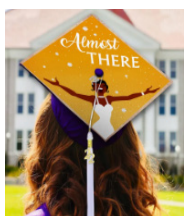




## Beneath The Headlines

### Upcoming Senior Events



### OM Jokes & Pranks



### Advice from Women of OM



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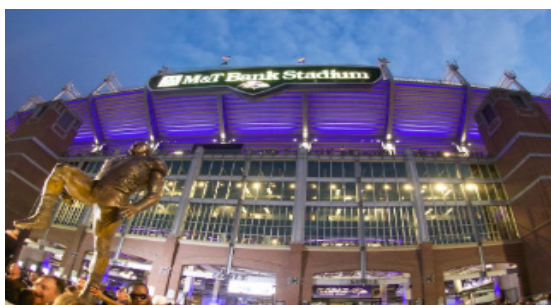
## OM Prom 2025

### *An Evening at M&T Bank Stadium*

If you are a Junior or Senior this school year, you are invited to attend this year's prom. Grab a group

front office.

The first Prom tradition started in the 1920s and has stuck ever since. It's the time



of friends or a date, or enjoy the evening solo. You can bring a date from another school if you fill out the proper guest form in the

of year many high school students look forward to the most. You get to get all dressed up to have fun with your friends or a date, and

it also means the end of the school year is near! The evening is traditionally spent enjoying music, food, and amazing memories you'll keep forever. Oakland Mills joined in on this country-wide tradition in 1975, when Oakland Mills hosted our first-ever Junior and Senior prom. At this year's prom, I'm pretty sure no one will be square dancing, but that was the popular dance back at the original OM prom in 1975.

So get those creative prom-posals ready, and we'll see you at the home of the Ravens in May!

Aubree' Davis  
Staff Writer

As April arrives, it is officially prom season! Book your nail, hair, and makeup appointments now to avoid all the last-minute stress and have the most perfect night.

Oakland Mills will be hosting this year's prom on May 17th, 2025, at M&T Bank Stadium in downtown Baltimore.

Tickets will be \$75 to cover entrance to the venue, catered food, and a red carpet themed evening building memories.

## HCPSS Cell Phone Ban

### *New Policy Met With Mixed Emotions*

staff, and parents around the county. On one hand, the policy has fulfilled many of its intentions by causing fewer distractions, allowing more social engagement, and aiding overall learning and comprehension. Many staff members and students, even skeptical ones, have acknowledged the benefits of the new policy on our learning environment. "I've noticed in my classes that people are less distracted and are working on assignments," said Sophomore Kayla Robinson. Junior Emmanuel Oluremi acknowledged that "People seem to be communicating more with classmates."

On the other hand, some students are still struggling with accepting the new policy for a multitude of reasons. Many students expressed displeasure at losing access

to music that helped them focus in their classes. Additionally, the ban has affected some in-school communities, such as clubs and sports who normally communicate updates and reminders throughout the school day. Even some teachers have expressed challenges that have arisen from adapting lessons and assignments that have traditionally allowed students to use their devices. Other teachers have expressed that managing the new requirement has added an additional headache to their long list of responsibilities in the classroom.

Though many students can see the benefits of the new policy, many believe there should be a compro-

mise by allowing students to use their phones during lunch and passing periods.

Overall, this cell phone ban could be a lesson and blessing for all of us; we just need to think positively and take accountability for our actions.



Aniya Guy  
Staff Writer

On March 3rd, 2025, the new cell phone ban during school hours went into effect across the county. According to an HCPSS press release, "On Thursday, Jan. 30, 2025, the Howard County Board of Education approved adjustments to Policy 8080 – Responsible Use of Technology, Digital Tools, and Social Media, and the Student Code of Conduct that is intended to reduce the use of personal devices by students during the student day." The policy requires students to have their cell phones away from "bell-to-bell," including lunch shifts and hallway transitions.

The new policy has certainly been met with mixed emotions from students,

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## Senior Upcoming Activities

### *Countdown to Graduation*

Miriam Sultani  
Staff Writer

#### Senior Breakfast

On April 28th, we invite all seniors to join together for a memorable breakfast celebration that will kick off the morning. There will be a large spread of breakfast foods, featuring a variety of options to suit all tastes. Enjoy the upbeat melodies of lively music that will set the perfect atmosphere for celebration. During the breakfast, the winners of the long-awaited senior superlatives will be announced! Following the breakfast, the Class of 2025 will go outside to the bleachers to take the annual class picture. This gathering is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate your achievements while sharing an unforgettable morning with those who have been part of

your high school journey.

