

BE SAFE  
RESPECT OTHERS  
ACCOUNTABLE  
VICTORIOUS  
ENTHUSIASTIC

BE BRAVE AND  
FOLLOW THE  
WARRIOR WAY.



FALL | 2021

# THE ARROW



## 13 Heroes, 13 Days

**A dream inspires an artistic vision**

Webster's Dictionary defines a hero as "a person who is admired or idealized for courage, outstanding achievements, or noble qualities." Members of our armed forces should be recognized as much more than this. They take an oath to selflessly put their lives on the line, without having met any of the people for whom they are fighting. This is what defines them as a hero: doing something for the greater good of society, without expecting any reward, achievement, or round of applause. The armed forces put their lives on the line for the people, and the people only.

EFHS art teacher, Kristy Dubinsky made sure to correct herself many times when using the word 'soldier' instead of 'hero'. She, too, believes soldiers should be recognized for much more than their titles given by the military. They should be recognized as heroes to our country.

On the night of September 2, three days after the 20-year war in Afghanistan finally came to an end, Dubinsky had a dream about needing to paint the 13 heroes who had fallen in the Kabul airport attack. Prior to that night, many news channels began broadcasting the whereabouts of these fallen lives, which brought thoughts into Dubinsky's mind about our veterans and what they have done for us.

Dubinsky heard the words "paint the 13" from a voice in the back of her head while dreaming that night, and the next morning she didn't waste any time. "It was a chilling overall feeling that I need to go start this painting right now," says Dubinsky. So, she grabbed her canvas and got started immediately.

Dubinsky's plan was to paint one portrait a day for thirteen days. While working

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on the first painting, she decided to make a TikTok video for her 54,000+ followers. The video gained over 500,000 views and more than 4,000 comments of praise. The positive response confirmed that she was doing the right thing by honoring these heroes. Dubinsky continued her journey of painting and recording one each day, while gaining about 20,000 views each. The attention from TikTok motivated her to get them finished in 13 days, since she knew people were waiting for these posts every day. It became extremely successful and even helped her to connect with the families of the soldiers she was painting. After completing the first three, she had the idea to submit these as her artwork for an upcoming art show.

Dubinsky is a very talented and successful artist. She does everything from paintings to drawings, and even art using a chainsaw. She says this year would be her 5th year participating in the art show in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Prior to her epiphany of the 13, she was planning to submit a different piece this year; however, when she had the urge to paint these heroes, she got on the phone with the director of the art show immediately and told her that she needed to find a way to submit this instead. Soon enough, she was on her way to Michigan with 13 canvases and 13 tributes to these fallen men of courage.

After bringing the paintings home from the Michigan art show, Dubinsky began the process of reproducing the paintings to gift to each of the fallen hero's families as a way to further pay tribute.

Dubinsky says, "I've been involved with all these families now, and while it's hard, it is very rewarding. I like to do this. I like to help people heal in a way that they wouldn't have been able to before."

