

# The Element

FOR MSTC, BY MSTC | February, 2017

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## Director's Corner MRS. YOUNG

### **Celebrating Diversity**

Maybe it is because we just celebrated our first ever MSTC Friendsgiving. Maybe it is because of our current political climate. Maybe it is because I am greeted every morning by our MSTC student body that reflects every race, religion, and creed. Taking all of those reasons together I felt compelled to dedicate a bit of space in this month's issue of *The Element* to celebrate the family that is the MSTC Program at Paul Laurence Dunbar High School.

To borrow from an article titled "Why Celebrate Diversity?" from the website of Appalachian State University ([www.diversity.appstate.edu/celebration/why/](http://www.diversity.appstate.edu/celebration/why/)):

*As human beings, we are revealed and make ourselves known to one another by infinite varieties of intelligence, language, race, values, politics, religion, national service, gender presentation, philosophy and a host of other elements common to humankind. The recognition of a common humanity is the first step in the celebration of our differences – differences that inform our cultures, our values, our minds, and all our ways of being in the world.*

## Director's Corner

MRS. YOUNG

It doesn't take long, when observing an MSTC class in action, to realize that our future is in good hands. The students in the MSTC program work collaboratively together to reach academic goals. Outside of the classroom they find time to volunteer, not only within the confines of the school, but in our community as well. In classes like Senior Seminar, students freely share and discuss widely ranging ideas and share very diverse opinions. The students in the MSTC program are passionate about a lot of things and are not afraid to speak up and take action to bring about change.

This is not to say that the MSTC program and its students are perfect. We all need to take the time to get to know those around us a little better. That is why I was so excited when a group of MSTC parents organized our first ever MSTC Friendsgiving. Close to 200 MSTC students and their families came together to share a meal and great conversations. The potluck format allowed us to get a little "taste" of each home and family. I was encouraged by the number of families that praised the event and excited by the number of students who stopped me in the hall the next day to say that they hoped that we could do it again.

I truly hope that each and every student and family that is a part of the MSTC Program feels that they belong. Please know that my door is always open. I know that I have been blessed to work with each and every one of you.

Send questions about academics,  
social life, or more to:  
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# MSTC Friendsgiving

Thank you all who attended MSTC Friendsgiving on January 24 for the fun and wonderful night!

This was the first ever potluck that MSTC has organized, and it was a great success. We had nearly 200 people attend, with families of freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors. At the beginning of the event, students and families were handed color-coded nametags, with four colors to represent the grade levels. On their nametags, people wrote a passion of theirs, encouraging others to start conversations with them about that passion. Along with these nametags, students were given slips of paper and asked to collect fun facts about another student from each grade level. These slips of paper were turned in to a large box for prize-drawing. Everyone brought delicious dishes from all sorts of cultures, allowing for a night of great food (and who doesn't like that?!). Later in the evening, the prize-drawing began. Students won vintage MSTC apparel, merchandise, and free tickets to the MSTC Senior Banquet.

Friends of MSTC is excited to continue putting together events like MSTC Friendsgiving! We can't wait for all future MSTC events.



# MSTC Student Accomplishments

- Scholastic Art and Writing, an annual art and writing competition that awards scholarships, exhibitions, and publications, Southeast Region winners were announced. MSTC students received a combined 15 awards across art and writing, including 4 Gold Keys (which qualify for the national competition). Congratulations to sophomore Megan Slusarewicz (1 Gold Key in Flash Fiction, 1 Honorable Mention in Poetry, and 3 Honorable Mentions in Art); juniors Jennifer Lee (1 Gold Key and 2 Silver Keys in Art), Sahar Mohammadzadeh (1 Gold Key in Critical Essay and 1 Silver Key in Short Story), and David Ma (1 Gold Key in Personal Essay/Memoir, 2 Silver Keys in Poetry, and 2 Honorable Mentions in Critical Essay).
- Fayette County Public Schools boasts 10 of Kentucky's 85 seniors tapped as 2017 candidates in the U.S. Presidential Scholars Program, one of the nation's most prestigious honors recognizing high school students' accomplishments. MSTC is happy to present 7 of these 10 seniors: Jan Balk, Annie Griffith, Carlo Labianca, Emily Liu, Ananth Miller-Murthy, Nisarg Patil, and Ben Xie!
- Senior Amit Lohe was selected as one of Kentucky's two delegates for the 2017 U.S. Senate Youth Program in Washington, D.C. Amit will attend meetings and briefings with senators, House Members, congressional staff, the president, a Supreme Court justice, senior members of the national media, and more. In addition, Amit will be awarded a \$10,000 college scholarship with encouragement to pursue coursework in government, history, political science, and public affairs.
- Sophomore Emily Cooper will join other outstanding musicians from across the nation as part of Music for All's 2017 Honor Band of America. Emily plays clarinet, and was selected from numerous applicants from across the nation for membership in this prestigious honor ensemble.
- Senior Amy Wang was named the Distinguished Young Woman of Kentucky after a week-long scholarship program and two days of competition. She represented Fayette County and was chosen among 31 women representing other counties across Kentucky. Amy won Overall Talent, Overall Interview, and a Self-Expression Preliminary Award, totaling over \$6,000 in cash scholarships. She will be headed to the National Distinguished Young Women Program in June to compete for additional prestigious scholarships.