#### Prom

The highly anticipated prom event is scheduled for May 17th and promises to be a night to remember. With tickets priced at \$75, attendees can secure their place for an evening filled with glamour and excitement. Guests can expect a stunning red-carpet entrance, setting the stage for an elegant experience. This extraordinary occasion will take place at the renowned M&T Bank Stadium, a venue known for its grandeur, adding an extra touch of lovely standing to this special celebration. Prepare for an unforgettable night filled with memories and dancing.

#### Awards Assembly

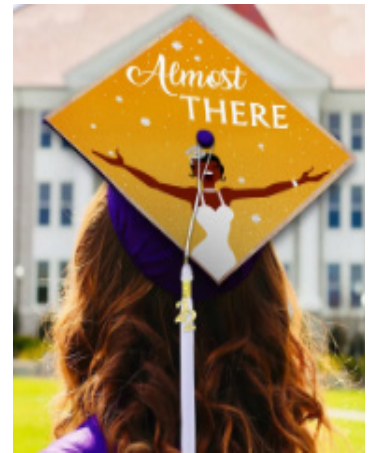
On the very last day of school for seniors, which will be May 20th, the Class of 2025 will attend the highly anticipated awards

assembly in the auditorium. The event is for seniors to come together to celebrate their achievements throughout high school. The assembly features speeches from faculty members and student leaders, each sharing anecdotes and wisdom that reflect on the journey of the graduating class. Awards, honors, and even scholarships are handed out at this culminating event. The awards assembly is also used as the "dress rehearsal" for the graduation ceremony.

#### Graduation

The official graduation date is May 22, 2025 at 11 AM. As always, the ceremony will be held at Merriweather Post Pavillion, and each graduating senior will receive ten tickets for guests. More information will be distributed during the graduation rehearsals that follow senior final exams during their last week of school.

For more information on the class of 2025 senior activities, contact the class advisors Ms. Demery at [shelia\\_demery@hcpss.org](mailto:shelia_demery@hcpss.org) and Mrs. Brown-Fordham at [nicole\\_brown-fordham@hcpss.org](mailto:nicole_brown-fordham@hcpss.org), or go to their rooms 206 and 809, respectively.



## Shrek, The Musical

### *Brought to OM By Our Wonderful Crew*

Ms. Hoffen, our theater director.

With all the musical options out there, Ms. Hoffen discussed her choice for the latest production: "I chose Shrek for a lot of different reasons. The biggest reasons are that the technical pieces of the show are bigger and bolder than anything we have done before. These pieces are perfect to challenge my tech crew, which is an incredible team ready for the challenge. The music, acting, and performance style of this show are the perfect way to build and grow on the skillset of my performers to push them to their next levels... There are so many moving pieces to the show that the tech crew really needs to be on point with the job delineation and production of set pieces."

Since we are only days away from opening night, I asked Ms. Hoffen what she was most excited about for this show. "Watching the show build before our eyes is always the coolest thing. Seeing each of the students develop their

artistry and their theatrical skillset is the best part of the experience," Hoffen said. "I hope the audience takes away a feeling of nostalgia, awe, and excitement about the production shown to them. The students are working incredibly hard on their craft, and when it is ready and gets to be shared with an audience, it is going to be a gift," she continued.

Let's all show up and support our arts department by coming to watch this wonderful production. You can purchase your tickets online at [hcpss.booktix.com](http://hcpss.booktix.com) or in person.

If you love what you see, consider joining a future production next school year. Ms. Hoffen raved about the benefits of getting involved in our local theater community: "The benefits are endless! There are

so many things that a student can get out of being part of a school production. Making friends, developing performance or technical skills, and collaborating with staff/peers on a common goal, just to name a few."

The Oakland Mills High School theater department is putting on a production of Shrek: The Musical on April 3rd, 4th, and 5th at 7:00 pm and on April 5th at 2:00 and 7:00 pm.

Shrek: The Musical is the stage production of the classic animated Dreamworks movie. In the story, Shrek, a green ogre, is forced to go on a quest to rescue Princess Fiona from a dragon-guarded tower, ultimately leading him to discover love and acceptance despite his appearance. Shrek: The Musical, directed by Ms. Hoffen, hits the OM stage this week! You may have seen the fall play She Kills Monsters, but unlike that show, the spring production will be a musical. "A musical is different from a play because of the singing, acting, and dancing that need to be coordinated into a performance," explained





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## The Saga of Starliner

*How a Week-long Flight Became 8 Months Aboard the ISS*

Dave Roberts  
Staff Writer

The most publicized and reported on manned space flight mission of the decade, the Boeing Crew Flight Test was both a serious debacle for the company as well as a source of media sensationalization. So, what really happened during the flight of Starliner, and what happened to the two astronauts that it carried into orbit?

