

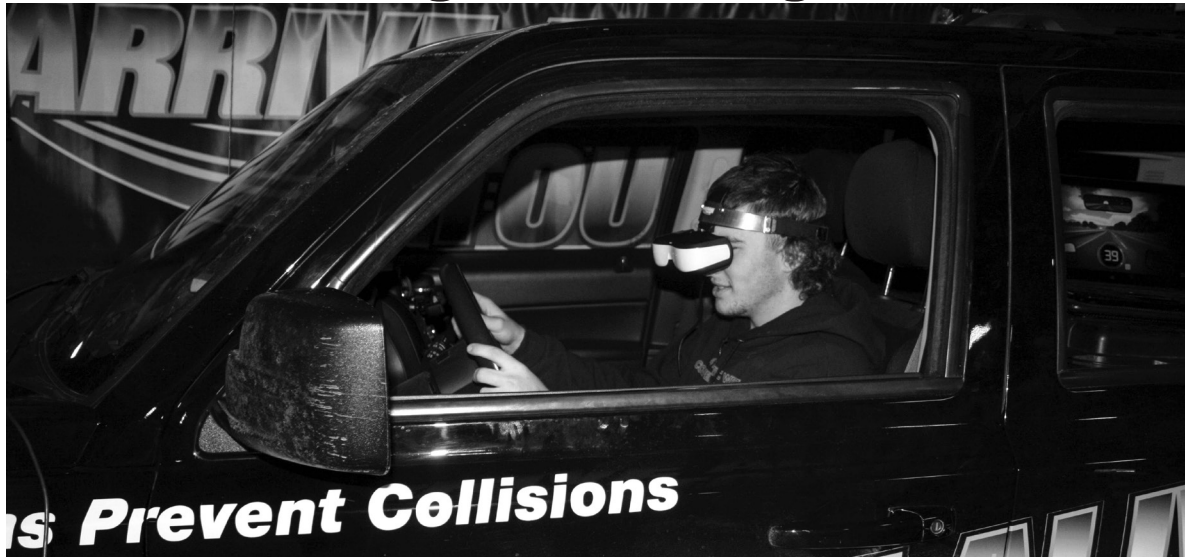


April 2022

# THE GROWLER

Odessa High School, Odessa, Missouri

## Arrive Alive Simulator helps OHS students understand dangers of driving distracted



Joey Clark, senior, participates in the Arrive Alive intoxicated driving simulator. The program, paid for by MoDOT, is designed to show students first-hand how dangerous it is to drive drunk, drugged or distracted.

By Teagan Loehr & Emmalea Munsterman

OHS juniors and seniors participated in the Arrive Alive Tour February 11 in the shop of the Vocational Arts Building. Sessions began at 7:40 a.m. and ended with the last call at 1:20 p.m. The event, originally scheduled for Courtmat week, was rescheduled due to inclement weather.

The program, paid for by MoDOT, is designed to show students first-hand how dangerous it is to drive drunk, drugged or distracted.

The OHS TRACTION Team (Teens Taking Action to Prevent Traffic Crashes) facilitated the day. Team members included: **Trinity Alvested, Jacob Arms, Tanli Hall**, sophomores, and **Emilee Hamilton**, junior.

The simulator provides students with a realistic experience in a safe environment, so they can see what could happen and learn to not make those mistakes in their real lives. Students “drive” the simulator, a Jeep Liberty, outfitted with a

virtual reality headset.

“We were super excited to host the simulator,” **Angie Sallee**, StuCo sponsor, said, “as we (the TRACTION Team) had been working since this summer to secure a simulator for our school as a part of our campaign to reduce distracted driving among students.”

According to UNITE, the “edutainment” company that presents the program, this simulation is considered to be the first statewide data-driven traffic safety initiative that unifies public safety. It is the only simulator in the country that simulates marijuana use while driving.

To begin the program, students were greeted by two facilitators who talked to them about making good driving choices and reminded them to drive S.A.F.E. (sober and free of electronics).

**Shaquille Hill**, one of the Arrive Alive Tour traveling educators, said the tour is a “great opportunity” to reach out to young people. He said his life has been changed because of friends who

died in a car accident.

