



# *LIONS ROAR*

## *JDA'S Student-Created Newsletter*

Editors: Michelle Lopez,  
Ysabella Ponce  
Estefania Quintana

November-December 2021



### **JDA BASKETBALL**

By Carli Espinoza and Gabriella Joens  
Staff Writers



During this fall season, our JDA athletes will be participating in basketball. Our girls' team is being coached by Coach Jasmine Long and has seven participants. Our boys' team has eighteen athletes coached by Coach Aldo Bertini and assisted by Coach Anthony Garza. Coach Bertini has a long and formative history with basketball. He's been playing since he was ten years old and says, "The sport helped me become more respectful and self-disciplined. I learned to respect my elders, the coaches, and my teammates." His hopes for this season are to provide his boys with a winning streak but also discipline and a real knowledge of the game. "I would like to see the boys come out on top in district and to learn to appreciate the sport, respect the game, and learn self-discipline," Coach Bertini said.

Coach Garza says, "The practices are great and the boys are learning more and more every day." Coach Garza has been a coach with JDA since the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year and has made a lasting and positive impact on the lives of all students.

We are eternally grateful for Coach Bertini, Coach Garza, and Coach Long for their positive presence on our campus and in our gym.

Please come out and support our boys' and girls' basketball teams this season!

- November 30** – Hebronville 5:00
- December 3** – Girls vs. San Perlita 6:30
- 3 – Boys vs. Roma 5:00/ 7:30
- 7 – Brownsville Harmony 5:00
- 9-11 – La Lomita Classic
- 14 – Brownsville Frontier 5:00

- January 11** – \*Alamo Macedonia 5:00
- 13 – \*Harvest Christian
- 18 – Kingsville Pan American 5:00
- 20 – \*Brownsville First Baptist 5:00
- 25 – \*S.T.C.A. 5:00
- 27 - \*Alamo Macedonia 5:00

- FEBRUARY**
- 1 – \*Harvest Christian 5:00
  - 3 – Kingsville Pan American 5:00
  - 8 – \*Brownsville First Baptist 5:00
  - 10 – \*S.T.C.A. 5:00
  - 19 – Bi-District
  - 22 – Area
  - 26 – Regional
  - March 3-5** – State Tournament





## TEACHER FOCUS: MR. STEFAN LIN

By Maria Salazar  
Staff Writer



Mr. Stefan Lin was born in San Jose, Costa Rica, but moved to the valley in 2007, and is an only child. He graduated from Juan Diego Academy in 2016 and attended Texas A&M majoring in Applied Mathematics with a minor in Film, graduating in December 2020. He studied math because he enjoyed it and found it easy, although he sometimes struggled with it.

Mr. Lin chose to return to his alma mater because he loves the campus. “I had a fairly normal high school experience and came back to JDA because of the beautiful campus. I have good memories of JDA.” When trying to find a job after college, Mr. Lin says, “Covid impacted my plans out of college simply because companies were hiring less.” As for current plans, he said, “I don’t have any except for continuing to teach at JDA, if they’ll have me.”

Mr. Lin says he has had a positive teaching experience so far. “Although I was nervous because of my shy nature, teaching has helped me by forcing me to socialize more. I truly enjoy teaching. Some days are great, and the kids understand. Others not so much, but such is life.” Mr. Lin chose to stay in the valley after college because of his family ties. “I didn’t have a job after college and came back because my mother is here. I like the valley.”

What other career would Mr. Lin have chosen if not teaching? “I enjoy cooking so I would have considered becoming a chef. People have also told me that I am a good singer so I would have given music a shot.”

Few people know that Mr. Lin is an avid dog lover. He currently has two dogs: a chihuahua and a beagle. His hobbies include listening to music, playing video games, soccer, and watching TV or movies. He also says, “I would love to travel to England and watch a soccer game or to South Korea to indulge in the many foods the country has to offer. But as far as my bucket list, I only have one item (so far): I want to take a road trip from Seattle to Los Angeles to travel down the Pacific Coast Highway.”