The story of Starliner began back in 2011 when Boeing and SpaceX were awarded the Commercial Crew Program, a contract to develop and operate a spacecraft to launch NASA astronauts to the ISS (International Space Station) after the Space Shuttle was retired. SpaceX's spacecraft, Crew Dragon, first performed an uncrewed test flight in 2019, then performed a crewed test flight in 2020, and has been carrying astronauts to and from orbit ever since. Meanwhile, Boeing's spacecraft, CST-100 Starliner, was having some difficulties. Their first attempt at an uncrewed test flight of Starliner encountered several hardware and software errors, resulting in the spacecraft being unable to meet all test requirements. Three years later, in 2022, Starliner had a successful test

flight, mirroring that of Dragon's two years prior, by which time SpaceX was already flying crew to the ISS. However, this mission did encounter some minor hardware errors, but regardless, Starliner was cleared to fly crew into space.

The 5th of June, 2024: the first flight of astronauts aboard Starliner. The Starliner crew: Barry "Butch" Wilmore and Sunita "Suni" Williams. They are both NASA astronauts that had flown into space several times before, had performed a combined 12 spacewalks, and Williams served as commander of the ISS for three months back in 2012. With all of these qualifications and achievements under their belts, they were selected to be the first to fly aboard Starliner. The mission plan was simple: launch into orbit, dock with the ISS, spend a week docked to the ISS performing tests, then undock and return home. However, as the return date approached, NASA and Boeing were troubled by some readings from Starliner. Notably, they were concerned that there was a helium tank leak

and multiple thruster failures in the service module of Starliner, which could impede spacecraft operations, potentially endangering the crew's lives if used.

The return date was pushed back

again and again, a few weeks at a time. Eventually, the cause of the failures was identified by teams on the ground: a teflon seal that had deformed from excessive wear.

On August 24, NASA had made a decision,

and announced that they deemed Starliner too risky to use to bring Wilmore and Williams back to Earth. As a result, they instead decided to launch their next ISS crew, SpaceX Crew-9, with two empty seats. Wilmore and Williams would "join" the crew, completing the six month stay with the crew on the ISS before returning to Earth in March 2025. On the 6th of September, Starliner undocked from the ISS, leaving its crew of two aboard the ISS. Starliner did successfully return to Earth, but the potential risk was still deemed too high by NASA. During this time, procedures for evacuating the ISS dictated that Wilmore and Williams would

ride in the backseat cargo hold of another Dragon spacecraft in case of an emergency, at least until Crew-9 arrived. Crew-9 arrived on September 29th, ending the crew's "stranding." Contrary to popular belief, Wilmore and Williams were not stranded for the vast majority of their extended mission. In case of an emergency, they could have returned to Earth anytime, however, it made more sense from a practical viewpoint to simply keep them on the station as part of Crew-9. In fact, Williams became the commander of the ISS again on the 24th of September, a position she held until she returned to Earth. In their time up there, Wilmore and Williams have been performing scientific research, as is the purpose of the ISS, along with spacewalks to perform maintenance work. Crew-9, which Wilmore and Williams were transferred to following the undocking of Starliner, returned home on March 18th, 2025. During this incident, Boeing, who has been having other public failures recently, have announced that they are considering selling their spaceflight branch of the company, which would include Starliner. If Starliner will ever fly again is unknown, but hopefully, it will one day be made safe to carry people to and from space, as it was originally intended to do.



## Worst Dad Jokes

*Featuring OM Staff Members*

Brianna Myers  
Staff Writer

April Fools' Day is here! It's the only holiday where people can pull pranks on one another and come together for pure laughter. In honor of this widely loved holiday, here are a couple of dad jokes from some of the male staff members at Oakland Mills High that are sure to crack a laugh!



**What did one wall say to the other wall? I'll meet you at the corner!**

(Mr. Jenkins featuring Ms. Learn,  
Math Department)



**Why is New Jersey known as the Garden State? Because of the Nuclear Plants!**

(Mr. Lo, Math Department)

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## The WelcOMe hOMe Experience

*A Uniquely OM Opportunity*



Photo Cred: Nik Berry

Taylor Whitaker  
Staff Writer

Welcome Home is a unique opportunity for all students at Oakland Mills High School to spend a day connecting with one another. I had the pleasure of attending on February 20th and I can say that I'm glad I decided to sign up. The skills I learned there will stay with me as I grow as a high schooler and as a person.

