, limiting unauthorized access.
- Additional security staff... thinking about adding these guys to our team...



## EdTech Highlights

The right tools for the job?

Selecting the appropriate tools can result in effective outcomes, is it possible to achieve the same result or an even better one by using another method or tool?

Technological devices are all tools that support processes in an efficient way, but too often we can lose sight of the objective and use technology as the driving force. This can result in barriers or obstacles, keeping a simplistic and effective mindset is always the best strategy. Use technology only when necessary.



## Res Life Highlights

CASP for Semester One is halfway through, completing five out of our ten weeks. We are very keen to get the involvement of parents and students as we begin to plan the CASP activities for Semester Two.

Please check your email for the survey, and feel free to be as creative as you like with your suggestions. We want activities the students and parents wish to do that benefit your children's long-term future. Teamwork makes Dreams work, and I'm sure that with all your input, we can continue to grow and refine the program.



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# Early Childhood Highlights

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## PreK3 Highlights

PK3 Puppies are enjoying the nice cool Fall weather! We have taken this time to ride our bikes, go on nature walks and play outside. We have learned about our senses through different activities. We talked about the colors we see in Jeju during Fall. We saw pictures of pink muhly grass and talked about the leaves changing colors during this season.

PK3 students enjoyed learning all about pumpkins and reading books about Fall. They are also learning how to be good friends, taking turns and sharing.



## PreK4 Highlights

How quickly time has flown, it's already Fall! Our new Unit of Inquiry was filled with many learning experiences where students had the opportunity to learn about the changes and transformation around them, routines, practice skills and learn how to enjoy and be part of a large group. Whole group meetings have been filled with stories, songs, outdoor exploration, learning about our feelings, how to be kind, and how we can look after each other to feel safe and happy at school. We are very proud to see the milestones our students have achieved so far, and are excited for the rest of the year.



## KG Highlights

This month was filled with so much growth and learning in KG! Our learners are officially published authors, having completed their first books about true stories and events in their lives. It's wonderful to see our students taking so much pride in their work and how happy they are to share their first published work with their peers. We're also thrilled to have launched our Literacy Centers in October, which gives our students many chances to practice new literacy skills independently while integrating more technology into their learning. KG has enjoyed keeping track of the daily weather and temperature patterns in their Science unit. Another great month of learning in the books!





# Elementary School Highlights

## G1 Highlights

Grade 1 students have been enthusiastically exploring the world of cactuses through an unit of inquiry integrated with various subjects. They are learning about the unique characteristics of these desert plants, while utilizing their understanding of non-fiction text features. Through diverse reading materials students are learning about cactuses' habitats, life cycles, and traits. Students are also crafting informative writing pieces showcasing their knowledge. Students will continue to express their understanding in creative ways, such as through colorful illustrations, posters, and online books.



## G2 Highlights

This month Grade 2 concluded our learning during Unit 1. Students shared how our community impacts our identity during student led conferences in artistic and creative ways! During writing workshop, students applied their skills as writers to share a memorable small moment story and published their first book! During math workshop, students explored how the base ten system works and used their knowledge about place value to compare numbers. Finally, it was very special to share our learning goals with our families at our student led conferences. We look forward to reflecting on our goals throughout this year to help us grow as learners and humans!



## G3 Highlights

Grade 3 has been out and about observing the weather and collecting data. We spent time graphing the information and noticing patterns to make predictions for future weather events. To add to our learning in our science unit, we also enjoyed a trip to the Jeju Weather Office and explored the plants that thrive in this climate at the Halla Arboretum.

As a grade, we continue to build community bonds while focusing on being confident. One activity we undertook was challenging ourselves in a range of jump rope activities. We also showed great confidence showcasing our learning at the student led conferences.





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# Elementary School Highlights

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## G4 Highlights

Grade 4 have been looking at how humans can impact our environment. At the beginning of the month, we went to Hwasun Beach for a beach cleanup. We picked up several bags of trash and had fun in the sun. We finished up our Earth's Systems Science and Social Studies unit on how 'natural processes shape Earth's landscapes over time' by completing a variety of research projects. We took a field trip for some outdoor education to Suwolbong and Dongsanbong, where we looked at erosion and weathering up close on a hiking adventure! We look forward to continuing on our Grade 4 learning journey!



## G5 Highlights

Grade 5 embarked on an enriching journey over the past month! Students have been actively engaged in activities that not only honed their skills for Capstone but also laid a solid foundation for their future learning. They participated in a community cleanup at Gwakji Beach, launched two new literacy units, and received invaluable lessons in our Makerspace to enhance their readiness for Capstone. Our students dazzled us with a performance at our assembly, and had an exciting field trip to the Jeju Aerospace Museum. It's safe to say that October has been a month brimming with memorable experiences!



