



# Redcoat Review

Berlin High School, Berlin CT

Fall 2023/ Issue 1

## Mrs. Amenta: From Student to Principal

By Nadia Malec and Katie Tierney  
*Redcoat Review Writers*

At the end of last year, Mrs. Eustis left her role as principal and Mrs. Amenta transitioned into the role. For Mrs. Amenta this promotion is a dream come true. According to Mrs. Amenta, becoming the principal at the school you once attended is a unique and special experience that “brings a new layer of genuine pride and commitment that speaks to the community.”

Mrs. Amenta has taken on multiple roles within the building. From being a Berlin High School student herself, to becoming an English teacher here, then onto serving as an assistant principal, and now to being the youngest principal at Berlin High. Since her promotion, she has taken a slow and steady approach as she believes “any leader who moves up the ladder cannot make monumental changes right out the gate.”

Since being named principal, Mrs. Amenta has the vision of a team prominent in her mind, often referencing the popular TV series, *Ted Lasso*. She greatly values the idea of teamwork, and is excited to be working alongside the staff in this building. Mrs. Amenta believes that for every person in this school community, no role or responsibility is beyond or beneath them.

In the initial months of the school year, Amenta’s goal has been visible to



Principal Amenta

both students and staff. She wants to make sure that she is connected with all students at Berlin High School. To ensure this, she has gone to as many sporting games as possible, as she thoroughly enjoys sports and was an athlete here at BHS herself.

One of the first initiatives that Mrs. Amenta has implemented that students are now familiar with is the rebranding of Red Sea Block. In the beginning of the year, Advisory was changed to Red Sea Block. She is working to shift Red Sea Block to a time dedicated to encouraging school spirit and teacher-student connection, as well as a period where students can take a step away from academics.

In terms of what she is most excited about accomplishing, she is

looking forward to creating a culture and community that is inclusive and celebratory of all members of the high school. One step she is taking to achieve this objective is creating the 23-24 Principals’ Team.

This diverse group of students come together and represent all four grades in the school. The objective of this group is to give students a greater voice about concerns around the school to make sure they are being heard and listened to, such as pep rallies, clubs and other events.

Additionally, Amenta is planning with the student government and organizing the pep rallies to ensure students who don’t normally put themselves out there have the opportunity to do so.

Besides this, her ultimate goal is having students look forward to coming to school. She hopes to establish a building environment where students feel safe, comfortable, and welcomed.

Mrs. Amenta deeply values the idea that “gratitude changes everything.” Gratitude results in everything around you feeling rewarding. Mrs. Amenta added that being Principal is a “surreal experience.” She can close her eyes, visualize and recall what it was like being a student right here in Berlin.

The Berlin community is so grateful to have such an amazing Principal who truly understands what it’s like to be a student here. We can’t wait to see what she accomplishes in the coming years.

## BHS Welcomes Special Visitors

By Ian Saunders  
*Redcoat Review Writer*

On Aug. 31, the two Board of Education Student Representatives, senior Ian Saunders and junior Anousha Hashim, gave a tour of Berlin High School to Gov. Ned Lamont, U.S. Secretary of Education, Dr. Cardona, the CT Commissioner of Education, Charlene Russell-Tucker, and Mayor Mark Kaczynski.

The focus of this visit was to highlight classroom learning during the beginning of the year. Throughout the tour, the visitors discussed educational policy, current high school classes, future careers, and the daily expectations of being a student at Berlin High.

The timing of the visit was aligned with starting a new year and reflecting on the return to a more stable learning environment compared to previous years. Ever since the shift away from pandemic procedures, many high school students have been resistant to just go back to the way things were; and BHS students are no exception.

At Berlin High School, many students have found their return to normalcy after three years brings onward some



Photo Credit: Nick Smith

Administration, students, and public officials gather in the Library Media Center.

form of change in their lives, either academically, developmentally, socially, or emotionally.

During the visit, visitors were met with examples of the new ways we at BHS are working to not just recover from the pandemic, but push ourselves forward into the future.

The visit highlighted new resources, such as the Work-Based Learning program directed by Ms. Hemming. This program allows students to discover their passions, ideas, and pathways while in high school.

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# Mr. Testroet and Mrs. Despres Join Admin Team

By Katelyn Tierney and Nadia Malec  
*Redcoat Review Writers*

Over the past eight months, this school has seen a plethora of administration changes, with the most notable changes being two new assistant principals. Students and faculty here at Berlin High School are pleased and delighted to welcome Mr. Testroet and Mrs. Despres to our school.

