

Emily Sanchez, Diamond Adams, & Jaela Westbrook

Over 100 community members served Thanksgiving dinner by Action Team

The Seventh Annual Thanksgiving Dinner occurred on Saturday, November 18, 2023 in the cafeteria of Thornton Fractional North. The event had raffles, dinner, and dessert served from 2-4 pm. The Action Team assisted in serving the community, and the event was organized by Ms. Dowd and Ms. Navarrete. Other helping hands included PRIDE and CWT students. The band performed music for the families. The Culinary Arts students of TFN assisted in making the food for the dinner. The menu included traditional Thanksgiving food such as turkey with gravy, macaroni and cheese, stuffing, sweet potatoes, green beans, rolls, cakes, and pies. Chef Bartlett and her classes made the two cakes to serve as well. Chef Parker from the Tech Center sent in the 24 sweet potato pies. "I feel excited. It's a new experience, and it's my first year on the action team, and I enjoy helping people out," said junior Favor Babatunde with enthusiasm as she helped serve food onto plates along with other Action Team members. "It feels really nice helping people...serving them and giving them food," added junior Genesis Robles. The leftover food was taken to the fire and police departments. "I feel good! We get to feed a lot of people and it's a good experience for them during this time," said Navarrete.



Juniors Brianna Astorga and Genesis Robles prepare plates of food to serve at the Thanksgiving Dinner sponsored by the Action Team. Photo credit: Emily Sanchez



The cast and crew of Cinderella. Photo from T.F. North Theatre's Facebook page

Story by Aidan Jordan & Jasmine Pastrana

Drama Club performs Cinderella the Musical First production in newly renovated auditorium

The 2023 fall musical was "Cinderella." It was held on November 16-18 at 7:00 pm, November 19 at 1:00 pm, and November 27 during 4th through 6th period in the newly remodeled A.C. Jaacks Auditorium. (Go back to the first issue from September 26, 2023 for more information on the auditorium.) The fall musical is an annual tradition at T. F. North. The musicals act as a fundraiser for the Drama Club. "After we're coming off a successful year, we're looking to match that success and go beyond it. So it's a pretty big show because also it's the first show in this new auditorium," said Ms. Sade May, the Director of "Cinderella." The musical was performed by the members of the Drama Club. Junior Tianna Bowen starred as Ella (Cinderella). "Being Cinderella was like a literal dream. Never in a million years did I think that I'd be playing Cinderella. It was so much fun and so much work and stress, but it was all worth it in the end," said Bowen. Senior Jaytee Terrell played Prince Topher. "Honestly I felt a lot of adrenaline and nervousness, and it feels really fulfilling," said Terrell. The evil stepsisters were played by senior Kierha Llyod and sophomore T'niya Hampton.

Sophomore Keniyah Stephenson played Madame, the evil stepmother. Freshman Ike Grace Apata, junior Amonis Overstreet, freshman Alameen Kenku, and junior John McBeth III had starring roles in the play as well. The ensemble included junior Jasmine Holman, freshman My'iana Qualls, senior Mia Romo, sophomore Yasmaine Davis, senior Jimena Jimenez, freshman Quentin Hall, freshman Anaeya Kelly, sophomore Kii Washington, junior Layla Hall, freshman Areli Saldo, and freshman Stacayla Martin. Senior Moyo Oluwole was the Light Crew Manager. The Light Crew Assistant was Shekinah Ogedegbe. "It's exciting to be on the tech crew because we have all this new equipment and there is more we can do now," said Oluwole. "It's stressful and really fun. I learned new things every day, especially for being new," added junior Zairayt Garcia who was the Microphone Mixer. The Tech Directors were senior Serenity Howard, junior Rogelio Romero, and sophomore Lillian Diaz. The musical was a success. "I thought it was amazing from the background dancers to the crew to the lights. It was amazing. I loved it all," said junior Josiah Jackson.

Marching Band Wins

Mia Romo, Rogelio Romero,
& Tianna Bowen

The Meteors competed at the Rich Twp Raptor Rumble.
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#1 Doubles Head to State

Taliah Robinson
& Ximena Gutierrez

Precious Agwu & Alex Thomas
shine on the court.
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Football Honors

Cormora Williams, Miranda
Cuanetl, & Ruby Garcia

Dominic Gradford & Damari
Dogan won special awards.
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Mia Romo, Rogelio Romero, & Tianna Bowen