Finally, when we what quote he likes, Mr. Lin said, “People make fun of the guy who stays home every night doing nothing, but the truth is that guy is a genius”- Ted Mosby, *How I met your Mother*.

Mr. Lin concluded the interview by saying, “I plan to serve the Lord in the future to the best of my abilities.”

## SENIOR SPOTLIGHT ISABELLA JOENS

By Sara Michelle Lopez  
Staff Writer



Isabella Joens, the president of the 2022 senior class, is an interesting student who has a plethora of talents. “I enjoy baking, cooking, eating different types of food, and participating in sports such as basketball, track (in long-distance races), and golf.” Isabella has two pets; Bruno and Prince, English bulldogs. And, she has two younger siblings, Gabriella (Gabby) and Chase. Isabella is from the Rio Grande Valley, born in Edinburg, Texas, and attended elementary school at St. Matthews Episcopal School. When asked about her campus activities, Isabella proudly said, “I am part of the robotics team, Guild of St. Agnes, and the Student Council.”

Miss Joens has important plans for her future. She is planning to start up her own business after she graduates either from the University of Texas at Austin or Baylor. “I am interested in the career of entrepreneurship. That’s why I plan to open a business. I also plan serve the Lord in the future by spreading the word of God wherever possible.” She plans to continue going to church, praying, and participating in her Catholic life.

Isabella says that she will miss her JDA friendships and the close-knit community after she graduates. “I am going to miss the senior class of 2022, my friends, the activities, and all the fun we had together. I love JDA.”

It is a blessing to have Isabella Joens as our classmate here at JDA.



By Rufino Garza  
and Chayan Castellanos  
Staff Writers



JDA has an official Quiz Bowl team this year, with Mr. Lin at the helm. “I was in quiz bowl when I was a student here, and when I came back as a teacher I heard that there was some student interest in bringing the team back, so I offered my time and service,” said Mr. Lin.

The official first competition was on September 11 but since they didn't have a budget they did not participate. Their first competition was on Friday, November 6. They practice as often as they can through the week. Mr. Lin is cognizant of student obligations so he works around their busy daily schedules. The team currently consists of eight students, all seniors, which is beneficial, but Mr. Lin is hoping some underclassmen dare to join.

The quiz bowl competition is two where teams try to answer 22 toss-up questions. If a team answers a toss-up correctly, then that team is given three bonus questions. This semester there will be four competitions; we plan to participate in the last two. Participants are schools from all over Texas, both public and private. There is no set league. If a school has a team, they can sign up to compete. Categories range from literature to history to math and science to pop culture. This competition has it all. This is not like Jeopardy because in Jeopardy, contestants are given general categories and a certain amount of questions in that category. In Quiz Bowl, one round could be very history heavy and another very science heavy and the following round could be an even split.

We are blessed to be able to bring Quiz Bowl back to JDA!

## JDA Annual Thanksgiving Meal

By Marcelo Sierra and Sarah Armenda  
Staff Writers



*Mrs. Bitner, Mr. Garza  
and Ms. Felix help serve  
Marco Gudino.*

"Be present in all things and thankful for all." -*Maya Angelou.*

Turkey, pumpkin pie, and football. It's Thanksgiving time here at JDA! On November 19, 2021, JDA had its annual Thanksgiving meal for all students and staff.

It was a beautiful Friday morning and JDA students were fully excited with anticipation for the upcoming meal later that day. To start off the festive season, JDA Student Council, along with sponsor, Mrs. Rodriguez, took the time to decorate the JDA campus with holiday cheer. From stringing lights in Seton Hall, putting up the office christmas tree, and to even decorating Diego the Lion with his very own Santa hat. Once all the details were in place, the campus gathered for a Thanksgiving mass before sharing in a blessed meal.

The gym was beautifully decorated for a Thanksgiving celebration with students, staff, and even parents who helped during our Fall Festival event. With administration taking the time to serve the food, everyone came together to reflect on what they're most thankful for. This meal became an opportunity “to give thanks for all the events we've had this year and all the help we've received to put all the events and fundraisers together,” in the words of JDA principal, Dr. Kathleen Carroll. We truly have so much to be thankful for.

