



December 2021

# THE GROWLER

Odessa High School, Odessa, Missouri

## FBLA members teach Halloween safety to McQuerry students



Ronnie Hyatt, Sarah Alex, Jayce Doss and Shiloh Hall, first graders, enjoy the Spooktacular put on by OHS FBLA members.

By Anikah Kaler  
OHS annual FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America) Spooktacular event took place at 1:50 p.m. on October 28 at McQuerry Elementary. The event helps teach children about how to stay “safe and smart” on Halloween.

FBLA members spoke to each class, handed out glow bracelets and delivered bags of candy with safety tips attached. Tips included the following: wear a safe costume, carry a flashlight, trick-or-treat with an adult, don't go into houses, have a parent check the candy, be polite and remember to say thank you.

“We want it to be fun and casual but also to establish a bond between the schools and community,” **Rachael Begemann**, FBLA adviser,

said. Begemann, who is new to OHS, took over the FBLA sponsorship after the previous teacher retired. Begemann was actually a member of FBLA when in high school as well.

In the past, the group would perform skits to get the children engaged, but due to the pandemic, that part was omitted this year; however, they hope to expand the event next year.

Begemann would like to add a fun assembly to help get the students' attention and add a parade of costumes in the hallways. The FBLA group is not only teaching the children safety for Halloween, but they are also trying to leave them with a positive memory to encourage them to join FBLA when they get into high school.

FBLA members said they enjoyed dressing up in costumes but had to be careful when choosing them because they didn't want to scare the younger students. The blow-up costumes were a favorite, so the FBLA members want to use them exclusively next year.

“The little kids were peeking their heads into the hallway asking if the people in the blow-up costumes were coming to their class next,” Begemann said.

Begemann said FBLA provides students with a more enhanced business education and helps them overcome fears, expand their abilities and become successful. They get engaged with the community and are paired up with

See **FBLA**, page 4

## Special Olympics returns to OHS



Derrick Marble, sophomore, participates in Special Olympics with Ronnie Finn, freshman

By Emma Jones & Olivia Fieth

Special Olympics was held on October 6 at Bulldog Stadium after a year off due to the pandemic. This was the sixth Special Olympics event held at OHS.

This year, OHS also added unified relay races to the list of events. Unified events include people with and without disabilities competing together. The concept is to participate together, which can lead to understanding and friendship among all athletes.

**Zachary Danner**, Director of Special Services, said these relays are the key to incorporating that “unified piece,” as well as pulling in more non-disabled athletes. One of the district's goals is to get more schools involved with the unified races in the future.

“Our main goal is full inclusion of student athletes that are here in the district,” Danner said.

Odessa had 25 school-age athletes competing, and nearly 100 athletes competed overall from

schools around the area including Holden, Chilhowee, Warrensburg, Leeton, Higginsville, Wellington and Carrollton.

There were also 100 student volunteers serving as buddies to the Special Olympics athletes and helping run events. **Angie Sallee**, OHS Student Council sponsor, organized the volunteers.

“We selected volunteers from StuCo, the Cross Country Team and the Girls' Tennis Team,” Sallee said.

The following events were held: 4x100 meter relay, 100 meter run, 100 meter walk, 50 meter run, 50 meter walk, 25 meter run, 25 meter walk, 25 meter wheelchair race, running long jump, standing long jump, T-ball throw and softball throw.

**Brittany Affolter**, senior, was the head of the Special Olympics Student Council committee and was in charge of the softball throw. Affolter also participated in the

See **OLYMPICS**, page 4



## Begemann teaches life-skills

By Trinity Alvested

**Rachael Begemann**, OHS business teacher, enjoys showing students the relevance of what she teaches. Begemann, who is new to the district, also appreciates the importance of FBLA, the club she sponsors, and believes it helps prepare students for the future.

She was excited when the position came open because she knew she was ready for a change. Begemann found out about the opening from her husband, **Brad**, who is the OMS assistant principal.

In fact, Begemann was considering a career outside of education in the business world after teaching middle school computer applications in Oak Grove for eight years. She said the opening came at a perfect time in her life and believed it was a good time to take a chance.

"This job kind of opened up right at the time when I was trying to make that decision with my life," said Begemann.

She now teaches introduction to computer science, application design, computer graphics, cybersecurity and Python, a computer coding class. These classes are open to grades 10-12.

Begemann said she has more job satisfaction than before because she knows she is teaching life-skills. Students will need computer skills to understand how to file taxes, fill out online forms for jobs and even complete a profit analysis for a small business.

