**Meet the Ulysses Seniors**  
**Ulysses Signature Program • January 11, 2018 • Northwest High School**

**Marissa Allen** has been cheerleading for almost eight years. It is her biggest passion, yet throughout her time as a cheerleader, she has often been stereotyped. She believes that cheer is not just the traditional second-hand activity most people think it is, and wants to inform the public about the upgraded, modern sport cheerleading has become. Her first-hand experiences inspired her to explore how the world views cheerleading through her project, *The Stereotypes in Cheerleading*. Marissa is looking forward to studying biology at Temple University next year.

**Brett Babb** has grown up playing and watching sports his whole life. It made sense that he would be drawn to watching ESPN, also known as “The Worldwide Leader in Sports.” After hearing the news of the sharp decline of his beloved television network, Brett was inspired to learn more about ESPN and its effect on the sporting world in general. Through his project, *The Rise and Fall of ESPN*, Brett seeks to show how and why ESPN is in a steep decline and how this will effect major sports organizations. In the future, Brett plans to attend college as a business major and hopefully send his final project to ESPN.

**Dr. Borenzweig** is a senior of a different kind! Over her 29-year teaching career, Dr. Borenzweig has been an English teacher, research teacher, and the coordinator of the Ulysses Program. In 2009, Dr. Borenzweig completed her own Ulysses project, *Passions and Possibilities: The Lived Experience of Teaching AP English*, when she earned her doctorate from the University of Maryland. She is proud of the students in the Ulysses Signature Program, and grateful to Northwest and MCPS for supporting the passions and possibilities of all students. Next year, Dr. Borenzweig plans on watching in awe as the Class of 2018 pursues post-secondary degrees and saves her a front-row seat for their future projects.
Asa de Vries is very passionate about two things: animals and music. His love for animals comes from his pet dog, Cody, and his love for music began when he started playing the saxophone in middle school. His project, *Music’s Role in Assisting Animals With Behavioral Problems*, is a combination of these two interests in a way that tries to find out if music can have beneficial effects on helping animals with behavioral issues. Asa plans to major in Environmental or Civil Engineering in college next year.

Kat Dingwall has always had an interest in helping children with disabilities. Growing up, she spent a lot of time with her uncle who has Down syndrome. She believes that there are effective but overlooked sources of therapy that could substantially help those with disabilities. Kat’s project, *The Effects of Therapeutic Animals on Children with Disabilities*, discusses how therapeutic animals have the ability to bring children out of their comfort zones and help them reach their full potential. In college, Kat plans to major in Health Sciences.

Benjamin Dressman has been interested in the pharmaceutical industry since the beginning of his junior year. His interest in the pricing of medicine evolved from an experience on vacation when he had an allergic reaction and did not have an Epi-Pen due to its high cost. Ben’s final project, *The Ethics of Pharmaceutical Drug Pricing*, is an investigation into the ethics of drug pricing. His findings made for an interesting family dynamic as his parents both work in the pharmaceutical field, and his household relies on income from the pharmaceutical industry. He is excited to learn about science and its applications next year in college.

Charles Duffy loves all things history, from the dawn of civilization to the present day. Charles discovered his passion for history through a video game called *Europa Universalis IV*. From the game, he learned more about history than he ever had before, but every new thing he discovered led to more questions. These questions led to his curiosity about modern day borders. His project, *Kosovo: Independent State or Rebellious Province?* discusses the border dispute between Kosovo and Serbia. Next year in college, Charles hopes to study computer science with a focus on software engineering.
**Cassidy Edwards** has been an active internet and social media user ever since she got into Webkinz as a child. She was also introduced to the importance of voting and government at an early age. During the 2016 election, Cassidy noticed an increase in political blogging, memes about candidates, and tweets, and witnessed political arguments in comment sections. In her project, *The Social Justice Network: How Political Expression Affects the Way We Use Social Media*, Cassidy investigates whether our social media interactions change when politics are involved. In college, Cassidy plans to double major in business and film and minor in theatre or journalism.

**Zachary Goldman** has many talents and interests. Through two of these interests--*Star Wars* and *Star Trek*--Zach has observed many societal and technological advancements. He is also curious about what the real future will be like. This curiosity led to the creation of his project, *The Continuation of Space Exploration*, which investigates the factors affecting the future of space exploration. Next year, Zach will attend college as an engineering major.