The event is a chance for students to connect with people they may not have met yet, learn more about others, and improve communication skills. One skill I developed during this event was listening better. I learned that it's important to hear what someone is saying fully without interrupting them or making them feel like what they are saying is unimportant. Welcome Home allowed me to learn how to better interact with others.

We also partook in activities

that encouraged us to step out of our comfort zones and meet and learn more about new people. The day starts with whole-group activities and games to get you warmed up. We then break into smaller groups and have discussions where we dive into both serious and silly conversation. Then, we have an hour lunch break and the rest of the day continued with small group activities and games.

I was able to strengthen existing friendships with people I already knew. I learned more about my teachers and how they are just like us. In fact, during the experience, we addressed the teachers with their first names and they presented themselves as equals to us. They talked to us about how everyone goes through different things and that it's better to just be kind to everyone. How you treat someone can affect the rest of their day; simply smiling or waving at someone can make their day. Welcome Home allowed me to change my perspective and

recognize the impact I can have on others.

Welcome Home is a great event to attend if you want to connect with the OM community and meet new people. I asked a fellow student, junior Naomi Ofori, how they felt about their experience at Welcome Home. "I really liked the inclusivity and how we get to meet new people and temporarily be vulnerable with one another," Ofori explained. I agree with her because during Welcome Home I felt comfortable talking about how I truly felt and was able to talk freely without fear of judgement. I also got a chance to speak with Ms. Florida, one of our media specialists at OM, and one of the facilitators of the Welcome Home experience. In our conversation, she said that in 2014, before we had Welcome Home here, there was a one-day event called "Challenge Day," facilitated by an outside program that was similar to Welcome Home. Ms. Florida and a couple of other school staff

members "saw what a benefit it was and decided that they could do it themselves." They "created activities that worked for the school and adjusted it to meet the student's needs," according to Ms. Florida.

To those who are considering attending the Welcome Home event, Ms. Florida expressed that "it's a lot of fun and a great chance to connect with people you don't know and people that you think you already know and learn new things about." She and the rest of the staff wanted to start their own event because they saw the benefits that came from students connecting with one another and listening to each other.

The final Welcome Home for this school year was on March 20th, but OM traditionally does two or three sessions throughout each school year. If you were not able to attend one of the experiences this year, I highly suggest you try to sign up next year!

Contact us at:



@omscroll



the.scroll.om@gmail.com

And see more articles at:



omscroll.com



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## Why We Forget News So Fast

### *How Our Attention Spans Affect News Consumption*

Lillian Sengamalay  
Staff Writer

Do you remember back in July when Donald Trump's ear was grazed by a bullet? Or when Luigi Mangione shot the CEO of UnitedHealthcare just over three months ago? Or how about the California wildfires? I bet you haven't thought about those head-



lines in a while. It's strange how quickly we forget major news, and I can't help but wonder if it has anything to do with shortened attention spans.

According to the American Psychological Association (APA), in the 1920s, the average attention span was at least 20 minutes. After the 20s, it decreased drastically, but barely came back up again in the 1950s with an average of 42 seconds. It went down to 30 seconds in the 70s, then down to 22 seconds in the 80s, down to 12 seconds in the 2000s, and now in 2025, the average attention span is only eight seconds. In 100 years, we've gone from a 20-minute

attention span to only eight seconds, which is one second shorter than a goldfish. Why is that?

Research shows that our constant exposure to electronics and social media has had a huge impact on our attention spans. We're so used to scrolling through five-second TikTok videos for hours on end that focusing on anything for longer than 10 minutes feels like a chore. So, what does this have to do with news?

You may remember that after the situation with Luigi Mangione, it was all anyone would talk about for weeks on end. Scrolling through social media, you'd see hundreds of videos referencing the event, you'd hear about it nonstop on the evening news, and you'd catch conversations about it everywhere you went. But that only lasted a few weeks before practically disappearing entirely

from public discussion. It seems we get bored from exhausting a topic before we just move on to something else.

Honestly, we forget so fast because of the sheer amount of things that go on in the world. Just when one big thing happens, something bigger and more shocking comes along, and we can't focus on both at once. It's hard for us to know where we should put our energy and attention with everything going on.

With all these events taking place at once, the prevalence of social media, and our shrinking attention spans, it's easy to forget things, even big news stories. Perhaps if we could spend less time scrolling through videos and more time focusing on what's important, we would be able to pay attention to issues and actually make a difference.

## Animal Abuse for Profit

### *The Morality of Animal Sales*

Charlie Odom  
Staff Writer

When I was a kid, my hyperfixation was on having an exotic pet. I had forgotten about my exotic animal fascination until recently. After seeing a video of someone owning a fennec fox online, I began to research how I could possibly get my own, the legality of it, and the prices on the market. While researching, I stumbled upon the first site listed on Google, titled "Exotic Animals for Sale."

