

BREAKING NEWS

Administration shuts down Powder Puff game

Abbey Marshall | Staff Writer

The annual Powder Puff football game between junior and senior girls was called off this year due to safety concerns and issues with disrespect.

According to Powder Puff advisor Sheila Nimer, the participating students were not following the rules in place while preparing for the game, making the situation dangerous.

"It was canceled because it was felt that many of the students weren't listening to staff members," Nimer said. "After Ms. Bruewer and I brought our concerns to administration, they thought it was in the best interest of safety to cancel the event."

Strict rules have always been in place, according to student activities director Lorri Fox-Allen. She said the disrespect of these rules was a deciding factor in the cancellation.

"We brought Powder Puff back seven to nine years ago and we put very strict stipulations on adherence to the rules and safety and when it's blatantly disregarded the way it was, they didn't really leave us a choice," Fox-Allen said.

Fox-Allen said students not only were disrespectful of the staff, but also risked their lives by practicing in a lightning storm.

"It's a shame that we have to cancel because the kids chose to put their lives in jeopardy in the middle of a lightning storm," Fox-Allen said.

Nimer said that she is upset by the cancellation, but feels it's necessary.

"It was tough to cancel," Nimer said. "I was really, really, really upset that it came to this. I was hoping we could change behavior before it came to this point, but unfortunately it didn't...This is definitely the first time that the behavior was so out of control that we just felt it was dangerous moving forward."

According to Nimer, she cannot yet make a statement as to the status of next year's game.

"At this point, I think it's too early to tell," Nimer said. "Emotions are very high so I don't want to make any speculation for next year at this point."

PRESIDENTIAL HONOR

Senior presents science project at White House



Photo contributed by Bluyé Demessie
Senior Bluyé Demessie presents his project in the East Garden of the White House.

Duncan MacKenzie | Staff Writer

While most Mason High School students were sitting in class on Monday, March 23, senior Bluyé Demessie shook the president's hand.

Demessie showcased his science fair project at the fifth White House Science Fair, an event hosted by President Barack Obama. Other attendees included Bill Nye and Victor Cruz, wide receiver of the New York Giants.

For four years, Demessie developed a low-cost and sustainable water filtration device using agricultural waste, specifically banana peels, for use in developing countries. Demessie's project won grand prizes at the 2013 and 2014 Intel International Science and Engineering Fairs and 2014 Siemens Competition in Math, Science and Technology. He also showcased his work at national and international conferences, including the 246th and 248th American Chemical Society National Meetings. According to Demessie, this project will be able to effectively and sustainably replace previously used water filtration devices around the world.

"The problems that people in developing countries face are a lack of water, a lack of food and a lack of capital," Demessie said. "This is able to produce clean water. The materials that are required to make this water filtration device do not take away from the production of food and the cost is very low; everything is based off waste material. It's a

much more sustainable solution than importing filters from Europe or the U.S."

Making a project with monumental real-world applications isn't a walk in the park. Demessie said that after starting the project during the summer before ninth grade, the research required immense perseverance.

"You have to be very persistent because a lot of times when you're trying to create something new, you run into a lot of walls," Demessie said. "For example, I ran into a big wall in my ninth grade year where I was having a lot of trouble. The filtering device wouldn't separate from the water so it got soggy really easily...There's a lot of trial and error."

According to Demessie, the trip wasn't just an intellectual endeavor. The experience of being in the White House and meeting the president was his most memorable part.

"Taking the group photo with the president (was my favorite part of the trip)," Demessie said. "He joked around with the students. It's strange because you usually see him on TV and then he's right there standing in front of you. It's very surreal when you see him."

"There's a lot of trial and error and you have to be very persistent."

— BLUYÉ DEMESSIE

SENIOR

Demessie says that he is excited for the future of his project. With the knowledge and networking that he gained from his trip to Washington, D.C., his next step is on the horizon.

"The next step for me is to take this device and do a case study in a developing country," Demessie said. "I met people from different NGOs (non-governmental organizations) and USAid (United States Agency for International Development) who have the resources and experience to get my project to the next step. It was a great opportunity to meet a lot of people that I otherwise would never have had the chance to meet."