This past January, Assistant Principal Mrs. Ventura retired. Mrs. Ventura worked at Berlin High School for six years. She played a big role here at BHS and influenced lots of students and set a precedent for future assistant principals. Her impact on the Berlin community will forever be remembered.

As her replacement, Berlin High School welcomed Mr. Testroet as the new assistant principal halfway through last school year. We sat down and interviewed Mr. Testroet about his career, home life, and goals for BHS. Previously, Mr. Testroet worked in many different teaching positions, from being a math teacher for seven years to working as an assistant principal at a middle school.

Mr. Testroet was drawn to Berlin because of the idea of working with older students and helping students with post-secondary plans. Berlin also has certain amenities other schools do not offer, such as woodworking, a variety of clubs, and classes that interest him and students alike. Testroet was also drawn to Berlin because he wanted to have a larger impact on the academic, social, and emotional growth of students while in high school.

Since transitioning here in late January, he has enjoyed talking to students in a more personal manner, rather than from the perspective of a teacher. Mr. Testroet emphasized that he loves interacting with students and being able to talk with students about what they are passionate about.

In March, he attended Upbeat Weekend and enjoyed teaching a lesson on planning and instructing for students interested in education. He also attended the high school's production of *The Little Mermaid* and was very impressed with the efforts of the students to perform such a high-level production.

Mr. Testroet thoroughly enjoys sports and frequently attends games to support the school whenever he can, bringing



Photo Courtesy Alyssa Napolitano

along his wife and two daughters. His favorite sport is basketball, and throughout the winter season he attended both girls and boys basketball games.

When asked about his dream job, he said, "I'm where I want to be." The Berlin community is very grateful to have Mr. Testroet as one of our new assistant principals, and we cannot wait to see what he accomplishes in the coming years.

Along with Mr. Testroet joining our team, we also welcome Mrs. Despres to the high school. Over the summer, Mrs. Amenta transitioned to the role of principal, opening another job position for assistant principal. Mrs. Despres occupied her position, coming up from Willard Elementary School, where she served as lead teacher. Previously, Mrs. Despres worked at McGee Middle School for many years. Mrs. Despres was a counselor for seven years, and then a lead teacher for two. She explained how she always wanted to come and join the Berlin High community. She especially enjoys interacting and working with high school students because of their maturity level, their greater sense of humor, and their ability to form more personal relationships with teachers and staff.

Mrs. Despres added that it is refreshing to be with kids who actually want to talk to you and look you in the eye and aren't scared to talk to you. She said it's a "nice way to start the day when kids aren't running away from you."

Although Mrs. Despres has only been

at the high school for three months, she explains how one of her favorite parts about working at the high school has been the sporting events. She enjoys the level of competition and the student encouragement section—the Red Sea. She finds school spirit to be at a much higher level than at middle school sports, and she loves how sports unite people. Mrs. Despres even proclaims how she was scared to attend the first football game as she did not know what to expect! So far, her favorite sporting event has been the girls' volleyball games.

In our interview, Mrs. Despres told us she didn't always know she would want to become an assistant principal. She knew she wanted to work with kids, so she started by teaching in elementary school after receiving her Master's degree in counseling. However, she was drawn to the idea of being a lead teacher because she likes being an instructional leader and enjoys having a different impact in the realm of public education. Mrs. Despres shared that she likes being an assistant principal at Berlin High School. She loves being involved with curriculum work and does not see herself moving to another position anytime soon. She added that her absolute dream job would be owning her own food truck because she loves to bake.

Mrs. Despres said she is super excited and thrilled to be working alongside Mr. Testroet and Mrs. Amenta because they make a great team. She's looking forward to seeing what the rest of the school year holds!

## October Upbeat Leadership Training Weekend a Success

By Ian Saunders and Grace Foster  
*Redcoat Review Writers*

On October 14 and 15, the Berlin Upbeat program headed on the road for the hour-long trip up to Camp Jewell for their 2023 October Training Weekend.

Every year, the Upbeat program takes three weekend trips in October, March, and May. The focus of the October Weekend is to emphasize team building and introduce the Upbeat program to underclassmen. In March and May, students will continue to build and harness key leadership skills such as public speaking, collaboration, team-bonding,

and decision making through various workshops and student-led activities.

In addition to providing leadership training, Upbeat also incorporates its roots as a student drug and alcohol resistance program with resistance training from School Resource Officer DePinto and other local police detectives.