## CHRISTMAS PINATA

By: Viviana Salinas and Ana Martinez  
Staff writers



*Sara Michelle and Sarah Armenda pose with the piñata they filled with candy.*

Michelle Lopez, the secretary of Sociedad Honoraria Hispanica, arranged for a Christmas pinata event sponsored by NHS and SHH students on December 13, 2021. The piñata festivities were held in between the two lunches, and the whole school was invited to participate in watching the two clubs break the pinata! We asked Michelle why she arranged this wonderful event. “We are doing this because it is a Mexican tradition, and the SHH thought it would be fun to bring this tradition to our school. We hope this event will be one we remember forever.” The fun began at about 12:15 pm outside the gym, and Juan Carlos Salinas is the lucky boy who broke open the Christmas pinata. All the students ran up to the pile of the candy and grabbed what they could. Thank you, Michelle Lopez, for your great idea to celebrate Advent.



Michelle organized the Christmas piñata.



Priscilla and Isabella ready to hit the piñata.



Michelle helps Illian prepare to begin his turn.



Juan Salinas breaks the piñata while student rush to get candy.

By Estefania Quintana  
and Dulce Ayala, Staff Writers



The Lions for Life club is going to participate in the national March for Life held in Washington, D.C. on January 21, 2022. The sponsor who is organizing this event is Miss Donna Kobisher, religion teacher and director of this club. The itinerary of the trip is planned to include departure from McAllen airport on January 20, participation in the march on January 21, and then return to McAllen January 23. At this point ten students have confirmed to attend the trip, and the teachers who will be attending are Mr. Linn and Ms. Kobisher. To fund this trip the club has received financial support from members of the school board and from the students who have organized fund-raising events, such as movie night, and the most recent event, the Winter Festival on December 4, 2021. The purpose of the March for Life is to promote life, to encourage an appreciation for life, and to “understand and value the gift of human life and help build a culture that cherishes and protects it.” (respectlife.org)

# Celebrating Día de los Muertos

By Ysabella Ponce  
Staff Writer



Día de los Muertos, or All Souls Day, is celebrated on November 2 in the Roman Catholic tradition. It is a day of prayer and remembrance for our departed loved ones. During the week of Día de los Muertos, we asked Estefania Quintanilla about how she learned to decorate an altar for celebration and her experience with it. “I learned how to make an altar when I was very little. I had always been around them growing up when observing Día de los Muertos and learned from my mom and other people who were decorating,” she said. Celebrating Día de los Muertos is both a Catholic and Mexican tradition that involves items such as paper, tape, candles, papel picado, flowers, pictures, and stardust to be placed on the altar. “Día de los Muertos means remembering those who are not with us anymore and honoring them through our memories by dedicating this special day to them,” added Estefania. When celebrating a loved one, people make altars and place pictures of their loved ones on it to remember them.

Estefania received help in decorating our JDA altar from Dulce Ayala, Renata Angulo, Camila Guajardo, Marcela Davila, Pricilla Quintanilla, Jesus Sanchez, Alexandra Aguirre and Mrs. Quintanilla. They worked together to create an amazing altar for JDA so that all the students had an opportunity to place pictures of their loved ones to be remembered.

Some forms of symbolism that are placed on the altar are the water and food that represent a gift to the dead, the skulls that represent the dead, the air that moves the paper, which represents the movement of those we are remembering, and the candles that represent the light of a pathway for the dead to follow. What is Estefania’s favorite part about creating the altar? “Designing the stardust that laid out on the floor of the altar,” she said. “Making this altar was a wonderful experience and I would love to do it again.”



Day of the Dead poster created by Sociedad Honoraria Hispanica.



Estefania, Priscilla, Alexandra, Dulce and others help decorate the altar.



Day of the Dead skull created by Estefania and other volunteers.