## MSTC Student Accomplishments (continued)

- Students across Kentucky auditioned for the KMEA's All-State High School Chorus. Sophomore Divya Sunderam was chosen to be a part of the All-State Women's Chorus.
- MSTC students attended the State Beta Convention. Congratulations to: sophomores Austin Li (Math Division I, 2nd place), Shashank Bhatt (Science Division I, 1st place), and Angus Maske (Social Studies Division I, 2nd place); juniors Cici Mao (Math Division II, 3rd place), Jennifer Lee (Onsite Colored Pencil Drawing, 2nd place), Hannah Wang (Onsite Pencil Drawing, 1st place), Zsombor Gal (Social Studies Division II, 1st place), and Sahar Mohammadzadeh (Speech Division II, 1st place); senior Thirushan Wignakumar (Science Division II, 2nd place.) Dunbar's Quiz Bowl Team (juniors Hannah Wang, Zsombor Gal, David Ma; senior Thirushan Wignakumar) also won 1st place in the Quiz Bowl competition and the Convention Sweepstakes competition.
- Dunbar recently competed in the District Governor's Cup Academic Team Competition. We are proud to announce that a Dunbar student or the Dunbar team won 1st place in every event including Quick Recall and Future Problem Solving (freshman Reka Gal, sophomore Megan Slusarewicz, junior Madi Halwes (non-MSTC), senior Amy Wang)! Congratulations to the following students on their excellent performance on written examinations: freshmen Aneesh Kadambi (Arts and Humanities, 1st place), Brian She (Language Arts, 1st place), Henry Blyth (Social Studies, 2nd place), John Adkins (Social Studies, 3rd place), Mohammad Rashad (Language Arts, 3rd place), and David Vulakh (Science, 3rd place); sophomores Shashank Bhatt (Science, 2nd place; Mathematics, 1st place with a perfect score!), Austin Li (Mathematics, 2nd place), and Eleanor Liu (Arts and Humanities, 5th place; Composition, 5th place); juniors Zsombor Gal (Science, 1st place; Social Studies, 1st place) and Cici Mao (Mathematics, 3rd place); senior Amy Wang (Composition, 2nd place).
- Dunbar competed in the Regional Speech competition, winning 3rd as a team. Congratulations to the following MSTC students: freshmen Parker Smith (2nd Place in Broadcasting, 3rd Place in Original Oratory), Angie Xiao (2nd Place in Declamation), and Nasim Mohammadzadeh (2nd Place in Humorous Interpretation); sophomores Luke Sills (1st Place in Informative) and Megan Slusarewicz (1st Place in Original Oratory, 3rd Place in Poetry); juniors David Ma (4th Place in Extemporaneous Speaking, 6th Place in Impromptu), Julia Radhakrishnan (3rd Place in Humorous Interpretation), and Sahar Mohammadzadeh (1st Place in Poetry, 3rd Place in Program Oral Interpretation).