Upbeat not only gives all students a community to be a part of and service hours, but it also prepares them to enter the world beyond Berlin High School based on its three pillars: integrity, leadership, and service.

If you would like to join the Berlin



Photo Courtesy Ms. Patel, Upbeat Director  
Upbeat students at Camp Jewell

Upbeat program either as a student, or as an adult-community contact, please reach out to [spatel@berlinschools.org](mailto:spatel@berlinschools.org).



# I'll Give You the Sun and Fourth Wing: A Review

By Sofia Calabrese and Eleanor Henriques  
Redcoat Review Writers

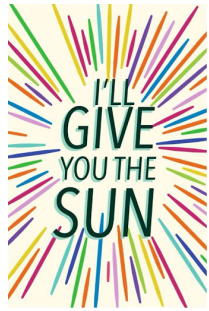
## *I'll Give You the Sun*

Jandy Nelson's young adult drama titled *I'll Give You the Sun* is the book for those who enjoy reading about flawed, yet realistic, people. The novel was critically acclaimed when it came out way back in 2014, including winning a 2015 Printz Award for Excellence in Young Adult Literature. The book was praised for good reason: it is the raw and suspenseful, yet emotional, story about twins: Noah and Jude.

"NoahandJude," as they used to be called because of their inability to separate themselves from each other, are now split apart because of family and social issues. The novel takes a journey through both twins' perspectives. Starting with Noah as a twelve to thirteen year old, then to Jude as a sixteen year old. During Noah's timeline, all he wants is to get into an art school for high school. During that summer of non-stop drawing and dreaming, he meets a boy who changes the way he views himself forever.

Jude's perspective is set a couple years after Noah's. Their mother had just died and the family is hanging on by threads. During all of that, Jude has to go through her own adventure with a mysterious sculptor and an even more cryptic and intriguing boy. Both points of view help piece together a bigger narrative, even while their own stories go awry. Noah and Jude both struggle to find peace in their lives. Whether it's with crushes, art schools, or family mysteries, the two protagonists can never catch a break. These elements combined make for a compelling story about family and love and, most importantly, finding yourself.

To start, the writing style is something special. It feels as if these characters are talking straight from their minds, or their stream-of-consciousness. This is seen when the use of all-capital words are placed in the characters narrations to convey how they are feeling and



thinking. It is at times scattered and unfinished, providing a human touch that any reader could relate to.

Another aspect of the novel that really finds its way into the hearts of the readers is the characters. To an unsuspecting reader, this book may seem to be just about two twins and their relationship over the years. Though that may be true for a quick summary, the book is much more than that. The story really shines through the twin's and their interactions with the other secondary characters.

These moments are what makes the novel so special. At a glance, these characters seem to make unforgivable decisions that possibly no reader could connect with. Yet as the story progresses, Nelson makes sure that those reading really understand each character and their motivations. This makes for a story where someone can see themselves through any character, which really works with the concept about family and finding yourself.

Overall, this novel is an exceptionally unique story. The way that Jandy Nelson writes and the way she incorporates her characters make the book what it is. It is a page-turner and you would be remiss to miss out!

## *Fourth Wing*

Rebecca Yarros' *New York Times* Bestseller *Fourth Wing* is the perfect book for readers that like overcoming impossible odds and thrilling action. Although the book was published in May, it is quickly gaining popularity and rightly so. The story is filled with romance, intrigue, and adventure. It blended suspense and action with moments filled with comedy and emotion. This masterpiece begins with a young woman, Violet Sorrengail, who has trained her whole life to become a scribe but is being forced into the war college for dragon riders.

Violet Sorrengail's family has all been dragon riders except for her father, who sadly passed away a few years prior. Violet wants to follow her father and become a scribe, but her mother, the general of the dragon rider army, is forcing her to abandon her hope of a quiet life with books. She is joining the hundreds of candidates striving to become one of the elite of her kingdom, a dragon rider. She doesn't have much experience in combat and is a lot smaller than

everyone else. Along with the impossibilities of the college, she also has to deal with Xaden Riorson, the son of the infamous Fen Riorson who was killed by Violet's mother. The hatred isn't one sided though, Fen Riorson killed her brother. The trials will test everything Violet knows: friendships, enemies, and even her morals. It isn't a normal year in any way, the amount of dragons willing to have riders is even less than last year and the wards that protect the kingdom are weakening. As much as Violet doesn't want to be a dragon rider, she doesn't have much of a choice; once you enter Basgiath War College, there are only two ways out: graduate or die.

