

Northeast MIDDLE SCHOOL



Please visit the [NEMS Calendar](#) on website for up-to-date information.
Tip: To see if additional information is available, click on a calendar item, and then click on "more details".

March 31 (Friday)

No School

April 3-7 (Monday-Friday)

No School - Spring Break

April 10 (Monday) 6:30pm - 8:00pm

PTA Meeting - Media Center

April 13th & April 14th (Thursday &

Friday) 7:00pm

Spring Musical - Bye Bye Birdie

Northeast Middle School Theatre Department

Presents

BYE BYE BIRDIE

Young Performer's Edition

April 13 & 14
7:00 pm

Tickets available at the door
Adults \$5.00
Students | Children \$3.00
Northeast Middle School Auditorium
2955 Hayes St NE, Minneapolis 55418



Book by Michael Stewart | Music by Charles Strouse | Lyrics by Lee Adams



Composing a Conference

10 February 2017

Written by Erin Nelsen, MUN Journalist



Teachers and MUN Staff from Right to Left: Jason Jirsa, Taylor Harris, Andrea Klein Bergman, and April Dejarlis

Jason Jirsa and Taylor Harris receiving the distinguished Norma Rowe Model UN Teacher Awards for their outstanding work in Model UN in 2016. The photo was taken at the United Nations Association of Minnesota's Annual Meeting and Recognition event on Saturday, October 29th.

After the Minneapolis school district stopped funding the in-school conferences for the middle school Model United Nations (MUN) program, two dedicated teachers, with the help of volunteers from the University of Minnesota's MUN team, Cambridge High School's MUN team, and the MUN senior staff volunteered to help make the February 10th conference a truly memorable experience. To learn more about the teachers and this event, I interviewed the two teachers, Jason Jirsa and Taylor Harris, who later won the Norma Rowe MUN Teacher Award for their long-term commitment to and participation in MUN, hard work teaching and preparing students, as well as their high standards, enthusiasm, and creativity. I also interviewed Coleton Hanson, a senior staff member at MUN who's efforts made the event possible.

Jason Jirsa, a Social Studies teacher at Northeast Middle School, when asked how he decided to go into teaching, said that he has always loved working with kids and learning about history, social studies and geography. He started his teaching career at a U.S. Space Camp where he explained: *"everything was exciting."* Jirsa then transferred this student excitement for learning into the classroom where MUN became a geographical Space Mission. Jirsa added that *"Schools need more of this type of learning simulations and events to celebrate [students'] learning, [they need] something that feels real to them."*

Because he did not want to continue teaching without this program, Jirsa refused to take no for an answer when they stopped receiving funding. Instead, he searched for alternative ways to keep the competition afloat. Jirsa further shared that MUN has *"become part of the school culture, and I think it is really important for schools to have events to celebrate great learning throughout the year."* After the success of the recent event, Jirsa noticed an increase in the conversation around topics like *"What do we want our school to be?"* and *"What is going to be our thing?"* The success of the MUN competition has also inspired other teachers' interest in hosting events of their own.

Taylor Harris is also a Social Studies teacher at Northeast Middle School with a passion for both history and social studies. Harris recalled that he wanted to be a teacher for as long as he can remember in order to give back to students. When he was a kid, teachers helped him get things together when life was chaotic, and he wanted to continue paying it forward. His favorite part of Model UN is watching how nervous the students are all dressed up on the day of the

competition because they “don’t realize how much they know until they start talking.” Harris explained that they hold the students accountable to a high expectation level and talk up the competition emphasizing that it will be difficult and challenging, but throughout the process they let their students know “you can do it, trust me.” Because Northeast Middle School is in a high poverty Minneapolis district with a large population of minority students, Harris explained that students experience many struggles and extracurricular activities are often limited. MUN, therefore, plays a profound impact on many of the students’ lives.

Harris recalled the experience of one student who did not do anything until the night before the competition, to which he communicated “if you do this you’re going to have to learn your position” that night. The student decided that he needed to do this and stayed up all night hand-writing a 5-page position paper on notebook paper which he turned in, and it ended up being one of the most complex resolutions Harris saw all year. “Students who have experiences like this in school, who have something positive that they can be proud of that is purely academic is what makes [the program] worthwhile” described Harris. To continue the MUN program, Harris plans to invite former students to come back and help with the program.