Meteors win Battle of the Bands

North takes home 5 awards from Rich Township

On October 21, 2023, T.F. North's Mighty Meteor Marching Band competed in Rich Township's Raptor Rumble Marching Band Competition. In preparation, Band Director Mr. Pisello sent his drum majors, Michael Hernandez, Saniya Craig, Tiara Foster, and Elizabeth Oluwole to leadership camp over the summer which lasted two weeks. "It helped me learn different ways of being a leader," said Foster. During the school year, the T.F. North band performed at every home football game to perfect its routine. Oluwole said the splits at the end of the song "Shout it Out" were her favorite because of all the difficulties that went into perfecting it. Rich Township High School invited T.F. North and nine other Illinois schools to compete in the 2023 Raptor Rumble Competition. The competition included a battle of drum lines and color guards and overall marching band performances. "I wasn't nervous, but excited to see the other bands performing. But I didn't feel confident that we were going to win anything from it," said Hernandez. Though unsure of victory,

in the end T.F. North took home the following awards: 1st Place Class A Show Style- Percussion, 1st Place Class A Show Style- Best Color Guard, 1st Place Class A Show Style- Best Drum Majors, 1st Place Class AA Show Style, and the Overall Grand Champion Award. This was the first time T.F. North won the Grand Champion title at the Raptor Rumble Competition. Now that the marching band season has ended, Pisello said that his goal for next year is for the competition band to hopefully have another great season.



Saniya Craig, Michael Hernandez, Mr. Pisello, Elizabeth Oluwole, and Tiara Foster pose with their trophies at the Raptor Rumble. Photo provided by Mr. Pisello.

Letters to the Editor

Letters to the Editor can be sent to our social media handles or thorntonian@tfd215.org.

Dear Thorntonian Staff,

I have been thoroughly enjoying reading the Thorntonian! Principal Rucinski is so proud of your work that he has been sending the paper to all of the Board of Education members, which is how I first saw it. I love how each issue has a theme and how you include the voices of many students in the paper. Your excellent work has helped me learn some history about T.F. North that I didn't know, and it is also helping me learn a lot about the students and activities at your school. I am so impressed by the work you are doing. Thank you for making your school and your school district proud!

Sincerely,

Ms. Dominique Newman

Congratulations to the Thorntonian Staff for the quality and quantity of this year's editions. As a math teacher, my days are full of numbers and problems. It is really nice to see what is going on with TFN students outside of my classroom and department. Thank you for making your paper interesting and a voice for our students. It was really nice to see how TFN celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month!

Keep up the quality journalism!

Sincerely,

Ms. Laura Cook

I love how well-organized the paper is and the graphics. The pictures are good quality which adds a professional effect to the paper. I have a love for photography, so that's one of the things that draws me into the paper. The issues I have read had no spelling mistakes so KUDOS to you, Editor, and keep it up!

Airraina Franklin, sophomore

I really like the way you included art on every page. It was a really nice addition to the newspaper. It's also more colorful than it was last year which is a nice touch. The costume ideas were great. I kinda wished there were some for groups though, but the newspaper was really fun to read this year. I just wanted to let you know you're doing a wonderful job. Reading the newspaper kinda makes me want to join the newspaper class next year. Keep up the good work. :)

Mahiya Dellar, sophomore

The Halloween newspaper has to be my favorite so far. I love reading what everyone has to say and them answering all the questions. I love how you try to include everyone. The art has to be my favorite honestly. Rae [Seals] took a lot of time to do that, and it really paid off.

Kindell Culley, sophomore

2023-2024

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Established in 1925, the Thorntonian is produced by the Advanced Journalism students of T.F. North High School. It seeks to provide an open forum for all members of the D. 215 community. Opinions expressed do not necessarily represent the official position of D. 215 unless otherwise noted.

Interviews by Taliah Robinson & Ximena Gutierrez

#1 Doubles Thomas & Agwu make it to state

This fall, senior Alex Thomas and junior Precious Agwu teamed up and were named No. 1 doubles for the tennis team. These girls were motivated all season which led them to the state tournament. It has been 8 years since the tennis team has made it to state.

When did you start playing tennis?

Precious Agwu: I started playing my freshman year.

Alex Thomas: I started playing tennis in January of 2023. I first began in the gold gym on a random snowy day during winter break while most people were asleep.

Why did you start playing tennis?

P: I started playing tennis just out of curiosity. I was taking the summer bridge program at North and saw it on the list of fall sports and me and a friend decided to join.

A: I started playing tennis because my current coach asked me to come out to practice one morning just to give it a try. Since I didn't have anything else to do that day, I decided to hear him out and try something new.

How did you feel playing this season?

P: During both seasons, it was upsetting to lose games. However, in my first season I think I felt a lot more carefree whereas this season I felt a lot more pressure since I knew, with my skill level now, I could/should win a lot more games.

A: Being able to be a part of this season felt amazing. After not having played sports since middle school, getting back into the rhythm, joining a new team, and putting all of my practice into work on the court felt amazing. What was really fun this season was creating a new bond with my partner on and off the court, and just being able to have each other's backs despite the outcome.