My first thought was, "I hit the jackpot!" until I looked closer at the listings:

"3 years old and intact, she is not tame and not a pet. Perfect for a future breeding project or exhibit," read a listing for a groundhog.

A wild groundhog. It would be one thing if this was a rescue, but it was not. The website connected to a listing with little information but an About page saying it's been

supplying zoos and educational facilities for over two decades. No reviews, no pictures of animals or its facilities. It is, however, a "trusted seller" on the exotic seller's site. It seems to me that this animal shouldn't be sold on this site for \$600; it should be in the wild, living its own life.

Another listing is for a Male Java Monkey; the description said the following:

"2 yr old male Java. Would be better as a breeder. Or a very experienced home. He will bite. WILLING TO TRADE FOR???"

Oh. So we're trading animals like Pokemon now and breeding them like cattle. That's ethical.

By the time I reached the second page, I was holding back tears because I had run across my absolute favorite animal, the ring-tailed lemur. Native to only Madagascar, they are endangered and not friendly to humans, meaning the animals for sale on these types of sites are probably hunted, caught, and bred for the exotic

animal pet trade.

Now, you probably think most people would take care of these animals and give them a good life, but the truth is they'd have a better life out in the wild. Being petted and prodded is not how they were meant to live. At the end of the day, they are not pets, they are wild animals.

Though not all of the listings were 100% unethical (some were rescues and other actual pets for sale), the majority of these are a part of the problem.

The issue of exotic pets goes under the umbrella of animal abuse for profit, which is a large worldwide problem split into smaller, more specific topics like the exotic animal trade, factory farming, animal testing, breeding mills, and dog/animal fighting.

All of these are continuously happening because economically, they are being encouraged, like being valuable in profit. The U.S. does have the Lacey Act, which requires all exotic animals and plant species to be "declared," meaning it has to be claimed to be legally allowed into the U.S. Permits are also required by law. But with every law, there are still loopholes to these regulations, and animals are still brought over borders illegally. Where there's a will, there's a way.

Please visit [omscroll.com](https://omscroll.com) to read the full article.



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Helen Villatoro  
Staff Writer

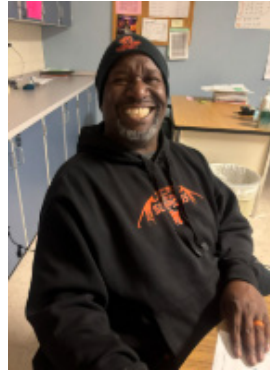
## OM Jokes and Pranks *In Honor of April Fool's Day*

April 1st brings the opportunity to fool the people in our lives with classic jokes and pranks. Here are some favorites from our own OM staff and students. Get ready to laugh or giggle at the jokes for this year! We hope these will bring a big smile and lots of laughter to our OM community.



**Prank:** "I like to scare people, stand behind doors, have things pop out at people, and bushman pranks."

Mr. Yarn, CTE Teacher



**Prank :** "I love rearranging people's houses."

Mr. Gabriel, Special Educator



**Joke :** "What do computers like to eat?"  
"What?"  
"Microchips."

Jeriah Shipp, Junior



**Joke:** At least I know I can always count on my fingers."

Terrance Snell Lawson,  
Junior



**Prank :** "My kids put a full cup of water at the top of one of my doors and left it somewhat open and I had a cup of water dumped on my head."

Mrs. Phillips, Assistant Principal



**Joke:** "How do you make a tissue dance? Put a little boogie in it."

Chemar Joaepl, Sophomore



**Joke:** "What did the artist say to the wall?"  
"What?"  
"I got you covered."

Mr. Guest, Art Teacher

## Souls of *The Scroll*:

**Editor-in-Chief:**

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**Digital Manager &**

**Editorials Editor:**

*Kira Hatcher*

**News Editor:**

*Nontai Kurmi*

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*Antoine Hodges Jr.*

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*Dave Roberts*

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*Jontaia Straite*

*Mariam Sultani*

*Helen Villatoro*

*Taylor Whitaker*

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## The Washington D.C. Cherry Blossom Festival

### *The Season of Cherry Blossom Trees*

Kira Hatcher  
Digital Manager &  
Editorials Editor

Spring has blossomed as April begins and brings forth the Washington D.C. Cherry Blossom Festival. Living in Maryland means we're extremely close to the bustle of the bloom, giving us the amazing opportunity to see this national festival near home. This year's festival takes place between March 20 and April 13, 2025, lasting several weeks to make sure people can view the cherry blossom trees during peak bloom. Peak bloom, issued by the National Park's horticulturists, is a prediction of when the cherry blossoms will push them from their winter dormancy to full bloom. Peak bloom 2025 was predicted to be between March 28-31. If you want to see the trees in their full glory, make sure to visit the walk soon!