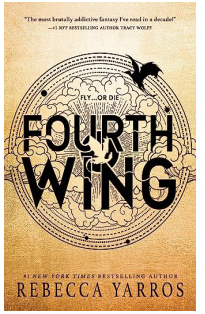
*Fourth Wing* has the unmistakable qualities of an amazing fantasy book. The magic and exhilarating rush of anticipation for what will happen next is a description that only scratches the surface of this book. The mystery that starts to unfold as Violet makes discoveries about the inner workings of the college keeps readers hooked and enthralled.

Although the book has the many great aspects of a fantasy book, it is a little different. Many books have a fantasy main character that just magically becomes strong to save the day. Instead of an instantaneous improvement Violet has to work to become stronger and on the things she physically can't do, she comes up with an idea that works for her.

Even with all these amazing aspects, the book has a couple flaws. The beginning is a little slow but around 50 pages in the story picks up and readers are entranced by the story. Although the book is also a little predictable, readers comment that it doesn't hinder the book's ability to intrigue.

The BHS Windows and Mirrors Book Club chose this book for their book to read in September. For anyone interested in joining to have a chance to read books in a different genre than normal, check schoolology.

The book never fail to provide interesting discussions and tasty treats. The cliffhanger ending leaves much to look forward to for the upcoming sequel that is coming out in November.



# Club Highlight: Ultimate Frisbee

By Grace Buchholz  
Redcoat Review Writer

Berlin High School has a wide variety of clubs and teams to offer to many students. One club in particular really stands out. That club would be Ultimate Frisbee. Coached by Mr. Forman, a former college team captain, the Ultimate Frisbee Club won Division II States last school year.

Yes, club, not just team. This means students can join and play ultimate frisbee on top of a varsity sports team. With no prior experience necessary, any student who wants to get to know the game can join in for some fun.

"Fall Frisbee Fridays" are something team members can look forward to, and last year spring practices were twice a

week from 5:30 pm to 7:00 pm. This late practice ensured not to interfere with varsity sports practice.

Although the team was obviously very strong and competitive, things have changed since last year. The team went 10-1, and at states won four games, scoring a total of 43 points across the board while its competitors scored only 5.

"Ranking would have changed, but fifteen out of eighteen students were seniors last year," Forman replies.

With only three people from the previous year, a brand new team will have to step out on the field to continue their legacy.

"I expect participation to remain high..." Forman says, "The hope for this season is to continue to foster



Photo Credit: Nick Smith

that love for the game, and to make sure that we don't have the same sort of recruitment issues we had this year."

With these goals in mind, there certainly is hope that the BHS athletes and coaches of the Ultimate Frisbee team will be able to pull through with another successful season. See Mr. Forman if you are interested in joining.





# How to Navigate BHS: Welcome Freshmen!

By Julia Grabek  
*Redcoat Review Writer*

The new school year has begun. The halls of BHS are once again full and bustling with eager and anxious freshmen. It is the perfect time for the knowledgeable upperclassmen to offer a guiding hand.

High school comes with many challenges and opportunities, so it is best to receive advice from those who are living through it. I have gathered valuable insights and suggestions from the upperclassmen to help the Class of 2027 embark on their high school journey with confidence and peace of mind. To do so, a survey was sent out to a group of upperclassmen who collectively agreed on many points, and shared experiences of their own. Reading through the flood of responses, certain points were most worthy of sharing.

To understand this year's freshmen class, it was necessary to ask them about their start to the new school year. A survey was also sent out to a group of freshmen, to provide information from different perspectives and people.

One of the very first responses touched on the subject of getting around BHS, stating that, "It was very confusing," and that "McGee had more narrow hallways and a lot more crowded areas" which differs from this school. This only added to the stress of new classmates, teachers, and classes to adjust to.

Even though the building itself was different, it was also the people and the independence provided that made navigating high school a bit more difficult. Change can bring many challenges, but it is the way someone deals with the change that makes it a positive or negative one. A few freshmen talked about the people that helped them start their high school career and navigate this change, saying things like, "My friends helped me out because they had siblings in the school before me," or "Ms. Whyte has been more than helpful, especially in Freshman Workshop."

After going through the responses received from the 9th graders, I moved on to the advice from the upperclassmen. From the start, an overwhelming amount of students pushed for the freshmen class



Photos Credit: Nick Smith

to get involved.