What was your biggest obstacle/weakness?

P: My biggest obstacle was probably trying to keep a positive outlook even when I knew that we were going against a hard-to-beat team. I just tried my best with the help of my partner, Alex, to stay motivated and focused.

A: My biggest weakness was probably getting down when we made consecutive mistakes. Seeing the gap in the score and the amount of mistakes I made sometimes broke my confidence.

What did it feel like to make state?

P: When I qualified for state, I felt amazing and proud of myself. It felt so surreal to hear that we finally made it to that point, after all the matches we played, but I felt really happy.

A: Making it to state felt unbelievable.

Before the season even began, the name of my team's group chat was

"#1 Doubles Medal Contenders/State Qualifiers." We worked hard every day before and after school and on the weekends to make that name a reality, and, in the end, when we did, I never felt more excited and accomplished in my life. Sharing this experience with the rest of my team was all the more fun, and looking back on how much of an accomplishment this was for our school, which is looked down upon by other schools, going to state felt incredible. Also being able to bring the team back to state after 8 years was a goal that we successfully completed.

Were you surprised to be #1 Doubles?

P: I wasn't surprised because I had already played #1 Doubles most of my sophomore year, and I improved a lot since then so I definitely knew I would've been #1 Doubles.

A: To be honest, I wasn't really surprised about being #1 Doubles because I didn't really know what it meant since I've never played tennis before. What I did know was that all of the work and practice I put in with my partner continued to move me up the ladder and make me a better player.

What does winning mean to you?

P: Winning to me means to leave with the W but also to leave with more experience than I came in with and a good outlook on the game I just played.

A: To me, winning means being able to reflect on a match and be happy and proud with the competition you put forward. Being the winner of a match is fun, but I'd much rather lose a match and be proud of how hard I played than win a match with no effort.

Do you plan on playing tennis professionally?

P: I don't plan to play tennis professionally like Serena Williams, but I do hope to play tennis in college.

A: I'm still thinking about the decision with my mom. At the very least, I want to play club tennis at whatever college I go to, but as far as going further, I am still reflecting on it. However, if I do go further, I would be more than happy.

Who or what has been your biggest inspiration throughout your time playing tennis?

P: My biggest inspiration has just been to get to state each season but also to get good enough to play and succeed in college tennis.

A: My biggest inspiration for playing tennis was my coach. Being around his passionate, lively energy every day definitely motivated me to become better and dedicated to the sport. When I made mistakes, I'd just think about all the tips and advice my coach gave me during practice. Also, after hearing about how he self-taught himself how to play every sport he knows after growing up in a family that wasn't big on sports, I was inspired to dedicate myself to the sport even more because it's not about the resources you're given but how you use them.

Do you have anything else you would like to tell our readers?

P: It was a great experience to go to state for the first time, and I hope to do it again next year and to just do better overall during the 2024 season.

A: Overall, I'd just tell anyone who's new to a sport or goes through many obstacles and challenges in anything else that they do to not give up. Stick with whatever it is you're doing, especially if you enjoy it. As long as you enjoy what you're doing, the success and skills will come along with it as long as you practice and put in the work.



Final Exam Schedule

Semester 1 2023

Day 1-Wednesday, Dec. 20th
 Period 1 8:25-9:35am
 Period 2 9:40-10:50 am
 Period 0 (EB) 10:55-12:05pm
 Make-up 12:10-1:10pm
(students must arrange own transportation)

Day 2-Thursday, Dec. 21st
 Period 5 8:25-9:35am
 Period 7 9:40-10:50am
 Period 6 10:55-12:05pm
 MAKE-UP 12:10-1:10pm
(students must arrange own transportation)

Day 3-Friday, Dec. 22nd
 Period 3 8:25-9:35am
 Period 4 9:40-10:50am
 MAKE-UP 10:55-11:55pm
 MAKE-UP 12:00-1:00pm
(students must arrange own transportation)

Interviews by Ruby Garcia, Cormora Williams, Miranda Cuanetl

Gradford & Dogan win major awards

The football team did an outstanding job this year and went 4-2 in conference and were 2nd place overall in their division. Their overall season record was 7-3. Mr. Pignatiello, Head Coach of the football team, introduced senior Dominic Gradford as the SSC Player of the Year and senior Damari Dogan as an Academic All-State Award winner at the football pep assembly. Coach Fortier said, "He [Gradford] was chosen to be Player of the Year because he put forth the hard work, effort, focus, and complete dedication to the team. He put his players and winning above all! It was completely earned." Coach Rogers said Dogan, "did a really good job especially for being his size and everybody he went against was bigger than him. He was one of the leaders on the front line, and he was one of the best defensive linemen this season."

The Thorntonian Staff interviewed both players.

How long have you been playing football?