“With the opportunity of Arrive Alive,” Hill said, “I get to express the impact of decisions and make sure that no one else makes those same mistakes.”

During their session, students climbed into the Jeep Liberty and put on a virtual reality headset which allowed them to see a road with surrounding obstacles such as buildings, construction sites, road signs, pedestrians, etc. A monitor was also set up to allow anyone standing near the simulator to see what the driver was experiencing.

After the participants completed the simulator, they received a mock ticket with the ramifications of their simulator experience. The citations on the tickets included speeding, swerving, driving below the speed limit, driving on the incorrect side of the road, driving off the road, failing to stop, collision, vehicular manslaughter and even death.

A high impact video played See **ARRIVE**, page 4

## OHS Courtmat is disrupted by snow days



Clay Fox, Garrett Bayless, Brittany Affolter and Lexi Moody, seniors, participate in a basketball shootout challenge during the Courtmat assembly on February 16, where the girls defeated the boys.

By Elizabeth Armstrong & Lorelai Burch

OHS Courtmat festivities began January 31 but were soon rescheduled or canceled due to the heavy snowfall that hit the area causing school cancellations February 2-4. Spirit Week dress up days planned for the week were cut short, and the dance was canceled without a make-up date.

During the short Spirit Week, students dressed up each day. Monday was Physical Day where students wore exercise or athletic gear. Tuesday was Fancy versus Fancy-Like Day where students wore country club or country attire. Wednesday would have been Deja Vu Day where students would

match as many others as possible. Thursday would have been Thrift Shop Day with mismatched fashion disasters, and Friday would have been Let’s Groove Day with students wearing white, neon, sparkly disco or Bulldog attire.

“It was difficult,” **Brittany Affolter**, senior StuCo Executive Board member, said, “because we had it all planned out, and the weather said ‘that isn’t going to happen’. We just had to go with the flow, but it was still fun participating and planning the event.”

By participating in Spirit Week, students were able to earn points for their “house”. Each year, students are divided

See **COURTMAT**, page 4

## Rey Camareno, OHS Spanish teacher, builds strong classroom community

By Emmalea Munsterman  
**Rey Camareno**, OHS Spanish teacher, is enjoying his first year of teaching and believes building relationships with students is crucial. He said his class is tailored to help him build relationships with students on an individual level by talking about their interests.

He makes a daily effort to get to know everyone better and to make his classroom an enjoyable and safe environment for all.

"I love working with the kids," Camareno said. "It's the best part of my job. They're super fun, and I love being able to see the light bulbs go off in their heads."

Camareno said what he teaches in Spanish I is relevant to the students' everyday lives.

"I talk to them about their likes versus their dislikes, their families and the different sports they play," Camareno said. "It really helps to build a strong community in the classroom."

Since becoming a teacher, Camareno said he feels a confidence that he's never had before.

"When I first started student teaching, I wasn't really sure of myself, and I didn't know what I really wanted to do or who I was," Camareno said. "Since becoming a Spanish teacher, knowing that I can be a professional in front of students, but I can also be my true self and be fun, boosts my self-confidence. Being able to teach a subject that I'm passionate about helps a lot too."

"His character is what stands out to me the most," **Rylee Adams**, freshman, said. "He's such a good teacher and just a really good person. Since he's a new teacher, his first day teaching high school was also my first day of high school, so I think that has helped us connect from a class standpoint."

"He's relatable and funny," **Gabe Studdard**, freshman, said.

Camareno said he enjoys being part of a smaller community like Odessa, where everything is on one strip.

"It makes me want to be a part



**Rey Camareno, OHS Spanish I teacher, enjoys building relationships with students and assisting with OHS sports.**

of the community and bring support," Camareno said. "I really like my colleagues. I love the administration. They are extremely supportive, and the parents and students are the icing on the cake. I love Odessa, and it's been like a home to me."

**Brad Briscoe**, OHS principal, said Camareno has found a home at OHS and he is excited about his future. Briscoe said Camareno is good at building relationships, is a team player, creates quality lessons that connect with students and uses technology well.