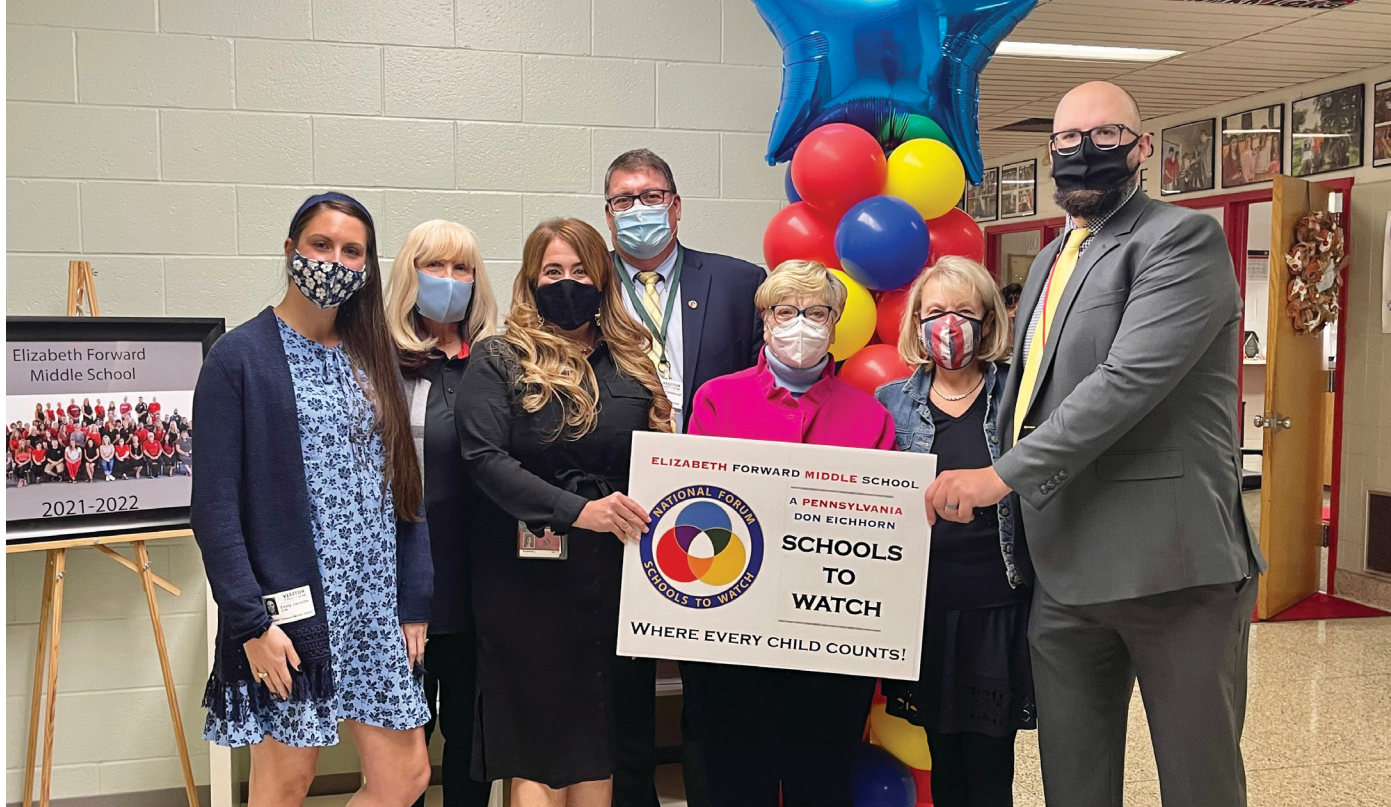
Dubinsky's paintings were featured here at Elizabeth Forward High School for a Veterans Day program in November so that every student, staff member, and veteran could pay tribute to these fallen heroes and take time to recognize the sacrifices that every veteran has made for us.

*Cover: Kristy Dubinsky admires her paintings at ArtPrize art festival, in Grand Rapids, Michigan.*

*Above: Setting up red, white and blue flowers next to each soldier's painting, Dubinsky hopes to bring peace to each one of them and pay her respects.*

*Bio: Julia Seymour (grade 12) is the editor-in-chief and head photographer of the yearbook staff at Elizabeth Forward High School.*





# Schools to Watch

## EFMS in the running for distinctive recognition

Elizabeth Forward Middle School is excited to announce that on November 3, 2021 the Schools to Watch evaluation committee spent the day evaluating the middle school and meeting with staff, students, parents, and community members in order to evaluate EFMS for its third re-designation as a Schools to Watch.

***EFMS was designated a PA Don Eichhorn Schools: Schools to Watch in 2013, earned a re-designation in 2016, and a re-designation two in 2019.***

Results for our 2021 evaluation are pending and will be available sometime in January.

Schools to Watch (STW) is a program of the National Forum to Accelerate Middle Grades Reform and Pennsylvania is one of 17 states that has an active STW program. The program recognizes schools that have shown three years of growth. Once schools are recognized, they need to reapply for this distinction every three years to show that they are continuing on a trajectory of continuous improvement. The STW

program promotes continuous school improvement and helps to identify and recognize middle-level schools and programs that are academically excellent, developmentally responsive, socially equitable, and organized to ensure continuous improvement. STW schools serve as exemplars for the successful implementation of best middle-level practices.

What does it mean to be a Pennsylvania Don Eichhorn School? The Pennsylvania Don Eichhorn Schools: Schools to Watch program recognizes a small number of middle grades schools that are diverse, high-performing, and growth-oriented in order to show the capabilities of middle grades schools.