The beginning of what is now the Cherry Blossom Festival has

been taking place since 1912 after the Mayor of Tokyo City, Yukio Ozaki, gifted Japanese cherry trees to the city of Washington D.C. The trees were given as a sign of friendship and continue to celebrate the close relationship between the two countries. The effort to bring cherry blossoms to Washington D.C. actually began many decades before by Eliza Ruhamah Scidmore after returning from her first trip to Japan. Her idea was initially rejected and she continued to propose it for the next 24 years. Then, on March 27, 1912, First Lady Helen Herron Taft and Viscountess Chinda, wife of the Japanese ambassador, planted the first cherry blossom trees on the north bank of the Tidal Basin in West Potomac Park. The two trees still stand on 17th Street Southwest, marked by a large plaque. The first celebration of the festival took place in late 1934 and in 1935, it officially became an annual national event. In 1994, the festival was expanded to accommodate all the activities that had begun to take place during

the celebration over the past few decades.

There are many things you can do to celebrate, either from Washington D.C. or at home. In Washington D.C., a few major events taking place are:

1. On April 5th is Petalpalooza, an outdoor activity day for all ages.
2. Japanese Culture Day at the Library of Congress will take place on April 5th.
3. From April 5-6th is the Credit Union Cherry Blossom 10 Mile, 5K, and Kids Run.
4. Mosaic Art Blooms, an outdoor market of all sorts of art, is also taking place April 5-6th.
5. Art of Pink, an immersive art and music experience, is happening on April 11th
6. Closing up the Festival is the National Cherry Blossom Festival Parade on April 12th and the Sakura Matsuri Japanese Street

Festival from April 12th to the end of the Festival on April 13th Celebrations can also take place from home by watching the live stream and participating in arts and crafts activities!

You can find and buy tickets on the official National Cherry Blossom Festival website, [nationalcherryblossomfestival.org](http://nationalcherryblossomfestival.org), as well as a full list of events, hotels, and restaurants to visit, and the best place to view the trees. So this year, visit the city in bloom to witness the beautiful cherry blossoms and celebrate this timeless tradition.



## OMHS ROBOTICS CLUB

Tuesdays and Thursdays - Room 608



- Curiosity and Dedication Needed
  - No Previous Skills Required
- Compete in the FTC Robotics Competition



04/01/2025

## Valuable Advice from Insightful Women

### *In Honor of Women's History Month*

Carly Arauz

Features Editor &  
Social Media Manager

Yesterday marked the end of March, which is also Women's History Month. This meaningful month honors achievements and contributions made by women throughout the entire history of the United States. This month celebrates the empowerment women have created together across age and ethnicity. To empower all women, it is essential to learn from those who have much more life experience than us. Here at Oakland Mills High School, we have many wise and insightful women who were more than happy to share their thoughtful advice for young women growing up in today's society.



English teacher Mrs. Brown-Fordham said some advice she would have given to her younger self would be, "I would tell myself to not quit. Being a child of dysfunction, there were days when I just didn't think I was going to make it. For instance, in school, there were expectations that I just felt were unrealistic. So, I would definitely tell my younger self to just survive by any means necessary. You learn how to establish a village, and that village is what helps you get to the next step. So definitely surround yourself with good people because when you feel like you can't

survive yourself, you'll need those women in your corner." Some valuable advice she would give to other young women growing up in today's society would be, "Forget the box, draw your own shape and fill it in however you want. You don't have to make people, you don't have to get married, you don't have to be corporate America. If you follow what the patriarchy has laid out for you, you will never figure out your own identity. So figure out who you are first, and then everything else is going to come into play. You don't need to worry about a relationship, you don't need to be validated by anyone; it's hard enough just being a woman. So find your voice. Don't be afraid to be the only one in the room who speaks up because there's someone else who's looking at you and depending on you to say those very words."

Ms. Epps, one of our teacher secretaries in the front office said some advice she would give to her younger self would be, "To allow myself to be more patient with myself, that mistakes happen and at the end of the day, you're going to be okay and you're gonna figure it out." Some valuable advice she would give to other young women growing up in today's society would be "To always find your people, your friends, and your community. Make spaces for yourself that you are comfortable in and where you can authentically be yourself because there are so many spaces in the world that women cannot do that." Ms. Epps also wanted to tell young women



in society, "To really listen to what the older generation is telling you about not growing up too fast. That's definitely what I taught myself, just to sit back, listen, and observe because the people I was around back then weren't going to be the people I was going to be around when I grew up. Don't grow so fast. Don't push yourself to be older than what you are. Focus on your career and what your



passion really is because that'll set you up for the rest of your life."

