

STUDENTS OF THE WEEK FROM AREA HIGH SCHOOLS

Vergennes Union High School

Ellie Wilkinson-Sachs

Ellie Wilkinson-Sachs is Vergennes Union High School's latest Student of the Week. She lives in Vergennes with her mom and her mom's partner, as well as three cats and a dog.

English classes have always been Ellie's favorite, along with visual art classes. She loves writing and reading, especially poetry. Ellie's favorite visual art mediums are drawing and painting. This year, she's especially enjoying AP Literature & Composition. Ellie also loved her experience in AP Biology last year. She is a member of the National Honor Society, has received Outstanding Achievement Awards in writing and visual arts, and has been on high honor roll.

Beyond academics, Ellie is a part of the VUHS Symphonic Band, Chorus, Jazz Band and Commodore Singers. She has also participated in the school musical. Once an ice hockey and lacrosse player, Ellie is now focused on cross country and track & field. On the arts front, she is currently involved in an independent study through school with a local artist, John Vincent, who runs the non-profit organization called A Revolutionary Press. Ellie notes that, "John has done incredible work in our community and has been generous with his time, resources, mentorship and knowledge. Our creative collaboration has brought me a lot of joy and insight."

Outside of school, she enjoys meditation and participating in meditation retreats. Her mom has encouraged her to explore meditation and wheel-throwing pottery, for which Ellie is grateful. Ellie has participated in studio art workshops over the past few summers, at the Governor's Institute of Vermont arts program, the SMFA at Tufts University, and The Putney School. For three years, she has been part of the annual winter solstice pageant, "Night Fires," which she describes as "a spectacular celebration of song, poetry, storytelling and dance, written and directed by Marianne Lust, and everyone should consider joining us to witness the magic!"

Ellie claims that the uncertainty of senior year has made her realize how connected her class is at VUHS. "We're together in this place of transition, going through the process of ending high school and beginning new journeys. Reflecting on what our time in this school has meant has given us this common foundational experience, and has made me so curious about all of the people I am sharing space with. In the final moments of our high school career, we are all pretty terrified and excited, and it is really wonderful to see that reflected in others. My advice is to let yourself be bored. Give yourself the space and time to become curious about yourself and others, because that interest is where you will find the inspiration to keep learning more about your community, your passions, and the world at large. Find and follow the threads that light you up, even when it feels terrifying, messy or lonely. Exploring your relationship to yourself and your environment is what will feed your soul and help you land in the places you belong. I truly believe that this type of investigation is as important for your health as basic necessities like food and water, and boredom is where it begins."

Next, Ellie will be going to college and hopes to major in Studio Art and English. One day, she would love to get a master's degree and join as many creative communities as she can find. The VUHS community wishes Ellie all the best!



Ellie Wilkinson-Sachs
VUHS

Middlebury Union High School

Kaden Hammond

Middlebury Union High School is proud to recognize Kaden Hammond as its latest Student of the Week. Kaden, the son of Elaine and Chris Hammond, lives in Middlebury and is the youngest of three siblings. His brother Colby graduated from the University of Maryland, and his sister Viviana is currently a senior at Duke University.

Reflecting on his time at MUHS, Kaden shared, "I love the teachers here. You can tell they are passionate about what they do and they are good at what they do." Among his favorite classes are Spanish with Ms. Causton and Global Politics with Ms. Slater — courses that he says have opened his eyes to the world beyond MUHS. Kaden is also taking Introduction to Latino Studies at Middlebury College and is grateful to Professor Roberto Lint Sagarena for the opportunity to participate.

A dedicated and high-achieving student, Kaden is the recipient of the UVM Green and Gold Award, has earned High Honors all four years, and has received department awards in Individuals and Society as well as Language Acquisition.

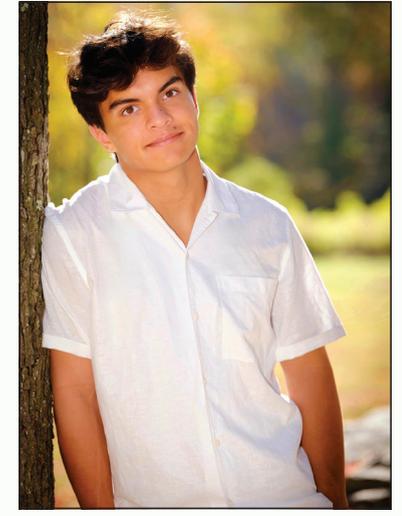
Kaden stays exceptionally active within the school community. He served as Captain of the Cross Country Team in the fall and of Nordic Skiing in the winter. Beyond athletics, he is involved in numerous clubs, including serving as President of the BIPOC Affinity Space, Co-President of Model United Nations, and a Peer Leader.

Since his freshman year, Kaden has also worked at the Middlebury Natural Foods Co-op, where he stocks inventory and assists customers. Additionally, he volunteers with the Better Middlebury Partnership. Outside of school and work, he enjoys traveling, skiing, hiking and spending time with friends and family.

Throughout his years at MUHS, Kaden has learned the value of self-advocacy. His advice to younger students is simple but powerful: "Advocate for yourself. You do not know until you ask. They may not know about a situation until you ask."

Next fall, Kaden plans to attend college at Princeton University and intends to major in International Relations or Race Relations.

MUHS congratulates Kaden on his many accomplishments and wishes him continued success throughout his senior year and beyond.



Kaden Hammond
MUHS

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Students of the Week are chosen by school teachers and administration.

Congratulations, Kaden and Ellie!

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