Pennsylvania Don Eichhorn Schools demonstrate excellence in four specific areas: academic excellence, developmental responsiveness, social equity, and organizational structures and processes. Schools with academic excellence challenge students in all content areas. Developmentally responsive schools are highly

concerned with the challenges faced by middle schoolers as they navigate their early adolescence. Schools that support strong social equity have opportunities for students of all abilities and backgrounds to be successful and provide supports for students who are struggling. High-performing schools with strong organizational structures and processes have well-established, foundational norms that are the bedrock of their success and that propel them on a path toward excellence.

A Pennsylvania Don Eichhorn School is a school that is conscientiously moving toward fully meeting the nationally-endorsed criteria for high-performing middle schools and that has made marked progress in meeting all of the criteria,

including measurable gains in the academic achievement of all students over time. Elizabeth Forward Middle School has worked hard towards earning this distinction and is excited about the possibility of earning a re-designation three in January 2022.



# Inspiring Others

## Blake honored with prestigious award

Miss Anna Blake has been the Computational Thinking and Computer Science Teacher at Greenock and Mount Vernon since 2017. In that time, she has worked with the elementary team of technology integrators to create activities like Tech Olympics and STEAM Day. This year, her work was recognized at the annual Carnegie Science Awards Celebration when they named her one of their Most Inspiring Educator award winners. This year was the 25th Annual Science Innovation Awards that celebrate leadership and innovation in the Pittsburgh Region.

During the pandemic, Miss Blake collaborated with Miss Melissa Unger from the South Fayette School District to create The Pittsburgh STEAM Station, a YouTube Channel where video lessons were shared with Western Pennsylvania teachers. The videos showcasing teachers around the area have been viewed over 100,000 times. Miss Blake uses technology in the classroom to prepare students to become 21st-century problem solvers as she designs creative lessons that align with the Computer Science Teachers Association (CSTA) and the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) standards.

Miss Blake is active in the Remake Learning Network and serves on the Duquesne University School of Education's Alumni Advisory Board. Through a grant from the Allegheny Intermediate Unit, she and Miss Unger co-authored and self-published the book *Capturing Creativity: 20 Easy Ways to Bring Low-Tech Steam into your Classroom*.





# Instructure Educator of the Year

**Central Elementary teacher honored for advancing technology**

“Simply incredible!” That is how EFSD Superintendent Dr. Todd Keruskin described the work of Central Elementary School teacher Mrs. Angela Girol who was recently awarded the 2021 Instructure Educator of the Year.

Instructure, the educational technology company that developed the Canvas LMS platform used by the Elizabeth Forward School District, sponsored this award and recognized only six educators in all of North America for their excellence in remote teaching and the use of Canvas. Only one teacher, Mrs. Girol, was recognized at the elementary level.

Mrs. Girol, a second-grade teacher, taught largely in a remote capacity during the 2020-21 school year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Working in the district for the last 15 years, Mrs. Girol was instrumental in the district’s implementation

of Canvas beginning in 2019, as well as helping to support teachers who were new to the Canvas platform during the pandemic. She has incorporated many new activities into the curriculum that are transforming the traditional classroom, including the creation of “personalized learning time” in her classroom repertoire. This block allows students to seek out help with skills and content if they need support or enrichment opportunities while working at an accelerated pace.

“Being awarded Instructure’s Teacher of the Year is an incredible honor,” said Girol. “I am humbled to be recognized alongside some of our nation’s best and brightest educators.” Girol continues to implement new types of instruction into her own classroom while also working with the district in the development of new initiatives related to Canvas.



# Central Elementary partnership with PaPBS

## Creating a culture of bravery

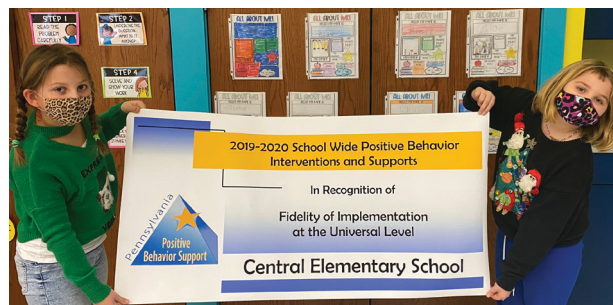
Each year, the Pennsylvania Positive Behavior Support Network (PaPBS) partners with schools to help develop and implement school-wide supports that focus on promoting their students' academic, social, and emotional well-being. Central Elementary partnered with PaPBS in the 2017-2018 school year and created a school-wide behavioral expectation framework (Be Brave – Be Safe, Respectful, Accountable, Valued, Empathic). This framework was created with input from the faculty, staff, students, and parents. Central Elementary was recognized by PaPBS in the 2019-2020 school year for reaching Universal (Tier One) Initial Implementation with Fidelity. This achievement required continuous effort and collaboration from the faculty, staff, and students over several years.