Recalling their own experiences, many shared tips like, "Get involved! Try new things, have fun, join a club, or seven. You can always leave if you don't like it, but you'll never know if you don't try." High school is known for being a completely different experience and an opportunity to try something new. Not only this, but some students stated, "It is good for your resume and also, you might find people or hobbies you like." Getting involved and trying something new can benefit you from any angle. This simple addition to your journey may change it for the better.

It is obvious that many had to discuss the importance of studying and how to take on the increased workload. Multiple people described the ways they had tackled this task back when they were the underclassmen of the school. It became quite clear that the advice being provided from the sophomores, juniors, and seniors, was longed for when they were in the 9th grade. Some responses were truly motivating by mentioning, "There's going to be a lot of work, but it's all doable, if you give it your all. If you need help, definitely ask for it..." and, "Get extra help if you need it and study for tests. Don't leave things for the last minute, it will benefit you in the end

to do things right away." Whilst reading all of this, it made me think about my own freshman year, and all of the advice given right now that I could apply to my past.

Certainly, throughout middle and high school, almost everyone strives to fit in, and erase what makes them different in the slightest way. The advice received warned the Class of 2027 about this problem. There was a specific piece of advice that stood out from the rest from a current sophomore in regards to this issue. This person called out to the freshmen class saying, "Don't try to fit in with other people, and just try to live in peace with everyone." The same person discussed the canon event of high school drama mentioning, "Talk through any issues you have and be responsible." Acting responsibly is always reminded by parents, guardians, teachers, and even peers. It is an important step in positively managing your high school journey.

High school is not just about academic achievement; it's a chance to build lasting friendships, develop crucial life skills, and uncover your true potential. With dedication, resilience, and the wisdom of those who've gone before you, you'll undoubtedly navigate these halls with confidence and thrive. So, Class of 2027, the path is yours to create.

In conclusion, dear Freshmen, your high school journey is a unique and transformative chapter in your lives, filled with opportunities for growth and self-discovery. The advice shared in this article is not just a collection of words; it's a roadmap to help you make the most of your high school experience.

Embrace your individuality, ask questions, and seek out support when you need it. Engage in extracurricular activities, maintain a healthy balance, and set goals that will propel you towards success. Most importantly, remember that the mistakes you make are opportunities to learn and grow. Make the most of this remarkable journey, and remember that the entire school community is here to support and guide you along the way. Welcome to high school – your future awaits, and it's full of promise and opportunity!





# Transitioning From Advisory to Red Sea Block

By Sydelle Holland and Alyssa Pye  
*Redcoat Review Writer*

This year, when students walked through the doors of BHS after a summer of being away from school, the first place they went was their Red Sea Block. However, this was a change from previous years, when students at BHS had an advisory instead.

According to Mrs. Wyskiewicz, a member of the Red Sea Committee, the old advisory program aimed to “build community, support student development, as well as expand and maintain relationships and focus on wellness.” So what exactly is the difference between the programs and what do BHS students and staff need to know about it?

The change from Advisory to Red Sea has been used to introduce an element of fun. Though the overarching goals of the new and old programs are very similar, Red Sea aims to be more interactive and include more class and school spirit events. Both the old and new programs provide consistent peer groups, and an opportunity to share schoolwide messages to help students feel safe and relaxed.

To change the program, the Red Sea Committee was formed by Mrs. Amenta, and she invited “students and teachers interested in brainstorming and planning activities for Red Sea Block” to join her, according to Mrs. Despres, one of the leaders of the committee. Mrs. Jones, another member, says she joined because she “wanted to work on a project that helped students to connect with each other, feel supported by an adult in the

building who wasn’t ‘grading’ them, and to help all students feel recognized and celebrated here at BHS.”

The group has worked hard to make Red Sea a safe and relaxed place for all students outside of the sometimes-stressful academic environment of the school. Through hands-on activities like trivia, bingo and other exciting events, students can forget about grades and take a moment to have fun.

The Red Sea program aims to connect with students and teachers to help everyone feel welcomed, represented, and celebrated here at BHS.

The program takes away from the rest of the normal class periods and students will stay consistent with one small unit throughout their time at BHS. This helps students feel more confident and ideally it will help them open up more. The program will only function if students are putting some effort into the lessons that are created to help them grow socially and emotionally.

Red Sea Block has been restructured to foster, “a school community who works hard AND plays hard. We felt the new name would play up our school spirit and pride and help students understand the purpose of the program better than before” according to Ms. Jones. The whole school participates in the same activities, sometimes against other Red Sea classes.