## Specialists Highlights

The PE department introduced a longboarding unit, providing students with a unique opportunity to experience this innovative initiative. Safety was our main priority, as students were required to wear a helmet, elbow pads, knee pads, and wrist guards. It was inspiring to see them rapidly improve their skills and confidence.

Elementary students have had a variety of science activities this year with the most recent one being the Jeju STEM Challenges. Students explored Jeju-gami, Jeju tea tasting, games, puzzles, engineering and more. Ms. Boyd and Ms. Kneyse were pleased to be able to celebrate our beautiful island through STEM!





# Middle School Highlights

## MS Musical: All Shook Up

The Middle School Musical, **All Shook Up**, is coming together! Our students will be putting on several showings for SJA and the greater community in November.

- ES Show - 8:45 a.m. on Tuesday, November 21
- MS Show - 2:15 p.m. on Wednesday, November 22
- HS Show - 2:00 p.m. on Thursday, November 23
- Community Show - 5:00 p.m. on Friday, November 24.

There will be space set aside for middle school parents at all of the performances. Students have been working hard to make this performance memorable, so please come out and experience it.

We want to thank the Parent Association and all of the volunteers who have helped with the musical in any way. Your support is appreciated!



## Model United Nations

Model United Nations (MUN) was one of the first clubs at SJA Jeju. We started with seven students from grades 6-10. Today we have well over 100 members from grades 5-12, with about two-thirds coming from the MS. Many of the leaders in HS (MUN, STUCO, NJHS) were in MS MUN. MUN fosters open-mindedness, collaboration, and encourages us to be reflective about our footprint in society. Students who wish to delve deeper into the realm of international relations and politics are encouraged to sign up for the International Relations class in middle school. This past month we hosted our first MUN conference (SJAMUN I). Congratulations to all students who participated and thank all students and staff who helped bring it all together.



## Student Organizations

The **National Junior Honor Society (NJHS)** is an international organization for middle school students. Students are expected to uphold the values, or Five Pillars, of scholarship, service, leadership, character, and citizenship. NJHS helps students to become well-rounded leaders in their school, community, and beyond. This year, we have twenty-six 7th and 8th graders in NJHS. So far this year they have been student ambassadors for new student orientation, volunteered at SJAMUN, raised funds for the World Wildlife Fund, and more. Follow us on Instagram @njhs\_sja\_hilltoppers.

**Student Council** is currently focused on enhancing the upcoming Winter Festival Week. Through brainstorming sessions and careful planning, they aim to engage the entire student body and potentially introduce activities that could contribute to earning House Points. Students are encouraged to share their ideas with their grade level representatives to make the event truly spectacular.





# High School Highlights

## SJAMUN

The inaugural Model United Nations conference held at St. Johnsbury Academy Jeju marked a very successful weekend for Model UN in the GEC. Over 130 high school and middle school student delegates were supported by the tremendous leadership of several chairs, secretaries-general, and advisor teachers. They came together on October 13-14 and worked tirelessly to find possible solutions for various world problems. In the process, these students developed many important skills, including research, writing, public speaking, and negotiating. Hopefully, this is just the start of a great annual tradition at SJA Jeju.



## HS House Spirit Games

On Oct. 13, SJA's STUCO and House Council successfully completed the first-ever House Spirit Day, working tirelessly to organize a memorable day full of activities for the entire student body and faculty. Such activities included: Tug of War, Capture the Flag, Green Light/Red Light, and ultimately culminating in a relay race around the track. The day was filled with demonstrations of student dedication and enthusiasm. Ultimately, a victor had to be announced and Dongmoolgoon House secured the top spot. Congrats, Dongmoolgoon!



## Fall Concert

The High School Music Department hosted the 2023 Fall Concert on October 10 with the participation of the Band and Choir classes and the Tunes after school activity. It was an occasion to celebrate the joy of music and the change of seasons. The Tunes bands performed a selection of rock and pop songs that rocked the house. The Choir class performed a selection of jazz pieces with the theme of falling leaves and shades of gold, setting an enjoyable mood, and the Band class closed with a few jazz and funk classics to finish the event with a high display of talent and energy.





# Sports / After School Activities

## November Athletic Events

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
		1 V B VB @ KISJ JV B VB @ SJA	2 V G VB @ KISJ JV/JV2 G VB @ SJA	3	4 FALL BREAK	5 FALL BREAK
6 FALL BREAK	7 FALL BREAK	8 FALL BREAK	9 FALL BREAK	10 FALL BREAK	11 FALL BREAK	12 FALL BREAK
13	14	15 ASA SIGN-UPS OPEN	16	17 HS BOYS VB KISAC @SJA HS GIRLS VB KISAC @NLCS KISAC CROSS COUNTRY	18 HS BOYS VB KISAC @SJA HS GIRLS VB KISAC @NLCS KISAC CROSS COUNTRY	19 ASA SIGN-UPS CLOSE
20 SEASON 2 OF HS ATHLETICS START	21	22	23	24	25	26
27 SEASON 2 OF MS ATHLETICS START	28	29	30			