"What I love about Rey is he is

always willing to learn and try new things," Briscoe said. "He is consistently seeking feedback, and putting in extra effort at OHS. He has volunteered to coach multiple sports, and is always willing to learn and try new things."

However, Camareno was just ten minutes away from teaching in another school district. When he saw the job opening at OHS on the school website, he applied for the job as well as for jobs at several other schools in the area. Having never taught before, Camareno said he would have taken any position that called.



## Staff spotlight

This month's featured reporter is **Lana Quick**, OHS sophomore. Lana joined Journalism I this year to help let others know what is happening in the school and to give her the opportunity to create stronger bonds with her peers. She enjoys improving her writing skills, being creative and social and getting to know the teaching staff better as she interviews them for stories.

Lana, who is 16, is the middle child of her family. She has two brothers, **Justus**, 17, and **Tyan**, 13. She likes having siblings because they are crazy and keep things interesting.

Her parents, **Christina** and **Darin Quick**, have been married for 16 years. Her dad was born in Missouri, and her mom was born in Washington but later moved to Missouri. Lana's parents met when her mom was babysitting her sister's children, and her dad was hanging out with her uncle. Lana's family has lived in New York and Kentucky, as well as Missouri because her dad was in the military for twelve years.

Lana's favorite hobbies are crafting jewelry and reading mysteries while relaxing outside. Lana also likes soccer. When she was younger, she participated in cheerleading and volleyball; however, now she spends her free time working at Parkway Senior Living Center in Blue Springs. She takes the food orders and serves meals to residents.

"I like talking to the residents about how they are doing and how their day is going," Lana said.

When she isn't working, Lana enjoys spending time with her best friends, **Arrianna** and **Brylee Pollard** of Higginsville. Their moms are best friends, so the girls have known each other since they were babies. They enjoy going shopping, to restaurants together and just hanging



**Lana Quick**

out while listening to music and talking. Lana also enjoys spending time with her four-legged friends—her cats, **Apollo** and **Rocky**, and she hopes to get a dog in the future as well.

After high school, Lana wants to become a pediatric nurse or a high school English teacher. She said she would enjoy working with students and helping children when they are sick.



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# Staff spotlight

This month's featured reporter is **Lorelai Burch**, OHS sophomore. She said she loves the atmosphere of the class because it is filled with people she enjoys being around and working with.

Lorelai, who is 15, is the middle child of five siblings: **Megan**, 20, **Amelia**, 17, **Chance**, 13, and **Meredith**, 11. The bond that Lorelai has with her siblings is strong. She said they are always there for each other, even when they 'hate' each other. Lorelai and her siblings love to hang out in their rooms for some alone time occasionally, but they also enjoy watching TV together and spending time with their parents.

Her parents are **Julie** and **Brett Burch**. Her mom works for the Army Corps of Engineers in Kansas City, and her dad works from home programming computers for multiple companies. Lorelai and her parents enjoy making memories together.

"Once my mom and I went to Florida and took surfing lessons from a professional surfer," Lorelai said.

Lorelai and her dad enjoy spending most of their time going to soccer practices and eating out. Lorelai said she and her dad are "besties."

"Our favorite place to eat is a sushi place in Lee's Summit called Siki," Lorelai said.

Lorelai loves to play soccer and plays for the Kansas City Athletics, a competitive team, where she plays center mid. Lorelai also enjoys playing for the OHS girls' team where she plays forward.

"The girls and coaches are all very nice, and this makes the game tons of fun," Lorelai said.

When she isn't playing soccer, she enjoys spending time with her dogs, **Bella** and **Molly**. She says they are clumsy, cute and annoying. Even though they are annoying, Lorelai likes to be around them



**Lorelai Burch**

because they make her smile.

"I love them to death, Lorelai said, "even though they can get on my nerves."

She also has a cat, **Shrek**. Lorelai and her family got him from a friend whose cat had given birth to a litter of tiny black and orange kittens.

"He is orange, and he is absolutely adorable," Lorelai said. "When I went over to **Lauryn's** house and saw **Shrek**, I immediately knew that I had to have him. He was the only one that was all orange, and he was too cute not to take home."