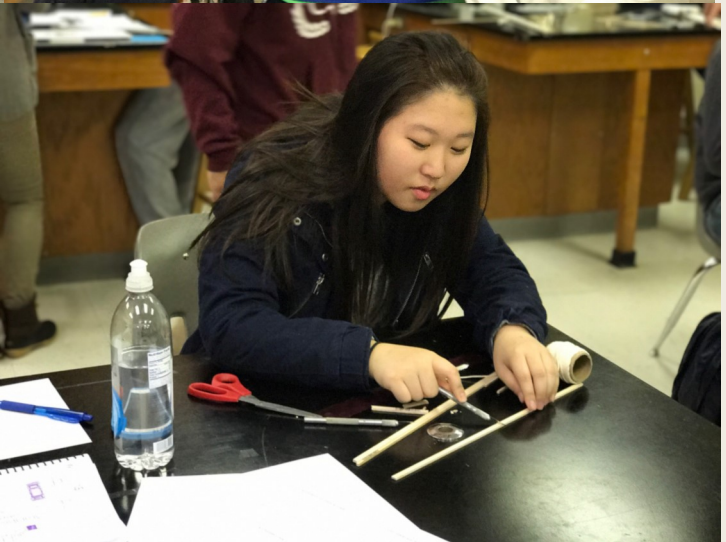


# MSTC Students Spotted



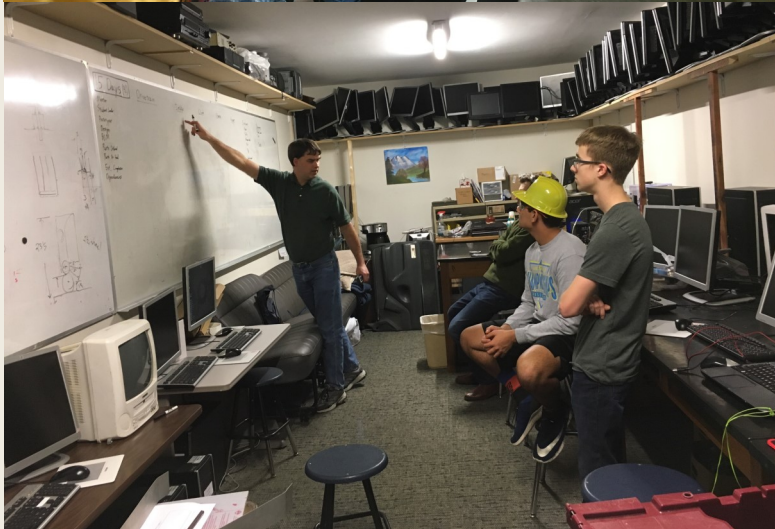


# MSTC Students Spotted





# MSTC Students Spotted





# My Experience at Summer Programs

AMIT LOHE

Summer vacation is rapidly approaching, and with it comes an excellent opportunity that many students often overlook: summer programs. Summer programs are supplemental academic programs that allow students to explore various topics of interest for several weeks. They are offered by colleges across the country and vary in cost, length, and rigor. They allow students an excellent opportunity to get a taste of college life, earn college credit, meet new people from around the world, and much more.

Since summer program applications are now in full swing here are a few reasons you should consider applying:

1. **You get a taste of college life!** By spending several weeks away from home, taking college classes, picking the brains of residential advisors, and exploring campus, you're able to get a great feel for a school's student life and campus vibe from these programs, and they are a great way to learn more about schools you're interested in.
2. **You learn a lot.** Most summer programs involve four to six hours of class a day, usually taught by university professors. The classes are extremely engaging and involve a great deal of discussion. Once you factor in problem sets, essays, and final projects, it's easy to see that many summer programs allow students a great deal of intellectual exploration. (However, it is important to note that the rigor of summer programs varies, so make sure you do your research!)
3. **You're able to explore new topics, or delve deeper into an area of interest.** Most summer programs usually have students specialize in a specific subject throughout the length of the program. Doing so enables an emphasis on the depth and quality of learning that students will experience. These programs are an excellent opportunity for students to explore a potential major, or get a head start towards their intended major.
4. **You forge unforgettable friendships.** At these programs, you're surrounded by dozens of other interesting, motivated students. These students from all over the country and the world each have a unique story to tell. Over the course of these programs, you form amazing friendships and share incredible memories together.
5. **You learn more about yourself.** At these summer programs, you're free from the daily social pressures of school. Surrounded by students who are in the same boat as you, you're free to be your true self at these programs; it's a clean slate.

I have attended two summer programs during my high school career, and I loved every single moment of both. When asked about my most memorable moments of high school, more often than not, I point to my experiences at those programs. If you're even slightly thinking about applying, go for it!

# Senior Spotlight: Senior Indoor Soccer Team

AURI VAEZ

Wintertime, a time filled with snow and dreary days for many. For a certain group of MSTC Seniors, however, winter brings something else to the table: indoor soccer. Our indoor soccer team was first established last year, when we were juniors. Spandan Buch first introduced us to the idea of playing indoor soccer, and the seniors who were on board joined the team, named “Kentucky Football Club (K F.C.)” With personalized uniforms and unlimited sportsmanship, our team began to play.



Our first year playing indoor was rocky. We started our season with a convincing 8-5 win, which meant a lot, as it was the first experience playing indoor soccer for most of the team. However, as the season went on, the opposition grew stronger and our losses increased. Ultimately, we finished 2-6 on the season, with two hard-fought wins and a couple heartbreaking losses. Although we didn't have a winning season our first year, we had a tremendous amount of fun. We always support and encourage each other. We emphasized teamwork and team chemistry above all; if we learned to work together, we could put on better performances than even the toughest of opponents.

Currently, we are playing in our second season as a team (with new uniforms, since our old uniforms were tattered from the amount of times they were washed!) Heading into February, we stand 1-3 and are playing even better than before.