## Sporting Events Updates

We're thrilled to announce the outstanding sports results from our middle school teams. In soccer, the MS Boys A Team secured an impressive 2nd place finish, while the MS Boys B Team proudly claimed 1st place. Our Boys Tennis team demonstrated their skill and determination by clinching 1st place, alongside the Girls Tennis team. In the realm of badminton, the MS Boys soared to 1st place, while the MS Girls displayed their prowess with a commendable 3rd place finish. Lastly, the MS Girls A Team Soccer earned the 5th spot, and the MS Girls B Team Soccer wrapped up an impressive 4th place. Congratulations to all our talented athletes for their hard work and dedication!

Congratulations to our middle school baseball team on their historic first game against another middle school! They showcased their talent and determination, securing a remarkable victory with a final score of 10-8. This success is just the beginning of what promises to be an exciting future. Let's continue to support and cheer for our budding baseball stars as they write their story of achievement on the field! Go team!

To stay connected with the latest updates, events, and highlights from our SJA Hilltopper community, we encourage you to follow us on Instagram at @sja\_jeju\_hilltoppers. By doing so, you'll have a front-row seat to all the exciting happenings at SJA Jeju. Don't miss out on this wonderful opportunity to engage with our school's journey and celebrate our students' achievements. We look forward to sharing our story with you on Instagram! #SJAJejuHilltoppers



# Parent Education

## ES Parent University

On Wednesday, October 19th, the ES held an insightful Parent University session on MAP Testing. Parents learned about:

- What is MAP and why do we do MAP testing at SJA Jeju?
- What does a RIT score really mean?
- How do teachers use MAP data at SJA Jeju?

In November, we will be hosting three more sessions on:

- College Counseling
- Second Language Acquisition
- Social Emotional Learning & Bullying Prevention

We look forward to seeing you at our future events.

## November Important Dates (ES)

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
		1	2	3
6 FALL BREAK	7 FALL BREAK	8 FALL BREAK	9 FALL BREAK	10 FALL BREAK
13	14 Book Fair	15 Book Fair	16 Book Fair	17 *ASA Season 1 Ends *Upper ES Swimming Ends
20	21 MS Musical for EC/ES Students	22	23 XXXX	24 Parent University #4: College Counseling
27	28	29	30 Parent University #5: Lang Acquisition Parent University #6: SEL / Bullying Prevention	

## MS Parent Partnership

In October, we hosted Parent-Teacher Conferences. This year's model was a little different. Students were invited to join the meetings and support with language if necessary. Meetings were scheduled ahead of time using an online booking system. In all, thirty-one teachers met with 249 parents for a total of 1,053 parent-teacher sessions! Parent-Teacher Conferences are an excellent opportunity to share academic progress and growth, but they are also an opportunity for parents and teachers to share information and observations about students' strengths, needs, behaviors, and learning styles.

Our next Parent Coffee is on November 24, and the focus will be managing tech use in the middle school years.

## November Important Dates (MS)

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
		1	2	3
6 FALL BREAK	7 FALL BREAK	8 FALL BREAK	9 FALL BREAK	10 FALL BREAK
13	14 Book Fair	15 Book Fair	16 • Book Fair • Math Olympiad in Advisory	17 ASA Season 1 Ends
20	21 MS MUSICAL Elementary School show at 8:45 am	22 MS MUSICAL Middle School Show at 2:15 pm	23 MS MUSICAL High School Show at 2:00 pm	24 • Parent Coffee 10 • MS MUSICAL Community Show 5pm
27	28	29	30	

## HS Exchange Program

This month SJA Jeju high school students had the opportunity to apply for the annual Vermont Exchange Program. This program with SJA Vermont allows five current 10th or 11th grade students to study in Vermont during the Spring semester. This unique program allows students to participate in academic and cultural exchanges with students in SJA Vermont - an important step in preparing to attend university outside of Korea. Students who are accepted into this program will leave Korea in the beginning of January. We are very proud of all of our applicants and look forward to hearing about the success of their experiences in Vermont.

## November Important Dates (HS)

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
		1	2	3
6 FALL BREAK	7 FALL BREAK	8 FALL BREAK	9 FALL BREAK	10 FALL BREAK
13	14 Book Fair	15 Book Fair	16 Book Fair	17
20	21	22	23 HS Students view MS Musical	24 Parent Info Session 1pm CC Session 2pm
27	28	29	30	





2023-24

St. Johnsberry Academy Jeju

# Autumn Charity Bazaar

2023. 11. 18. Saturday

10:00 - 15:00

Venue: SJA Jeju

SJA Jeju PA & CIC Communications