Dominic Gradford: I have been playing football since I was 8, so roughly 10 years.

What position do you play?

DG: I play quarterback, free safety, punter, kicker, and kick returner.

How does it feel to be player of the year?

DG: Honestly I'm still speechless. But for me it feels normal, yet surreal, because if you told me freshman year I would be P.O.T.Y. my senior year I'd think you were lying.

What are the achievements you have earned while playing football?

DG: I got Player of the Year, [and am] 2x all-conference. I've been blessed to perform in front of college coaches over these 4 years, got to be around amazing coaches and good athletes, got to make my family proud, and I've made my name bigger for myself.

How was the football season, since it's your last year? Will you miss it?

DG: This football season was something I don't think I'll ever forget it. Being my last year just made it more memorable but also made it hurt more. And absolutely I will miss it.

What will you miss about it?

DG: I'll miss playing with my teammates, coaches, playing in front of the people at North and other schools, the environment and energy around the games, just everything.

What is the Player of the Year Award, and what does it mean to you?

DG: So the Player of the Year Award is an award that all 14 teams in the South Suburban Conference's coaches come together and vote upon. It means more to me than what people would think it means because being voted in means that each team I face talked about me in a very good way and acknowledged me, and they acknowledged me over a player that's probably on their own team. To hear that coaches are talking good about me from games where I felt I could've done better, win or lose, means I'm actually good and good enough to put people on opposite teams on notice, so that's why it means a lot to me. Also I couldn't be more thankful!

How did it feel to win this award?

Damari Dogan: For getting all-conference I wasn't that surprised because of all the work I've been putting in.

What position do you play?

DD: I play left guard and defensive tackle.

How long have you been playing football?

DD: I have been playing football since I was in the 3rd grade.

Since you are a senior, what will you miss about football?

DD: What I will miss most is the Wednesdays because before practice we would go to Wendy's or McDonald's.

What is the academic all-state award and what does it mean to you?

DD: All-state academics I was not expecting at all so when I found out I won it, I was shocked.

Is there anything else you would like to tell our readers?

DD: Nope, just good luck to the underclassmen, and I hope they can continue what we ended with.



Dominic Gradford poses with his family at football pep assembly.



The Thorntonian Staff was featured in the Lansing Journal this week. Read about it here:
<https://thelansingjournal.com/2023/11/28/tf-norths-thorntonian-newspaper-lives-on-thanks-to-new-advisor-and-passionate-students/>

Reporting by Mia Romo, Aidan Jordan, Rogelio Romero

Fall Athletes Spotlight

Football

All-Conference Honors: 1st Team- Dominic Gradford, Tristan Jackson, Terrior Long, Aramis Stewart, Tremaine Floyd, Damari Dogan, Alvin Lankin, Carlos Roa, Trevon Conner Honorable Mention-Aric Moultrie

All-State Nominee: Dominic Gradford

Academic All-State: Damari Dogan

MVP: Dominic Gradford

Most Improved Award: Tremaine Floyd

Player Coach Award: Aramis Stewart

Meteor Toughness Award: Alvin Lankin

Golf

All-Conference Honors: Honorable Mention - Destiny Allwell

Player of the Year: Destiny Allwell

Most Improved Award: Luis Pelayo

Player Coach Award: Aidan Jordan

Boys Cross-Country

MVP: Said Rodriguez

Most Improved Award: Enrique Cruz

Player Coach Award: David Malagon

Meteor Toughness Award: Phillip Singleton

Girls Cross-Country

MVP: Andrea Sotelo

Most Improved Award: Gabby McClain

Player Coach Award: Yulissa Villarreal

Meteor Toughness Award: Diana Delgado

Girls Tennis

All-Conference Honors: Alex Thomas and Precious Agwu

MVP: Alex Thomas and Precious Agwu

Most Improved Award: Celeste Escobar

Boys Soccer

All-Conference Honors: Giovanni Melgoza, Jovani Rivas, Dimitri Kouemo, Elkan Ochir, Angel Saenz

All Sectional- Angel Saenz, Honorable Mention- Dimitri Kouemo

All-State Honor: Giovanni Melgoza

MVP: Giovanni Melgoza

Most Improved Award: Oswaldo Mendoza

Girls Volleyball

All-Conference Honors: Jackelin Vargas Honorable Mention- Samiya Smith

All-Tournament Nominees: Mirly Camacho, Sammie King, Samiya Smith, and Christiana Spears

MVP: Mirly Camacho

Most Improved Award: Christina Spears

Player Coach Award: Sammie King

Meteor Toughness Award: Jasmin Ramirez and Alana Dotson



Dominic Gradford



Damari Dogan



Destiny Allwell



Said Rodriguez



Andrea Sotelo



Precious Agwu



Alex Thomas



Mirly Camacho