When she isn't hanging out with her family or playing soccer, she likes to lay on her bed and watch shows on Netflix. Her favorite shows are *Outer Banks* and *Stranger Things*.

"I like these shows because they are attention grabbing," Lorelai said. "They also have good story lines, and every season is better than the last."



# JV boys' wrestlers place in Lee's Summit North Tournament

By Emma Jones & Olivia Fieth

Odessa JV boys' wrestling team competed on February 5 at the Lee's Summit North JV Tournament against approximately twenty other teams.

Four of the seven Odessa JV wrestlers placed, putting them around the middle of the pack. The top placer at the tournament was **Tyler Renfro**, junior, who placed second in the 126 pound class.

Renfro credits his coaches with his success and said the coaching staff helps the wrestlers and makes sure they are doing everything right and working hard.

"I felt like I was really confident, but that was also part of the problem," Renfro said. "The guy I went against was a varsity wrestler at the JV tournament, and I wasn't taking him as seriously as I should have. Next year, I am going to try to get up to 132 pounds and stay there. I want to make it to state and get a win down there."

"Renfro is such a great kid," **Kirk Gross**, OHS head wrestling coach, said. "He has been in and out of the varsity line up, and he is such a hard worker."

**Ayden Agcokra**, 285 pound freshman, and **Blake Gillespie**, 170 pound sophomore, both placed third.

"I thought I built up in the bottom well," Agcokra said,



**Ty Stewart**, freshman JV wrestler, runs a half nelson on his opponent.

"and he just weighed a bit more than I did. His weight was part of the difficulty."

"Ayden just kept battling," Gross said. "We knew the kid (his opponent) was tough, but if we could get him tired and get on top, we could turn the kid."

Gross said Agcokra is getting better every week. He is coachable and has a "good gas tank" allowing him to beat a lot of heavyweights.

"Coach **Dan Schreimann** and Coach **Robert King** have done a good job bringing him along," Gross said.

Gillespie said he was pleased with the way he performed but was able to set some new goals.

"There are a couple things that I noticed I need to work on," Gillespie said. "My goal is to fix those and hopefully stay on varsity permanently next season."

Gillespie said he needed to work on taking more shots and developing better defense.

Gross said Gillespie has had a successful year and has wrestled varsity on and off all season.

**Ty Stewart**, 145 pound freshman, placed fifth at the tournament. This is Stewart's first year of wrestling, and he said he had a rough start. However, he said he is glad he joined the team because it is more fun than he thought it would be. He plans to continue wrestling throughout his high school career.

"It is so outside of my comfort zone," Stewart said, "but, it ended up turning into a fun activity that I have become really passionate about."

"Stewart is a very coachable freshman surprise with great energy," Gross said.

**Daniela Dwinells**



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## Courtmat festivities cancelled due to weather

**COURTMAT** from page 1 into four houses or groups for year-long competitions, and at the end of each school year, the house with the most points wins a spirit belt. For Spirit Week, Green House came out champions by one point, followed by Blue House, Purple House and Yellow House. Overall standings for the year are as follows: Purple, 1774; Blue, 1593; Green 1297; and Yellow, 1271.

The assembly, basketball games and crowning of royalty that were scheduled for February 4 were rescheduled to February 16. The Courtmat assembly began at 1:25 p.m. Students followed an assembly schedule with Bulldog Block being canceled and each class being shortened to make time for the assembly at the end of the day. StuCo members, Affolter, **Emilia Peterson**, junior, and **Keilee Johnson**, senior, ran the assembly.

All candidates were introduced during the assembly: **Brady Glynn** and **Brooklynn Stevens**, freshmen; **Ryan Still** and **Lorelai Burch**, sophomores; **Lexi Adamec** and **Zack Miller**, juniors; and **Larry-Joe Dodson**, **Brock Oldham**, **Pierce Wisdom**, **Blake Heitman**, **Paige Dillon**, **Hailey Dukes**, **Samara Sims** and **Sydney Stevens**, seniors.

Heitman was crowned king, and Miller was crowned prince.

"I was surprised that I won," Heitman said.