All in all, it is an amazing experience that the whole team recommends. Even if the games don't end ideally, we still have developed valuable experiences with our friends, something that can mean more than anything else. We urge future MSTC classes to assemble their own teams, to represent MSTC and form lasting memories.

The MSTC Seniors rostered on the K F.C. team are: Jan Balk, Spandan Buch, Tim Cheal, Kyle Combs, Ronit Kar, Ryan Kennedy, Amit Lohe, Paul McIntyre, Murphy Powell, Hemanth Sonthenam, Auri Vaez, Amy Wang, Thirushan Wignakumar, and Ben Xie.



# Senior Interview: Murphy Powell

SHELBY MCCUBBIN

Murphy Powell will be attending Emory University and will be playing volleyball for Emory. She is a member of the German Honor Society and National Honor Society.

**Q:** How, as a senior, have you managed to balance things like volleyball with the intense MSTC workload?

**A:** As of right now, I'm not playing volleyball for high school, but I'm working with a personal trainer five times a week. Some of my senior classes are not strenuous, like Film Studies and Seminar, while others are strenuous, like AP Calculus BC, AP English Literature, and AP German. As for balancing time, I try to get as much homework done before practice so that when I get home I am able to finish the rest of my homework in a small amount of time, shower, and get to bed. Since it's senior year, the homework load is small in comparison to previous years and much more manageable.

**Q:** What kind of work have you been doing in the lab for your research project?

**A:** I'm working under Dr. Dupont and Mrs. Confides in the physical therapy, physiology, and kinesiology lab at UK. I'm determining whether we need satellite cells in the diaphragm for regulation and maintenance of muscle fibers in the diaphragm. The mice I work with are injected in their diaphragms with tamoxifen, which depletes or mostly gets rid of satellite cells in the preferred area. From there, they run on their wheel for 8 weeks and then I take diaphragm samples of mice that were injected with tamoxifen and mice who weren't so that I can compare the number of satellite cell nuclei on single strands of their muscle fibers as well as their size.

**Q:** How did you know that you had found the right mentor?

**A:** Dr. Dupont was actually my first interview and it just clicked between us. I felt safe in her lab environment under the control of Mrs. Confides. Neither of them were intimidating or very strict and I just felt like I could be myself around them instead of cowering in the corner waiting for my tasks.

**Q:** Do you have any advice for the underclassmen regarding the project/are there any myths about the project that you want to invalidate?

**A:** Make sure you send out emails when Mrs. Young tells you to. I sent my emails at the very last second because I was procrastinating and scared of getting turned down. Being told "no" isn't the end of the world either, sometimes labs are full and it might turn out for the best in the end.

**Q:** How has MSTC/the people you've been surrounded with prepared you for college?

**A:** MSTC has prepared me for college with my mostly-rigorous class schedule and homework. The people I've been surrounded with these past four years are always challenging my intellect, finding new ways to solve problems, and acting like family. I wouldn't wish for anything to change.



# Lunar New Year Festivities: Easy Chinese Recipes

## Stir-fried Garlic Green Beans

(recipe adapted from BBC Good Food)

*Prep time:* 5 minutes

*Cook time:* 10 minutes

*Ingredients and materials:*

- 2 tbsp sunflower oil
- 200g pack of trimmed green beans
- 3 garlic cloves, finely sliced
- 1 tsp soy sauce or oyster sauce

*Instructions:*

1. Heat the oil in a wok, then stir-fry the green beans for 5 minutes until slightly brown. Add garlic and continue to cook until just tinged brown. Splash in the soy sauce or oyster sauce.
2. Serve!



## Scallion Pancakes

(recipe adapted from My Recipes)

*Prep time:* 10 minutes

*Stand time:* 15 minutes

*Cook time:* 15 minutes

*Ingredients and materials:*

- 2 large eggs
- 2 tsp sesame oil
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 tbsp and 2 tsp vegetable oil
- 1 cup thinly sliced scallions

*Instructions:*

1. Preheat oven to 200°F. In a bowl, beat eggs with 1 1/2 cups water, sesame oil and salt. Whisk in flour until mixture forms a smooth batter. Let stand 20 to 30 minutes.
2. Warm 2 tsp. vegetable oil in a skillet over medium-high heat. Pour in 1/2 cup batter; swirl to form a pancake. Sprinkle with 1/4 cup scallions. Cook until set on bottom, 2 to 3 minutes. Flip; cook other side for about 1 minute. Keep warm in oven.
3. Repeat with remaining batter and scallions, adding more oil to skillet as necessary.
4. Serve!





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*Thank you!*

*-The Element Staff*