When students think they don't need the skills, Begemann said she is able to argue that fact and let them know they will use the skills in real-life. One student said he was going to be a farmer when he graduated, so she started asking him questions about self-driving tractors with GPS systems that can navigate fields.

Begemann was a FBLA member in high school and graduated from Nevada High School where she was also involved in DECA, volleyball, basketball, track and H.O.P.E. (Helping Out Peers Everywhere).

Begemann received a bachelor's degree in Business Adminis-



**Rachael Begemann, OHS business teacher, enjoys teaching classes that help students learn life skills.**

tration from William Jewell College in Liberty, where she met her husband. However, after finding out that she didn't want to spend her life in a cubicle, she decided to get alternative certification to teach business from Northwest Missouri State University in Maryville. She began her teaching career at Paseo High School and also taught at Raytown High School before going to Oak Grove.

When she isn't at school, she enjoys hanging out with her family. She and Brad have three children: **Macey**, who is a freshman,

**Audrey**, who is in fifth grade, and **Mina**, who is three. She said that Mina is more like her father while Audrey is more like herself, and her oldest daughter, Macey, is a combination of both her parents.

"We also have a dog named **Jewell** because my husband and I met at Jewell," said Begemann.

Begemann said her children are adjusting well to Odessa, and it is a good place to live and raise a family.



## Staff spotlight

This month's featured reporter is **Anikah Kaler**, OHS sophomore. Her favorite part of journalism is becoming closer with her friends and listening to all the funny things they say.

"We somehow came up with the idea of writing the funny things we say on sticky notes and making a quote wall," Anikah said.

Anikah is 15 and has an older brother, **Nathan**, who is 21. She said that while he gets on her nerves, he also pushes her to become the strongest person she can be.

"Together we annoy our parents," Anikah said. "So, I guess it is a good thing he moved out."

In addition to her brother, Anikah said her parents, **Amber** and **Kris**, have contributed to making her the person she is today. Her grandma, **Tammy**, also plays a big role in her life. She enjoys going shopping with her grandma, just talking with her or helping her around the house. She spends as much time at her grandparents' house as she can. On the weekends during the fall and winter, she enjoys going to craft fairs with her mom and grandma.

"Family is very important to me," Anikah said.

Anikah enjoys baking for her family. She often bakes cakes and makes her own icing from scratch. She also enjoys helping cook dinner and preparing food for holidays. She loves most foods, especially ones with lots of cheese.

"My best friend, **Alissa Wilkerson**, and I eat nachos all the time when we are together, and we load them with cheese," Anikah said.

When not spending time with her family, she enjoys being outdoors, playing with her dogs and hanging out with Alissa and **Alex Burkhart**, her boyfriend. Alissa has been her best friend for several years, and she has dated Alex for almost two years.

Anikah is considering partic-



**Anikah Kaler**

icipating in the Missouri Innovation Campus program next year and studying design and drafting. When the opportunity came up she decided to just "go for it."

The MIC program would allow Anikah to earn a bachelor's degree two years after graduation. Beginning her junior year, she would take college classes from UCM and Metropolitan Community College along with her high school classes. So, she would graduate from high school and already have an associate's degree.

"I hope I get accepted because this will really get me headed in the right direction for my future," Anikah said.

## STAFF

**Makenzie Harget**  
Editor

**Trinity Alvested**  
**Elizabeth Armstrong**

**Lorelai Burch**

**Olivia Fieth**

**Emma Jones**

**Anikah Kaler**

**Teagan Loehr**

**Emmalea Munsterman**

**Lana Quick**

Writers

**Kris Poisal**

Journalism Advisor



# Micah Lewis sets goals for teaching and coaching

## Staff spotlight

By Teagan Loehr

**Micah Lewis**, OHS Special Education teacher, is enjoying his first year of teaching at OHS; however, he never thought he would become a teacher. In fact, he attended actuary school and planned on working in the insurance/banking industry. He said the desire to coach is what drew him to the school environment.

"I actually tried to do anything but teach," Lewis said, "because my brother and my mom were both teachers."

Lewis grew up in Independence where he went to Fort Osage and graduated in 2014. While in high school, he played basketball and golf, and was also on the debate team. Lewis played golf all four years, was a two-time sectional qualifier and was named all-district.

After high school, Lewis went to Metropolitan Community College, and received his associates degree in teaching in 2016. He said he chose the degree because he thought it would be the easiest, even though he never planned to teach. He attended actuary school at UCM but was not happy with the career choice.

"Then, about the time I was 19 or 20," Lewis said, "I dove into the whole teaching thing."