Coleton Hanson, a senior MUN staff member, assisted with the logistics and training at the February 10th competition. For each conference, many tasks must be completed to have a smooth and successful conference including sorting nametags and folders, making the most of what you already have, reserving space, delegating space, planning lunch, training volunteers, and much more, all of which they must complete several times a year. Hanson has been involved with MUN in some form since high school in 2005, he started volunteering a couple of years ago and then came back to help run the program. Hanson said that the February 10th conference was a lot of fun and for a lot of students, this was their first time wearing a suit. The small group Hanson worked with sorted out a refugee problem in Syria by suggesting the United States and Russia team up and send peacekeeping soldiers to Syria making it safe for refugees to return home. While this solution may not be feasible, the process gave the students a positive experience solving problems, practicing their research skills and was fun in the process. Hanson explained that they “all do a lot of work with this program, everyone who participates whether they’re on the board, or whether they are a volunteer who’s just doing it for the first time. Everybody is essential to this program’s success, and it’s the reason I’m a part of United Nations Association of Minnesota (UNA-MN), it’s brought me back more than once, and I’m going to keep participating and helping out as long as I can.”

MCA Dates

Reading Test April 18-19

Math Test April 24-26

Science Test (Grade 8 ONLY) week of May 1

MCA Test Prep - Item samplers are provided to help teachers and students become familiar with the format and type of content included in the accountability assessments. Item samplers contain fewer items than an actual full-length test and are aligned to the Minnesota Academic Standards. They are NOT suitable for predicting how students will perform on the accountability assessments.

Item samplers, along with other resources for teachers and parents, can be found on the Pearson Access Next website, including:

- Reading, Mathematics, and Science MCA online item samplers
- Reading, Mathematics, and Science MCA paper accommodation item samplers
- MTAS item samplers

<http://minnesota.pearsonaccessnext.com/item-samplers/>

SAVE THE DATE

6th Grade Families.....

May 25 & May 26th

All 6th graders will be heading to Camp Miller in Sturgeon Lake, MN. **Chaperones are needed!**

The cost is \$50.00 per student. Detailed information will be available after spring break. Questions, please contact Debra Reutter.

debra.reutter@mpls.k12.mn.us

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FREE TREES FOR EARTH DAY

Our school is participating in the **8th Annual Neighborhood Forest program**, whose aim is to provide free trees to kids to plant on Earth Day. We endorse this project and are excited to give kids a way to beautify and green our communities.

Fill out the following online registration form **by April 7th Anewday** and receive a free red splendor crabapple tree (6-12 inches in size) during Earth Week (April 22-28). Planting instructions and species information will be emailed a few days prior to the trees arriving.

Register (**on a laptop, tablet or desktop computer**) to receive a free red splendor crabapple tree for Earth Day to plant with your child:

<http://www.neighborhoodforest.org/search-for-school/>

Thank you for your support and participation. For more information about this program, please visit www.neighborhoodforest.org.

Summer Enrichment Opportunities

Northeast Middle School will be having GEMS/GISE Summer STEM Academy.

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Summer Trek is offered through Community Ed. It is a 6 week program that you can do 1 week at a time:(note that there is a significant discount if registered before April 1st)

<https://minneapolis.ce.eleyo.com/course/8235/summer-youth-programs-2017/webster-trek-program-grades-6-8>

MPS Culinary & Wellness Services and the True Food Chef Council are looking for middle school (6-8th grade) students to apply to participate in the 3rd Annual MPS Jr Iron Chef Competition! Selected students will be paired with chefs from the True Food Chef Council to compete top-chef style for a panel of judges. The purpose of this event is to raise awareness about MPS' shift to fresh, scratch-cooked meals and to get students excited about good food!

When: Monday, May 8th from 5:30-7:30pm (Participants will need to arrive around 4:30pm)

Where: Solar Arts by Chowgirls, 711 NE 15th Avenue, Minneapolis, MN

Application details:

Application is an online Google form that must be submitted at <http://bit.ly/JIC2017application> by 4pm on Wednesday, April 12th.

Students will submit a 1000 character essay explaining why he or she wants to cook with our chefs in this competition. Get creative with your response!

Consider including: when and why you love to cook, your favorite dishes to cook, your previous cooking experience, and why participating in this event is important to you. Note: previous cooking experience is not required!

Students must apply individually or with a partner.

Applications will be judged by the Jr Iron Chef planning committee.

Selected participants will be notified in early April with further details and a participation waiver.

This event is open and free to the public. Student participants are welcome to invite family and friends to attend the event!

All applications must be submitted at <http://bit.ly/JIC2017application> by 4:00pm on Wednesday, April 12th to be considered.

Please contact Kate Seybold at kate.seybold@mpls.k12.mn.us or 612-668-2852 with any questions.

Our Beacons Leadership Team took a service learning trip to Second Harvest where they packed 6,762 pounds of food equaling to 5,000 meals.