Winter sports and activities were also recognized including boys' and girls' wrestling, boys' and girls' basketball, Winter Drumline, FBLA, Scholar Bowl, Speech and Debate, DECA, MRVC Choir, MRVC Band and Winter Guard. Sponsors and members spoke about their seasons and accomplishments.

Winter Drumline performed part of their show, "The Society". The cheerleaders were also recognized and performed a dance with Winter Drumline. Partway through the assembly,



Riley Jerome, sophomore varsity cheerleader, performs for the student body during the Courtmat assembly held on February 16.

the student body and staff participated in a school-wide send off for the state-bound wrestlers as they left for Columbia, Missouri. **Shon Badger**, 152 pound senior, placed third, and **Brady Jones**, 106 pound freshman, placed sixth at state.

StuCo members led the students in several games during the assembly such as Rock Paper Scissors, where the students could win house points. **Jason Gennetten**, sophomore yellow house member, won the Rock Paper Scissors game.

"It felt awesome," Gennetten said. "I used to play a lot in elementary, so I think it was my skill that helped me win."

A basketball shootout chal-

lenge was also held between two senior members of the boys' and girls' basketball teams. **Lexi Moody** and **Brittany Affolter** took on **Clay Fox** and **Garrett Bayless**. Each of the team members had to make five three-point shots and a free throw in the fastest time to win the competition. Moody and Affolter defeated the boys by coming back from behind to win by two shots.

"I made three shots in a row in order to win the contest," Affolter said. "It was amazing to win because our coach didn't make us condition after school during practice."

Later that night, sisters, B. Stevens, freshman, and S. Stevens, senior, were crowned

## Arrive Alive distracted driving simulator comes to OHS

**ARRIVE** from page 1 throughout the day reinforcing the dangers of texting or drinking while driving.

"I think it (the simulator) showed some students who might be susceptible to using drugs or alcohol that it is more dangerous than they realize," **Sydney Stevens**, senior, said.

Students completed a survey after their simulator experience and had an opportunity to make a pledge. One of the questions asked was students how often they text and drive and if they have ever driven under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Over 50 percent admitted to driving and texting, and over 13 percent said they had driven under the influence.

After completing the simulator, 73 percent of students pledged that they will think twice before driving while drunk/impaired, and 9.9 percent said they will never drive under the influence.

"I think that it (the tour) made people learn," **Stryder Sumy**, junior, said. "We were having fun and learning at the same time which was beneficial."

"I thought it was a great opportunity to bring awareness

princess and queen between the JV and varsity boys' basketball games.

"What I liked most about the crowning was that I won with my sister, and I got crowned by my friends. It was a moment that I won't forget," Sydney Stevens said.

"Everyone was really supportive about it. Even though some people lost, they were still supportive," B. Stevens said.

JV boys' basketball team defeated Vanhorn 65-30 and varsity won 53-50.

"We started off kind of rocky and didn't make shots early," **Micah Lewis**, OHS boys' basketball coach, said. "We ended up down nine, and in the third quarter, the boys just really decided to play better.

to our student body about the dangers of distracted driving." **Brad Briscoe**, OHS principal, said. "Most importantly, hopefully it sends a message that we are serious about these issues and the safety of our students."

Partway through the event, the TRACTION team was presented with a \$1000 check from AAA for placing third in the Buckle Up Phone Down (BUPD) Showdown in the fall, where students competed with other schools to have the most students sign the BUPD pledge.

TRACTION Team members, Alvested, Arms, Hall and Hamilton will be attending a TRACTION reunion in Columbia. During the conference they will be presenting the driving safety initiatives that OHS students have participated in this year for a chance to win up to a \$2000 grant.

Additional future OHS TRACTION sponsored events include a guest speaker, **Cara Filler**, who will be speaking to students on March 30 with a message about driving safety and decision making, and a docudrama (mock crash) tentatively scheduled for April 22, the week before Prom.

They bonded together well as a team."

**Boston Sanders**, senior, was the high scorer with 25 points.

"I was trying to outscore one of my friends from Vanhorn," Sanders said.

The dance/activities scheduled for February 4 were canceled. Different options were going to be offered this year in addition to a black light dance. Table top games were scheduled in the library, yard games were scheduled in the cafeteria, and a movie was scheduled to play in the commons.