To make the program the best it can be, Mr. Dresko, another member of the Red Sea Committee, says, “Students should approach Red Sea Block with an open mind and willingness to participate, instead of the usual, ‘roll-of-the-eyes’



approach that people can have when different topics are brought up.” The lessons are completely planned around helping to make BHS a better place. One of the best ways to ensure the success of the program is for the students to get involved and participate during the 30 minute blocks.

The Red Sea Committee has a lot of different parts of the program and according to Ms. Despres the best part of Red Sea is “the excitement and collaboration from students and staff!” Mr. Dresko adds, “I don’t really have a favorite part [of the Red Sea Block], other than to say that I legitimately enjoy seeing my students when we get to meet. The hope is that we can build a rapport that lasts throughout the 4 years here at BHS.”

The Red Sea Committee has worked tirelessly to make this program the best it can be, and the BHS community has a lot of potential to grow because of that. Ms. Wyskiewicz believes that, “As with any change, it will take some time to adjust to the new name, but I think over time Red Sea will be known throughout the school as well as Red Sea is known at our sporting events...school spirit, student relationships and school community!”

# Community Comes Together For Berlin Fair

By Grace Foster  
*Redcoat Review Writer*

Berlin is a diverse community, but there is a statement that nearly everyone can agree on; the Berlin Fair weekend is one of the most exciting weekends of the year. Since its founding in 1882, the Berlin Fair still remains a weekend that Berlin citizens look forward to all year, as it has something for everyone.

Berlin students look forward to the Friday off from school to go and hang out at the Berlin Fair. There are many exciting events throughout the day, including students in the McGee and BHS bands playing songs for the rest of the town. The rides are another huge part of the experience, and there are fun choices for younger kids all the way up to high school.

A crucial element of the fair’s success is the help provided from numerous organizations throughout the town. One significant program that supports the fair is Berlin Upbeat; a community service and leadership skill development program within BHS.

“Upbeat contributes a lot of manpower in the form of student volunteers who ensure that the entrance gates for the fair itself and the Lions Memorial Food Booth are fully staffed,” says Upbeat Director Sheel Patel. Though Upbeat may be just one of the many groups that contribute to the fair, the program has



Photo Credit: Nick Smith

Katie Zibell and Gabe Matta volunteering at the booth.

many students in the high school doing a variety of different jobs. For example, sophomore volunteer Carter Braun says volunteering at the fried dough booth was “a lot of fun” and he was happy to serve “a lot of people, and get community service hours for it.”

With a total of 225 high school volunteers, it is safe to say that this year’s Berlin Fair was successful, completing a total of 355 shifts, equivalent to 1,122.5 hours of community service work.

Similarly, Interact is another community service club that is offered at BHS, and also another large contributor to the fair. Junior Katie Zibell, the Vice President for communications of

the Interact club explains how the club members’ hard work is an essential part of the fair operations and enjoyment. Members of Interact “volunteer their time to work at the mini-donut booth alongside Lions Club members, as well as scan tickets at two entrances to ensure people are being accounted for.” With over 250 community service hours acquired by the club from this past fair, it is clear to say that it has been a success.

There are so many opportunities for students to get involved in at the fair, and Berlin is beyond grateful for the volunteers from Upbeat and Interact, as well as all volunteers and workers who helped with the preparation, setup, and success of the weekend.





# Girls Soccer Nets Another Successful Season

By Alexa Fallon  
*Redcoat Review Writer*

On September 12th, 2023, the Berlin High School women's soccer team took to the field in the opening of their season. Since their initial game, the Redcoats have taken each team on by storm, increasing their standing to a near perfect record. As the playoff season unveiled, the Redcoats were an impressive 12-1-2, making them first in the conference with the CCC South Division title. They earned the No. 1 seed in the Class L state tournament, before losing in the second round to East Catholic. They ended their season with a 13-3-2 record.

Starting off strong, the Redcoats defeated Bristol Central 2-0 in their home opener. Sophomores Ella Santoro and Janalyn Weber each tallied a goal. Grace Ramirez continued the shutout streak by blocking four more goals against the team. Since then, the Redcoats have demonstrated clear teamwork skills and determination against each competition. Julia Salina, a senior captain, says that each player has worked extremely hard and pushed themselves as a player.

"Coming into the season we had to work around a lot of gaps that were left from 12 seniors leaving last year." The Redcoats once again showed their



Photo Credit: Alyssa Napolitano

dedication as they faced CCC rival Glastonbury at Sage Park on October 6th. Glastonbury had been undefeated against Berlin for the last 6 seasons. Nevertheless, the Redcoats stepped up to the challenge, and came to the game with a clear and optimistic mindset.