During the 2018-2019 school year, the PBIS Core Team, including Dr. Perry, Mrs. Gracan, Mrs. Hodge, Mrs. Stock, and Miss Straub, kicked off the Be Brave expectations in the classroom, restroom, cafeteria, hallway, and stairwell. Students were taught the Be Brave expectations during a school-wide assembly, as part of teacher-led classroom lessons and through student-produced videos. These expectations continue to be reinforced with Brave Bucks that staff members can give if they witness a student demonstrating these expectations. The Be Brave expectations are posted throughout the school, and the faculty and staff continuously reteach and reinforce them throughout the school year using Brave Bucks, the Principal 100 Board, Hump Day Giveaway, The Golden Bus Award, classroom incentives, and other school-wide rewards.

The adoption of this school-wide framework has changed the culture at Central Elementary. Both students and staff clearly understand the behavioral expectations, which enable a proactive approach to potential issues. Students have learned what it means to be a good student. When fourth-grade student Isabella Kania was asked what strengths she possesses to be a Brave Bunch member, she said, "I am responsible. I get to school on time and

complete my work. I am a good listener and follow directions." Teaching children what it means to be a good student, classmate, and citizen provides the foundation to succeed in school and life. Over the last several years this framework has expanded to include student leaders applying for the Brave Bunch and school bus drivers issuing The Golden Bus Award. New this school year, students can also be recognized by their parents through the Home/School Connection.

Central will be working towards PBIS Universal (Tier One) Sustained Implementation with Fidelity for the 2021-2022 school year. Achieving this designation will require a visit and a structured interview with a PaPBS Network member. The principal, faculty, staff, and students will be interviewed to evaluate if the school-wide framework is effective and meets specific requirements to reach Fidelity. The PBIS Core Team, faculty, staff, and students have worked hard to implement this framework over the last several years. Reaching Sustained Implementation will add value to this ongoing initiative by recognizing the importance of prevention and having clear behavior expectations for students, faculty, and staff.





# Pre-K Badge Books

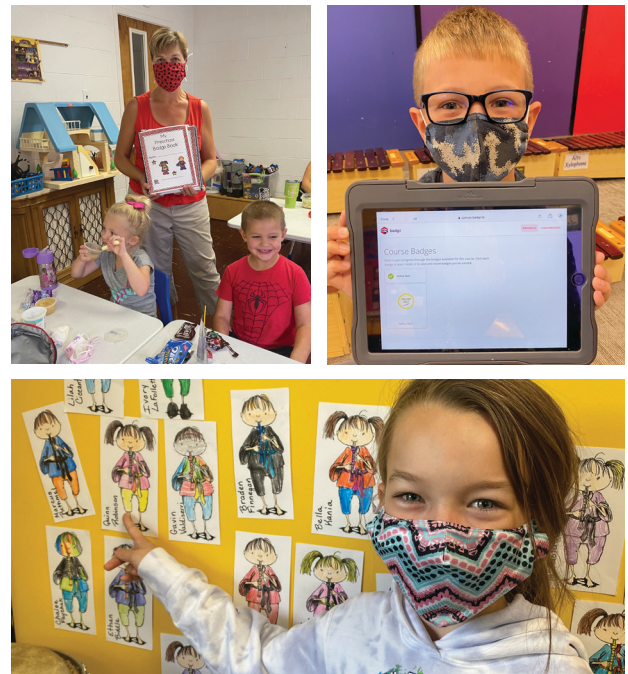
## Promoting growth and progress

Most people associate badges with the Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts, where children complete various tasks and earn badges that signify they have met the requirements associated with the badges. The Elizabeth Forward School District applies the same logic to learning by using badges and badge books to show students' academic progress. Students who attend the various pre-schools throughout our community earn badges for academic and developmental skills, which are kept with them in their badge books. The badge books promote growth and show the progress of our children. The school district has partnered with the Alvah M. Squibb Company to provide this valuable resource for our children for the past three years.

