

READY FOR THE RUSH

+ **EVERY MONDAY** and Wednesday, sophomore Shannon Henderson and senior Megan Tibbels roll silverware in napkins for North by Northwest restaurant. They will roll between 100-200 silverware over the two days. | PHOTO BY RACHEL SMITH

+ **MAKING THE** patio perfect, junior Andy Vasquez, senior Uriah Wilson and sophomore Shannon Henderson prep the tables for the arrival of customers. The trio placed four chairs at each patio table as well as in the dining area. | PHOTO BY RACHEL SMITH



WORKING TOGETHER, seniors Khan Le and Megan Tibbels apply sprinkles to her Christmas cookie. Being in this club was not just about hanging out with individuals with 'disabilities', it was more about connecting with them despite their differences. "Bowie Buddies has affected my life by showing me that everyone can be happy, and to never take anything for granted," Le said. | PHOTO BY JAMIE DORSEY

LOVING LIFE (SKILLS)

+ **WITH HOLIDAY** cheer, Mr. Wayne Johnson enjoys the Christmas party with freshman Nathan Beames. Both students and teachers alike were encouraged to dress up for the occasion. "Our students have a need to feel needed and successful. They aren't "those kids"! They might have a disability that causes them to be delayed in certain areas, but they want to be integrated into society just like everyone else. They want to have friends and relationships. Sure, every one of our life skills students are unique, but then again, so is every other student at Bowie," Mr. Wayne Johnson said. | PHOTO BY JAMIE DORSEY

+ **SUPPLIES READY**, freshman Veronica Ochoa decorates a cookie with her buddy, senior Maya Trevino. Ochoa got to talk to her buddy and frost her cookie. | PHOTO BY JAMIE DORSEY

+ **BETWEEN BITES**, junior Viviana Estrada, sophomores Kaitlin Lee and Kelly Bull, and senior Uriah Wilson have a discussion about the festivities and what they are going to do over winter break. Discussions took place over cookies and sandwiches. | PHOTO BY JAMIE DORSEY

+ **PUTTING TOGETHER** her lunch, senior Taylor Davis follows behind freshman Jake Stockenbojer as they find a seat at the Buddy Christmas party. The Buddies spread holiday spirit by sharing a meal, then decorating and eating cookies with their life skills buddies. | PHOTO BY JAMIE DORSEY





GETTING VOCAL

+ JOB SKILLS HELP LIFE SKILLS STUDENTS EMBRACE INDEPENDENCE AND CONFIDENCE

Spread by Michaela Gero, Sierra Webb and Hayden Gilman

Special education teachers are superheroes to their students. But it took something more than Kryptonite for Ms. Rachel Smith to embrace her calling.

“I chose a career in Special Ed because it was second nature to me, and I knew I could make the biggest difference,” Smith said.

Smith led a vocational program where she guided students with disabilities in work settings.

“I teach them skills necessary to be independent and how to think beyond what is in front of them so they are, and continue to be, successful. Whether they are with us at Bowie, at the grocery store with the parent, out to dinner with family or doing whatever, I hope the skills we’ve implemented are ones they carry on with them. We really push the students to be as independent as possible, to each of their individual levels,” Smith said.

There were a wide variety of places Smith’s students got to gain experience from.

“On Mondays, we have a group of seven students travel to Clifton, which is a vocational school in AISD. The amazing part about the job-the students are paid. For most of them, they are receiving their very own hard-earned paycheck for the first time. We also have four students travel to North by Northwest restaurant. They set up the outdoor patio and main dining area inside

the restaurant by putting chairs under the table. After doing this, they walk around to ensure all chairs are properly aligned and customer ready. Once that is over, they roll anywhere between 100-200 silverware,” Smith said.

Near the end of the week, the students were rewarded.

“On Thursdays, we travel to Gatti Town and prepare their five party rooms. The students are required to take chairs off the table, wipe the chairs and table down, sweep, align the chairs properly, THEN enjoy the buffet. Every other Friday, we travel as a class to West Gate Bowling Alley and join about 10 other schools,” Smith said.

While Smith was only with each of her students for four years, she hoped her program’s influence would live on.

“My wish for my students after they graduate is they continue a path that allows them to maximize their potential by being continuously challenged so they can rise above and continue to feel proud of who they are,” Smith said.

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MY BUDDY



“I joined Bowie Buddies when I was a sophomore because I had worked with special needs kids in middle school. I like making relationships with all the kids; they are all really great. I’ve made a lot of good friendships from Bowie Buddies. I like eating lunch with my buddy and just talking about their day.”

SUMMER HAWKINS, 12



“The Christmas party is a lot of fun because I get to hang out with [the buddies] before the holidays and have them tell me what they’re going to do for the holidays.”

VIVIANA ESTRADA, 11



“I have always thought it’s so satisfying to see how happy [the buddies] are when they have a friend, and boosting them up and high-fiving their accomplishments, and doing stuff like decorating cookies together is really satisfying because their joy is worth a lot.”

VANESSA SALEM, 12



“I really enjoy having the Christmas party because we just sit down and talk about the things that we want for Christmas from Santa, and then we decorate Christmas cookies which they really like.”

SOFIA LOZANO, 12

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LIFE SKILLS + BOWIE BUDDIES