After a defense-heavy first half, Bella Salina netted a highlight-reel goal from 30 yards out to put the Redcoats up. The team continued their powerful defense with the help of 12 saves by Grace Ramirez, including two clutch ones in the final five minutes, to defeat Glastonbury.

After losing tough games to Glastonbury the last three seasons, Julia Salina said the win was exhilarating, and let everyone know that they weren't messing around this season.

"Glastonbury has always been one of the best teams in the state, leaving a huge target on their backs for years. We were proud to achieve one of our many goals of the season."

With great leadership, teamwork, optimism, and perseverance, the women's soccer program is continuing to raise the standard.

# Barbenheimer: Summer Hits Movie Review

By Sofia Calabrese and Julia Grabek  
*Redcoat Review Writers*

This summer's big 'movie of the summer' were actually two, *Barbie* directed by Greta Gerwig and *Oppenheimer* directed by Christopher Nolan. Not only did the two global hits come out during the summer, but they happened to come out on the same day - July 21. People from all over the world would show up to the big event (nicknamed 'Barbenheimer') either dolled up in pink for *Barbie*, or in gray-toned suits for *Oppenheimer*.



*Barbie*

The current number one box-office hit of the year, bringing in nearly 1.5 billion dollars, delivers on all fronts. *Barbie* is an eye-opening tour de force made for those who grew up playing with the toy the movie is based on. Going in blindly, it may seem like a fun little film packed with nostalgia. Yet many viewers found themselves walking out of the theater holding in tears and reflecting back on their lives. Starring Margot Robbie as the traditional plastic icon, *Barbie* takes our heroine on a journey throughout the real world after learning she is losing her Barbie-ness. In this world, *Barbie* overcomes many challenges and obstacles that in *Barbieland*, would have never been there in the first place. Those moments are some of the most impactful.

While there are some storylines that

ponder the social state of the world, there can be some very humorous beats. The humor is seen very thoroughly through Ryan Gosling's take on Ken and the variety of other Barbie's in *Barbieland*.

Not only do the emotional beats live in harmony with the absurdity, but the overall beauty and design theme make the movie what it is. The film is overwhelmingly pink, with hints of other vibrant colors. This was a perfect choice for the color palette of the movie because of the iconic Barbie toy, that was all about pink and femininity. Not only did the color make the movie pop, but all the set designs, clothing, and makeup helped make the movie what it is. *Barbieland* looked like how *Barbieland* sounds like, pink houses with plastic pools and too small convertibles.

Overall, *Barbie* is a special movie that only comes around once in a while. It truly deserves all its praise and acclamation. Certainly one of the best movies that came out this year.

*Oppenheimer*

The irony is great when it comes to the two most popular, and money-grabbing movies of the summer. *Oppenheimer* presents the viewers with a glimpse of groundbreaking history that changed the course of the future. The choice to create a film about the Manhattan Project was controversial. This plot was a secret research and development program led by the United States during World War II to develop the first atomic bomb, which is a quite emotive and sensitive topic that divides the country. Although this topic had been depicted in many movies, books, and television series throughout the years, it still made skeptics wonder

about the success of the movie. Yet in the end, it became a piece of poetry.

Nolan created a truly unique experience for the audience about the complicated man who spearheaded the Manhattan Project. Although the main point of this film is the atomic bomb, the creation itself defines Robert J. Oppenheimer and how it guided him through his very own life. Casting choices for this biographical epic are impeccable. Cillian Murphy, who is known for his previous collaborations with Nolan, delivers a stellar performance in the titular role, capturing Oppenheimer's intellectual genius, inner struggles, and evolving conscience.

The supporting cast, including Emily Blunt and Tom Hardy, complement Murphy's performance with remarkable portrayals of those who surrounded Oppenheimer during this critical juncture in history.

"*Oppenheimer*" shines in its meticulous attention to historical detail, capturing the essence of the Manhattan Project and the political climate of the era. It brings to life the scientific discussions, ethical debates, and the immense pressure faced by the scientists involved in the creation of a weapon capable of unparalleled destruction. The film also masterfully compares Oppenheimer's personal life and struggles, offering a glimpse into the man behind the genius.

This cinematic masterpiece ultimately succeeds in crafting a portrait of a brilliant mind caught between duty to country and the moral burden of unleashing atomic destruction. It is a film that will leave you pondering long after the credits roll, delving into the intricate tapestry of human nature, science, and history.