Each school year, the Elizabeth Forward School District provides pre-kindergarten badge books for every child in our district. The badge books are designed to demonstrate the students' mastery of different skills. Students earn badges in reading, writing, math and independent developmental skills. The concept is rather simple – when children demonstrate mastery in each area, they receive badges for their accomplishments instead of earning grades. Students earn badges at their own pace based on their individual needs and developmental levels. In addition to these academic advantages, the badge books also make the transition to kindergarten much easier because the skills identified in the badge books are skills needed in kindergarten.

The books provide an opportunity for consistency amongst the large number of pre-kindergarten schools within the community. The books are also a great resource for parents who do not send their children to a pre-school program. Each book offers suggested activities for parents to help their children master each skill.

*For more information about the pre-kindergarten badge books or for a copy of a book, contact Brad Simala at [bsimala@efsd.net](mailto:bsimala@efsd.net).*



# Badges Promote Learning

## Students thrive with goal-oriented reading and math challenges

Adults can relate to the feeling of earning achievements on digital games like Candy Crush or Wordscapes, or perhaps remember the excitement of earning badges as a Boy Scout or Girl Scout. Hours were spent learning to make a fire with sticks or setting up a tent, but the concept made sense: demonstrate a skill to earn a badge. We definitely know that our students share this love of earning achievements on games like Roblox and Minecraft.

What makes it so exciting to earn those badges? The same psychology behind earning badges through scouting is also built into the concept of video games to make players want to keep playing. For some of us, the social aspect of being part of a group or team creates excitement. For others, it is the fact that we can achieve a goal in different ways. Several years ago, schools started asking how that same kind of motivation might be built into teaching and learning.

In 2016 Elizabeth Forward kindergarten teachers started using badges with their students. A set of 64 skills in reading and math were identified and a badge was designed for each skill. Now, when kindergarten students across the district demonstrate skills to their teachers, they receive corresponding badges to celebrate their achievements. Earning badges is so much more exciting than the typical primary grading methods of checkmarks, letter or percentage grades, or other scales that make no sense to young children. The same science that makes children want to keep playing video games also makes them want to keep learning. Since students are not receiving report card grades, the teachers meet with them four times during the year to discuss progress.

Badges have been such a success that teachers were challenged to create badges in other grades and subject areas. Mrs. Kristy Ochs, elementary music teacher at Greenock and Central Elementary Schools, is using badges in elementary music. "This is the first year I have started badging in our elementary music classroom," says Ochs, "The students are so motivated by the visual, digital, and ceremonial aspect of receiving a badge for their recorder playing. I always had students submit recordings of themselves playing, but with the addition of earning a badge, I have had 100 percent participation! Badges are a great way for the arts to show assessment and individual achievement. I will definitely be incorporating badging into more of my curriculum."

Motivating students to learn through badging is happening all around the district. At Mount Vernon Elementary, fourth-grade science teacher, Mrs. Tiffany Loeffler, took the challenge and created badges to show learning achievements for her students. "It is so fun to teach this way and to see the kids motivated by learning," says Loeffler. "They are enjoying science in a way I have not seen before." Loeffler's students know that, by using the scientific method, they are actual scientists, and when they don their lab coats, they are ready to work! Student feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. They feel confident knowing that they get to demonstrate what they know in different ways rather than just taking a pencil/paper test.

*For more stories about badging in our district, Google "Elizabeth Forward badging."*



# Fall Farm Smiles with Greenock Elementary

## Long-awaited Triple B Farm field trip

It had been a long time since the wheels on a field trip bus went 'round and 'round, so the students from Greenock Elementary were more excited than ever to visit one of everyone's favorite local haunts – Triple B Farms in Monongahela, PA.

Over 200 students in kindergarten through second grade arrived at the farm on a crisp Autumn day ready to explore and enjoy the day with their Greenock

teachers and staff. "Mrs. B" (Carolyn Beinlich) of Triple B greeted the children and spent time teaching them all about the farm and the way things grow, with a special focus on the way dirt helped make their lunch!