Later, he attended Graceland University where he finished his degree in K-8 elementary education and K-12 Special Education in the spring of 2021. Lewis said he decided he wanted to be a SPED teacher in 2019 when his friends and family pushed him to find a program that would fit him. He knew he wanted to work in a high school and decided to get a SPED degree.

Lewis started coaching basketball at Fort Osage in 2015 and began coaching golf the following year. He was the golf coach for five years and the basketball coach for six years. During his time coaching, he filled various paraprofessional roles, was a substitute teacher and even



**Micah Lewis, OHS SPED teacher and coach, enjoys spending time with his children, Martin James (MJ) and Layna.**

drove a bus.

Lewis said his sister-in-law, **Alyssa Banes**, who was a 2012 OHS graduate, thought Odessa would be a good fit for him. He kept checking the school district's website and jumped at the opportunity when it became available.

Lewis said he is pleased with his decision and loves teaching. Since coming to Odessa, he said his favorite part of being a SPED teacher is getting to know the students as well as helping them succeed.

"I love getting to interact with our students," Lewis said, "Our kids are amazing. You get to develop personal relationships, because you are constantly working with them to obtain goals and succeed in class. Those relationships are awesome."

Lewis is the girls' golf coach and the head boys' basketball coach. Lewis said his first golf season was great, adding they were a successful team, and everyone seemed to have a lot of fun.

"The dynamic of our team is awesome," Lewis said. "The girls really enjoyed being around each other, and that made them want to be there and want to get better. That was really cool."

Lewis said there are a lot of opportunities for the boys' basketball team this season as well, and he believes they have the opportunity to stand out.

"With the guys that make up our team and the way that we will play, we can do things that have never been done before," Lewis said. "Having that opportunity gives you the chance to be special. It's up to us."

Lewis has several goals for his future. He plans to be a high school teacher and coach for the duration of his career, and one of his goals is to someday make it into the Hall of Fame for basketball.

"Starting as a head coach at 25 opens up a lot of doors in terms of win totals and things like that," Lewis said. "I hope to climb that leaderboard someday."

He said that he wants to do his best to make sure that kids can look back at their coach or teacher and think, "Man. He really did something for me."

"As I look back over my career and as the kids look back at me, I hope that they look back with fond memories of me," Lewis said.

Lewis said that his experience at OHS so far has been everything he could have asked for. He mentioned that one of his favorite things about Odessa is the school pride. He loves seeing kids involved with their school and showing school spirit.

"Between the golf girls, the basketball boys, my specific kids in Special Education or

See **LEWIS**, page 4

This month's featured reporter is **Elizabeth Armstrong**, OHS sophomore. She joined Journalism I this year to become a better writer and learn more about the newspaper.

Elizabeth is 15 years old and is the youngest of her family. She has one brother, **Alexander**, who graduated from OHS in 2021, and she misses having her brother around the house because it is quiet. Her mom, **Becky Armstrong**, is a fifth-grade teacher at OUE, and her dad, **Daniel Armstrong**, is the principal at McQuerry Elementary.

"I like having teachers as parents," Elizabeth said, "because I always get to walk to their schools and hang out in my dad's office."

Elizabeth said she enjoys being close with her parents. She loves to watch movies and TV with her mom and listen to 80s music with her dad.

"My parents have always been there for me," Elizabeth said. "I honestly don't know what I would do without them."

Elizabeth said one way her parents are always there for her is when they drive her to dance. She has been dancing since she was four years old at Blue Springs Ballet. She said ballet is her favorite thing to do and is a big part of her life. Elizabeth also said that she was excited because they finally get to put on their production of **The Nutcracker** this year after it was cancelled due to the pandemic. Elizabeth performed in six dances throughout the show.

"The studio is like my second home," Elizabeth said. "I am always there dancing and hanging out with my friends."

She loves to spend time watching TV and shopping with her dance friends. She enjoys that when she is with them, they are always cracking jokes and having a good time.

Elizabeth also likes to hang out with her friends at church.



**Elizabeth Armstrong**

She attends First Baptist Church, and she recently went on a trip to Texas with her church where she grew closer to all of her friends and God. She likes helping others and plans to become a children's doctor and go on mission trips to different countries to help out those in need.

"I love to help others, especially little kids," Elizabeth said.

Along with helping others, Elizabeth loves to bake. She said her favorite item to bake is sugar cookies. She started baking when she was eight years old, and it was always a dream of hers to be in the Kids' Baking Championship, a TV show. One of her favorite items to make is Christmas cookies.

Elizabeth likes to watch TV and movies in her free time and play with her dogs. She recently got a new puppy named **Luna** after **Luna Lovegood** from **Harry Potter**. She already had one dog, **Brownie**, but she said she begged her parents to get another dog, and they eventually "caved in."