# “Puffs”: A Magical Show and Performance

By Eleanor Henriques and  
Lillian Cookson  
*Redcoat Review Writers*

On November 3rd and 4th, the BHS music department once again delivered an outstanding play for the school community called, “Puffs.”

According to Mr. Tyler Boyle, the music director at BHS, Puffs is a 90 minute show about a “certain boy wizard and his experience at a certain school of magic over the course of seven particular years.” (The Jesuit Chronicle) It features a familiar cast of characters to a very well known story, with some different, goofy changes involved.

“Due to a whole bunch of trademarks and licensing agreements we can’t exactly say what the school of magic is, but I’m sure most people can figure it out for themselves,” joked Mr. Boyle. “Puffs is told from the viewpoint of a different wizard who happens to be there at the same time.”

Mr. Boyle was pleased with the performances of his entire crew of students. He was also very pleased with the choice of the play.

“I was originally going to choose some Shakespeare,” he says. “I was asking some of our students what they would be interested in, and they quickly shot that down. They were more interested in doing a little bit more of a modern comedy play.”

“We had a really successful fall play production last year. Not only did our audiences really enjoy it, but our students had so much fun working on it,” recounts Mr. Boyle, about last year’s play, which was titled *The One Act Play That Goes Wrong*. “Puffs seemed to fit the bill, there’s a little something for everyone.”

This seemed to have been the case last year as well. *The One Act Play That Goes Wrong* was another comical, quick-witted play, with laughable characters and a set that (purposely) kept breaking down. It was a well done show by the theater department, cast, and crew, and audiences were very entertained by it.

In addition to the interview with



Photo Credit: Jacob Miller

Mr. Boyle, student feedback from cast members was important.

Cast member Junior Tommy Morisse-Corsetti, who played the character Wayne Hopkins in Puffs, said he enjoyed the show because it was an “... opportunity to expand my acting skills and work to improve my abilities.” Tommy was a strong lead. He brought humor to the play and also brought more of a serious side with his portrayal of his character.

Stage crew worked hard to get this play on its feet. Senior stage manager Nora Ritchie was excited to see the process come full circle, as she stated how she was “excited to see how our cast portrays each character, they are all so well casted and I think everyone is having a lot of fun during rehearsal.”

She also mentioned that “there are so many funny jokes packed into the play and the vague, but very specific, mentions of Harry Potter make it even funnier.” This was sure to make the show even more hilarious for audiences, and it definitely did!

“We’ve got some really talented kids who are just naturally funny,” Mr. Boyle stated. “There’s a lot of humor in this show. To have kids who are naturally funny delivering comedic material is just the perfect combination.”

One scene that was a crowd favorite was a monologue done by Ryan Markey

who played Mr. Voldy. It was a hilarious reference to the many scenes in the Harry Potter movies of Voldemort not having any shoes. He also played Cedric and was a dynamic character in the show. He did a great job, and he says “It was my first time acting. It’s only 13 people so it gives us a chance to be really connected to each other and supportive.” He also adds, “It was a very close knit community, and a lot of people I knew were there to support me.”

Calvin Delude played the character Zach Smith, along with various other parts. His part as Zach Smith was the most notable due to his exciting, yet a little dark rendition of Beauty and the Beast, and not to mention the overall character. He definitely had a lot of energy in all of his parts and made the show fun for everyone. He says, “I think the play was a big success, just considering that we had a lot of great talent this year.”

The most common theme between everyone involved with working on this play is that audiences were sure to enjoy it, as the cast and crew worked hard to make sure everyone had a good time. It was a show perfect for all ages.

The theater department has unmistakably put a lot of time and effort into making this show perfect for our entertainment. It was definitely a great show and one to remember!

## Dr. Cardona Visits BHS

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In fact, many colleges and universities have started similar programs for their students to be able to experience industry work and gain experience while still learning.

Throughout the tour, Dr. Cardona interacted with countless students from a variety of backgrounds, reflecting his work at the federal level by developing community-based programs that share values of diversity and inclusion of all students.

This reconstruction effort helps to address the concerns that plague every teacher’s mind across the country: how the impact of the pandemic has changed the future of education. All over the



Photo courtesy of Nick Smith

Dr. Cardona and Mr. Benigni walk the halls of Berlin High during a special visit.

country, Cardona’s work has helped to cultivate an exceptional academic and social environment within the public education system. Ultimately, although a lot still needs to be done to fully under-

stand just to what extent the past three years has impacted students’ well-being, efforts are continuously being made to redesign the educational culture for the students, teachers, and staff.