After a jam-packed day of pumpkin picking, hay riding, tunnel sliding, bouncy jumping and animal petting, the tired students hopped back on the bus for



the trip back to school. Students loved the playground and, despite their muddy feet, said the trip was the best day ever.

Triple B Farm, operating since 1985, is located right here in the Elizabeth Forward School District at 823 Berry Lane in Monongahela, PA.

*For more information visit [triplebfarms.com](http://triplebfarms.com) or call 724.258.3557.*



# Warrior Stadium Recharged

## Crucial upgrades bring life to historic field

The Elizabeth Forward School District is proud to announce the completion of the construction project at Warrior Stadium. Over the last two years, the artificial turf has been replaced, new LED lighting has been installed, and the track was replaced. The Elizabeth Forward School Board and Mr. Al Ragan, Director of Finance and Operations, worked very hard to refinance several bonds to help pay for the new upgrades to the stadium. “My family and I have been part of this district since 1975 and being able to make these upgrades possible was very rewarding,” said Mr. Ragan.

Mr. Zak DiGorio, Director of Building and Grounds, oversaw the project over the last two years. The projects were finished in a safe and timely manner and phasing was implemented to ensure these projects did

not impact student and staff events and activities. Additionally, the project costs were completed within the allocated yearly capital budgets that were designated.

The district’s Athletic Director, Mr. Timothy Guffey, was one of the original members of the community group called Operation Light-Up that initially installed the stadium lights in 1993. “The technology of the lighting system is so much more advanced than it was 28 years ago,” says Guffey. “All the light is concentrated directly to the playing surface. We are very much looking forward to once again being able to host home track meets this upcoming season. The senior members of the team will be able to run in a home meet for the first time in their high school careers.”



# Fall Athletics

## Staying active and achieving goals

The EFHS fall sports teams were able to compete during the fall season with only minor interruptions due to the ongoing COVID pandemic. Most of the teams never stopped practicing and were able to complete their schedules. The athletes took care of themselves and made sure proper precautions were used throughout the season.

The volleyball team was in a rebuilding season and was able to finish with an overall record of 3-11. Joselyn Dawson received 2nd team all-section honors. Skyler Shoben and Grace Smith each received 3rd team all-section honors.

The girls golf team had an overall record of 4-4. The ladies finished fourth in the WPIAL-AA playoffs. Senior golfer, Meagan Lewonas, competed in the WPIAL individual championship where she placed 16th overall.

The boys golf team finished the season with an overall record of 12-1. AJ Palmer and Logan Monzak competed in the WPIAL individual championship. Logan finished in 3rd place and advanced to the PIAA individual championships.

The cross-country teams experienced success on the trail this past season as well. The boys and girls teams finished with an overall record of 7-4 each. Many individual accomplishments were achieved throughout the season. Senior Laci Schwirian finished in 21st place in the WPIAL Championship and competed in the PIAA championship in Hershey, PA.

The girls soccer team had a very successful year. The ladies finished with an overall record of 13-3-2 and a section record of 8-0-2. The All-Section members of the team included Bri Hartford, Natalie Moffa, Abby Beinlich, Giovanna Ferraro, Olivia Kristen, and Brooklyn Baldensperger. Abby Beinlich received All-WPIAL honors.

Dominated by several senior members, the boys soccer team finished with an overall record of 12-5 and a section record of 9-3. Receiving All-Section honors were Anthony Valerio, Gino Penascino, Isaac Hrehor, and Ethan Bowser. Ethan was also named Player of the Year in section play and Logan Cherepko received an Honorable Mention.

The football team finished its regular season with an overall record of 8-2 and will be entering the WPIAL 3-A playoffs. This season, the team is represented by nine All-Stars, including Zion White, Kyle Flournoy, DaVontay Brownfield, Charles Meehleib, Nick Murphy, Grant Robinson, Charlie Nigut, Johnny DiNaploi, and Zach Boyd.



**Fall Sports Season photos taken by Matt Gaydos (Redford Photography)**









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2021 Homecoming Court: DaVontay Brownfield, Kyle Flournoy, Vincent Marino, Anthony Valerio, Nathaniel Ratica, Maxwell Salankiewicz, Faith Gregory, Maura White, Sage Smith, Grace Smith, Rylie Kuhn, Avrey Parkins



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