"I love both my dogs, and I wouldn't trade them for anything in the world," Elizabeth said.





# OMS holds annual Glow Run

By Lana Quick

The darkened hallways of OMS were filled with laughter and colorful glowing streaks as students sped by; however, running in the hallways was not frowned upon, but encouraged as students participated in the fourth Glow Run.

Glow Run was held at 5 p.m. on October 27 to encourage students to live active and healthy lifestyles and to raise money for **STEP** (Students, Teachers, Educators and Parents Organization), which hosts the event. This year's run would have been the fifth annual, but last year's event was cancelled due to the pandemic.

"It was wonderful to provide

## Athletes compete at Special Olympics

**OLYMPICS** from page 1 unified 4x100 meter relay.

"It changed the way I looked at life because it made me realize how privileged I am in what I'm able to do," Affolter said. "It's so good to see these kids smiling and having fun."

**Levi Davis**, freshman athlete, said "I really enjoyed the event and look forward to next year. My favorite part was running."

Davis competed in multiple

## FBLA prepares for upcoming events

**FBLA** from page 1 leaders as well. It also teaches them how skills learned in the classroom are applied in the real world.

FBLA has 34 members and is open to anyone enrolled in a business class. One of the club's goals this year is to get at least three members to state and also to advance someone to nationals. The

this fun, physical event for our kids again," **Kendra Malizzi**, OMS principal, said.

Students ran in the hallways for 25 minutes, played glow bowling in the gym and had popcorn, assorted snacks and drinks in the cafeteria for 15 minutes, then ran again for the remainder of the time.

"The best part was the food and getting to run and hang out with my friends," **Sadie Booth**, eighth-grader, said.

Booth said she had not run in the event before but decided to participate this year to spend time with her friends.

The event was open to all OMS students and staff. Runners registered for \$15 and were given glow masks, glow

events including the unified 4x100 meter relay with his buddy, **Brock Oldham**, senior.

**Jaydis Carter**, senior athlete, said his favorite part was "competing with everyone." Carter competed in multiple events, including the softball toss.

**Derrick Marble**, sophomore volunteer, hopes to be able to participate again next year. He said the event gave

club also hopes to go on some field trips including UMKC to explore the computer science options and UCM to tour the business department.

"So far it's been really positive," **Elliott Plough**, junior FBLA member, said. "It's a great group of people, and I really enjoy being in FBLA. It's been fun."

bracelets and glow necklaces. Ninety-two students pre-registered for the event, but walk-ins were also accepted. Approximately 150 students participated, raising \$2250.

Money raised will be used to help fund incentives for students and provide meals for teachers. Student incentives include monthly drawings for a gift card to reward students for good grades, behavior and attendance.

"The kids had a blast," Malizzi said. "Our halls were packed with happy kids. They all enjoyed themselves by racing the halls and participating in glow-in-the-dark bowling in the gym."

him a "positive new outlook" on life. Marble was a unified buddy and competed with **Ronnie Finn**, freshman athlete. He said he still talks to Finn all the time.

"These people are just here to have fun," Marble said. "They're not any different than us."



Emilee Hales, Baylor Bainbridge, Kaylyn Seals and Presleigh Gross, seventh graders, take a break for snacks and drinks at the OMS Glow Run.

## Lewis settles into teaching at OHS

**LEWIS** from page 3 even just the kids I get to interact with in the hallways, the kids are outstanding," Lewis said.

In addition to teaching and coaching two sports, Lewis tries to come to as many other school events as he can and offer his support to students. He enjoys bringing his two toddlers, **Layna**, who is four, and **Martin James** (MJ), who is three. When attending sporting events with him, he said they are their "loud and people loving selves."

"They love interacting with everyone," Lewis said. "If you see them at events, you probably hear from them too because

they like to talk to people."

Lewis said he enjoys interacting with his peers at OHS. He said one person who inspires him is **Sam Hughes**, who is also an OHS Special Education teacher. He said he respects Hughes because he does such a good job of balancing his teaching and coaching.

"He is very good at what we do in the Special Ed. world," Lewis said. "On top of that, I came in at a time where he is very successful as a coach as well. Just seeing everything that he has done with the soccer program, what it takes to balance both of those jobs and to do it at the level that he does it, I respect him."

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**Patty Dent**  
Owner  
(816)797-4170

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816.716.9903

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Denise Best  
Owner  
Amazinggracezbboutique@gmail.com  
Amazing Grace ZB Boutique VIPS