Mrs. Moore, who is a part of the Science Department, expressed how she wishes she could tell her younger self and other young women to "be patient with yourself and give yourself grace. You're not going to be perfect, but you can always strive for perfection. I would like to tell myself that you can be whatever it is that you want to be in this society. As a woman who identifies as African-American or foundational black American, you can achieve if you strive hard and continue to work towards it; don't give up. Don't let anyone tell you that you can't do it. You can do anything that you put your mind to if you just try."

Ms. Veltre, another member of the OM English Department, shared this advice for young women growing up in today's society: "When you can, don't care so much about what other people think. The image that you

have of yourself in your head is not true. You're better off. You're way better than what you think. Stop comparing yourself to other people, and stop caring about other things. People should think and find confidence and happiness within themselves, not based on what others think. Don't get your validation from other people."



I hope you, the person reading this, can take advice from these knowledgeable and inspiring women who have experienced the ups and downs of life. No matter your age, gender identity, or situation, their advice can apply to all aspects of life. Think about and keep these in mind every day, and remember: you are strong, you are smart, and you will succeed as long as you stay focused and don't let anyone bring you down.





04/01/2025

## OM Girls Basketball

*A Dominant Season*

Kai Brooks  
Staff Writer

The Oakland Mills High School Girls Varsity Basketball team has had an exceptional season this year, winning the Howard County Championship and advancing to the State Finals on March 14.

The team is led by Coach Coughlan and three captains: Heaven and Adey Alexander and Destiny Macharia. After losing to Howard in their first game of the year, the team went on to win 17 consecutive games in the county, suffering their only additional loss to Mt. Zion Preparatory Academy. The girls rounded out their regular season with a 17-2 record.

When asked how the team's mentality shifted after their loss to Howard, junior Chloe Grenway stated, "I think our mindset changed and we...just wanted to win." Entering the playoffs with a

bye in the first round, the girls out-worked their opponents in the next two rounds, defeating Centennial 61-41, and getting revenge on River Hill for eliminating them the previous year in the playoffs. After beating River Hill 67-44, they claimed the regional title.

The OM girls faced an old rival, Howard, in the state quarterfinals, for the first time since that early season loss. Before the game, Macharia shared her thoughts on the significance of the game: "I'm excited for this game, we only got to play Howard once in the regular season, so I wanted a rematch." In the end, the Lady Scorpions triumphed over Howard 56-46. That game marked their final home match of the season, as they cruised to the state semifinals, where they faced Baltimore Polytechnic Institute, with the chance to advance to the State Championship on the line. They defeated Poly 59-51 and moved on to face South River High School

in the 3A State Finals.

The Championship game was held at XFINITY Center at The University of Maryland College Park. The XFINITY Center was familiar to Coughlan, as he traveled to the state finals twice with Reservoir High School in 2015 and 2018. However, this game was incredibly meaningful to Coach Coughlan since he is an OM alumnus. "My five siblings and I went here, so this was very special for me," Coughlan said.

This game wasn't just historic for Coach Coughlan, as it also marked the first time in 27 years that an OM Girls basketball team went to the state finals.

OM led most of the game, up 27-21 at the half and 40-35 at the end of the 3rd. Despite their early lead, the lack of depth caught up to the Scorpions, allowing the South River Seahawks, with a bench full of substitutes, to dominate the 4th quarter. The Seahawks went on a 21-5 run taking the lead

and ultimately beating the Scorpions 45-56. Grenway led the OM team with 12 points.

Even though the Lady Scorpions came up short, they had a remarkably successful season. The young team has a bright future ahead, as they are only graduating three seniors this year, and their JV went 11-5-1 this season. Despite their promising future, losing three of their seniors is a big loss for the Scorpions. Macharia and Alexander were captains of the team and main contributors to the team's success. "I want to shout out those three for paving the way. I told them that they're the cause of next year's...success because they carved it out for the younger girls," Coughlan said. After making the finals this year, it is clear that the team's goal is to win it all next year, and they have all of Oakland Mills behind them.



