

Stay positive dawgs

Half-asleep and running on autopilot, students slowly shuffle into school on a Friday morning. Football players are wearing their jerseys and cheerleaders are in their uniforms, as the looming feeling of Friday fills the hallways.

Some students feel excitement, knowing that there is only one more day to get through before the weekend. Others dread the thought of trying to make it through one more day of school. After a hard week of learning, extracurriculars and sports, it is hard to see the good.

Students find their friends and take a seat at their unofficial morning tables as they wait for the beginning of the school day.

Talk of plans for the weekend and last-minute studying keeps everyone busy as they attempt to stay awake. Suddenly there is a change and a wave of energy flows through the school. Whispers of 'look here they come' and 'I want to be in the video' take over the conversations of the students. Principal Marcus Belin and math teacher James Allen begin approaching different groups of students. The known "hype men" of the school create laughter and excitement as they make their way around the school asking, "What's good in the last 24?"

Recently Belin, Allen and their videographer, junior Isabel Hernandez, have started a new segment on the Huntley High School social media accounts called "What's good in the last 24?"

Every Friday morning, the duo goes around the school asking students and staff to reflect on the past 24 hours and share something good. The goal is to create a positive vibe around the school and give people something to look forward to at the end of the week.

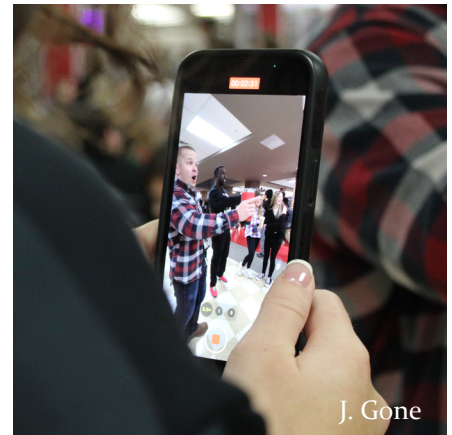
I think it's genuinely nice
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genuinely ask you 'how
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James Allen

The concept started at a faculty meeting, where author Shawn Achor was virtually brought in to build up the staff and get them ready for the upcoming school year. Over the summer, staff members were encouraged to read his book "The Orange Frog" and learn about getting into a positive

Principal Marcus Belin and math teacher James Allen create positive vibes at HHS

By *Jessy Gone*



Videographer Isabel Hernandez films Belin and Allen as they ask students "What's good in the last 24?"

mindset.

Those with a positive mindset tend to be more productive, high-functioning, and happier. One trick to get into that mindset is by scanning the world for positives and reflecting on the recent past through writing it down or telling someone. Once this habit is built, people begin looking for the positives in their lives.

Allen brought this concept into his classroom by starting each day by posing the question. His students passed around sticky notes for them to share their positives and display them in the room.

Students began looking forward to sharing and wanted to find a way to bring the concept school-wide.

"I love seeing what he does in the classroom and his engagement with kids," Belin said.

Allen thought about the best way to introduce this concept to all the students at the high school and brought the idea to Belin. He proposed going around the building and asking students to share something positive, then stitching it together and making a short montage of all the positives.

"That was the fastest that man



Belin and Allen interview students in the cafeteria on Friday morning.

has ever texted me back and he was like 'I'm in' and that Friday we just jumped on it," Allen said.

The two are adding a new level to the school's 'You Matter' environment by forming new connections with the student body and helping them not dwell on the negatives, but turn that around and see the good.

Not only does this help their mindsets, but also gives everyone something to look forward to on a Friday morning. Even those who are not in the videos still get to watch them once they are posted on social media, which will hopefully inspire them to find positives in their own lives or at least give them a good laugh.

"It makes you start thinking about things that are positive and I think it impacts students in a good way because it gets them to smile," videographer and editor Isabel Hernandez said.

Hernandez has been helping Allen with the videos for his TikTok account since last year when she started filming and editing videos of funny moments during class of him trying Starbucks drinks. The partnership grew and she started editing all of his videos, so when this new segment came about, Allen figured there was no one better for the job. Hernandez, with some history of editing videos and more knowledge of what the students will find funny, has taken the videos to another level.

"She put all the stuff together in a way that was so entertaining from something so simple," Allen said. "I was like 'we gotta have Isabel follow us around and put some of these things together [for] us.' She has been crushing it on the shooting and editing front."

Both Belin and Allen have an established presence on social media. They run their respective accounts and document what is happening at the high school. Their positive energy radiates through the screen and keeps students informed about things that are going on around the school, so it is no surprise that the two are coming

together to make Huntley High School a more positive place.

"You've got to find people that match your energy, like positive vibes and good thinking," Belin said. "Mr. Allen and I have always had that, so us coming together to do something like this was [perfect]."

There has been an increase in teachers and staff using social media to find more ways to connect with students. Although Allen's social media presence initially started by posting his videos on YouTube, he found more success on TikTok and his account has about 13.6 thousand followers.

His content is mostly solving quick math problems, sharing funny moments from his classes, and "Math in the Wild" videos, but students greatly appreciate the time and effort that he puts into his social media. Not only does this help students stay engaged, but shows that teachers do care about their students.

"I think it's just nice having someone genuinely ask you 'how are you doing?' or 'what's something positive that has happened to you?' and just having a positive conversation with somebody," Allen said.

Allen and Belin are changing the environment of HHS by encouraging

students to look at the world from a different perspective and showing that they do matter. Having someone come up and talk to you because they genuinely care can change someone's day. This hype duo will keep changing the mindsets of students and build

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Isabel Hernandez

good habits for them to remember to see the positives in their lives.

"Make sure to check out the dope vids on the 'gram when Dr. Belin posts on [@huntleyraiders] or my TikTok [@mralenmath]" Allen said. "Stay positive dawgs."

Students smile in excitement as they see Belin, Allen, and Hernandez, approach them.