Photo Cred: Kai Brooks & Isaiah Johnson, OM Alumni



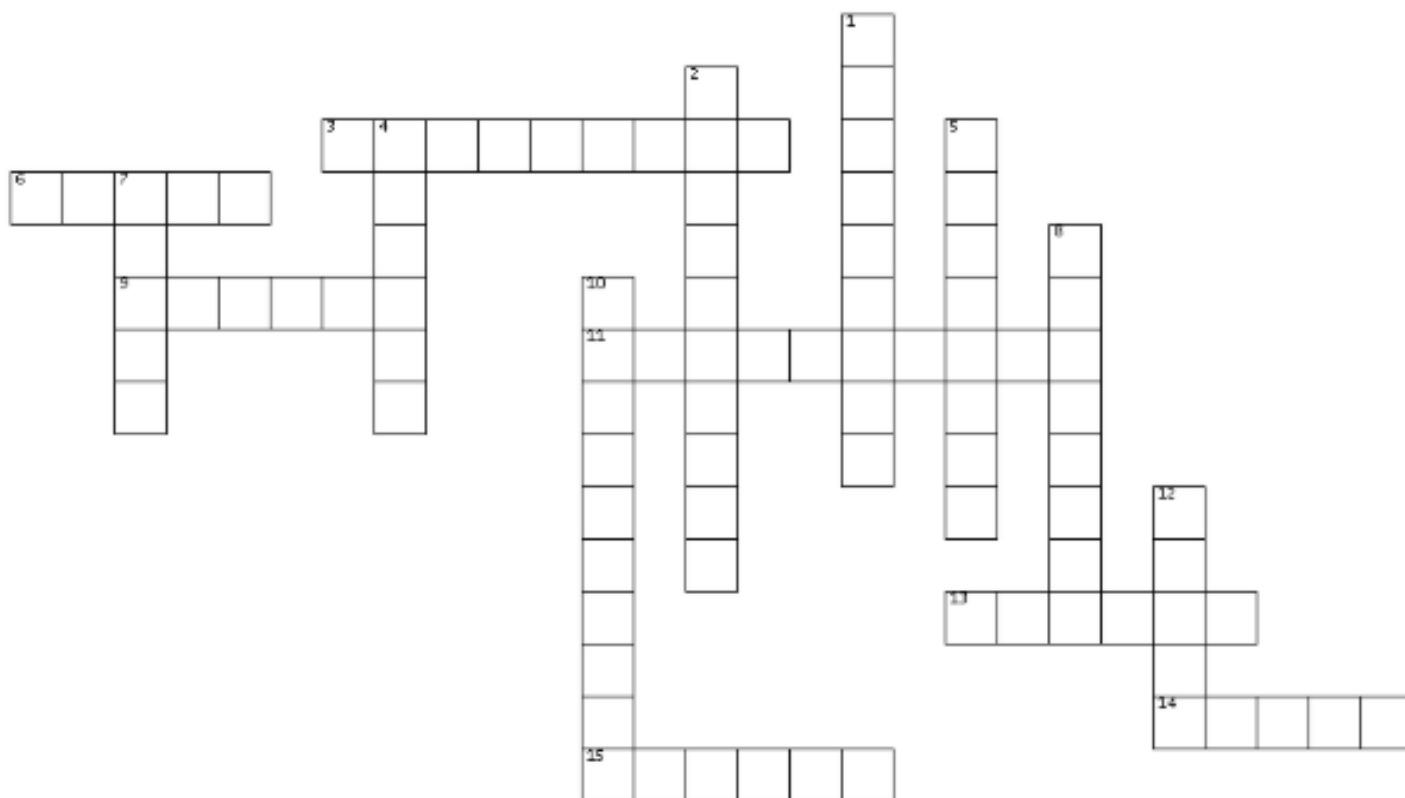
Congratulations on an amazing season, and special shout-out to our seniors: Destiny Macharia, Mia Wellington, and Heaven Alexander!

Your hard work, teamwork, and dedication have truly paid off. We're so proud of all your accomplishments and can't wait to see what you achieve in the future!

04/01/2025

## ACROSS

3. A bean-shaped candy with a gelatinous center and a firm sugar coating  
 6. OM just broke the record with their 11th state title in this sport  
 9. A plant-eating mammal with long ears, often associated with Easter  
 11. A trick or hoax on April 1 (2 words)  
 13. A spring allergen that comes from flowers and other plants  
 14. The OM Spring musical  
 15. The season that began on March 20th



## DOWN

1. A nectar-feeding insect with two pairs of large, typically brightly colored wings  
 2. Traditionally, kids search for these in a hunt on Easter (2 words)  
 4. A Christian holiday that falls on April 20th this year  
 5. The oldest organized sport in North America  
 7. The month after March  
 8. A ball game played on a field with a diamond-shape  
 10. Bright yellow flowers, usually one of the first signs of Spring  
 12. A chick-shaped marshmallow treat