**Hasiti Hamidi** has been involved with sports her whole life, and has been a part of Northwest volleyball for four years. One thing about her that has always shocked people was that although she is left handed, she plays sports with her right hand. This sparked her interest in studying left handedness in order to create her senior research project, *The “Right” Way: A Study of Left Handedness in Society*. In the future, Hasiti plans on majoring in Kinesiology to pursue her career in physical therapy.

**Katie Lane** has always been interested in animals. She became interested in the topic of animal intelligence when she got pet rats in ninth grade and read the book, *Are We Smart Enough to Know How Smart Animals Are?* This inspired her project, *A Study of Animal Intelligence*, which analyzes the different animals that are considered intelligent and why this is. Next year, Katie plans on attending college to study zoology.
Emma Lingberg has always loved the water. As a little girl, she believed that on her thirteenth birthday she would turn into a mermaid. Five years later, she has yet to grow a tail, and decided to take matters into her own hands. She connected herself to the water through wakeboarding and surfing. However, one aspect of the ocean she has never been able to experience is what lies beneath the surface, leading her to her project, *Mermaids for Sport and Science: The Effects of Freediving*. Emma sees freedivers as real-life mermaids. In the future, Emma plans to study marine biology in college and hopefully get the chance to freedive herself.

Ritika Miryala has always been interested in the classical Indian dance form of Kuchipudi. Upon taking AP Psychology junior year of high school, Ritika began to approach dance with a different perspective, trying to study the human behavior patterns and psychological concepts that existed within it. Through her project, *A Study of the Human Mind and Behavior*, she investigates the complex neurological phenomena that guide the physical behaviors associated with dance. She has published her research in the *National High School Journal of Science*, and hopes to study behavioral biology in college and further expand her work.

Matthew Mulhern has always had a strong interest in nutrition. His curiosity increased after learning about the outrageous caloric intake of professional athletes. He began researching the impact of nutrition and lifestyle on overall health and whether one has a greater impact. In his project, *The Correlation Between Nutritional Intelligence and Overall Health*, Matt examines the nutritional intelligence of his peers as well as professional athletes to determine how significant an impact knowing more about nutrition contributes to overall health. Matt hopes to continue his active lifestyle while studying engineering in college.

Erin Oxenford has always enjoyed home remedies. She uses lemon juice to clear her skin and avocado oil to make her hair grow faster. While trying to find a home remedy to reduce her headaches, she stumbled upon hypnosis. Through research, she found that hypnosis has many health benefits for people of all ages and backgrounds ranging from pain management to reducing social anxiety. Erin wondered if hypnosis could be used as a form of stress management, leading to her project, *The Effects of Hypnosis on Stress Levels*. Erin plans to study pre-veterinary medicine in college and continuing researching.
Sophia Photinakis has always been intrigued by the human mind and how external factors affect internal feelings. Growing up with strict parents herself, Sophia has experienced the effects first-hand. This led to her project, *The Mental Health Effects of Strict Parenting*, in which she explores the correlation between parenting style and overall mental well-being. Sophia plans to major in psychology in college, with hopes of becoming a psychiatrist in the future.

James Radko is what many would call a geek. His interest in technology dates back as far as he can remember. He has a keen interest in consumer and enterprise technology, ranging from gaming peripherals to server infrastructure. When the time came to choose a Ulysses project, he quickly decided to follow his interest in Virtual Reality, which had just been beginning to grow. After some time, the project developed into *Virtually Recovered*. Next year he plans to study mechanical engineering at one of the University of Maryland system schools.

Tatiana Rowe has loved a wide variety of movies, whether they be Oscar winning dramas, space exploring sci-fi flicks, or cliche teen rom-coms. Her idyllic view of film was tainted, however, when she heard about the Bechdel Test. Movies that pass the test can be considered representative of women, but Tatiana was disappointed when she found that many of her favorite movies actually failed the test. In her project, *Misrepresentation on the Silver Screen: A Study of Women in Film*, Tatiana expands the Bechdel Test by exploring patterns of cinematic female portrayals based on genre. She hopes to take women’s studies courses in college next year, as well as study political science.

Ally Salvino’s interest in the STEM field began with an interest in Algebra 1 in middle school. Her love for math, and the entire STEM field, has since grown. While visiting the hospital that her father had been working on, she learned about proton therapy. After a family member was diagnosed with cancer, Ally wanted to learn if proton therapy would help. Although it wouldn’t, she was intrigued by what she learned and was ready to launch into her project, *Innovations in Cancer Treatment: Proton Beam Radiation Therapy*. Ally is excited to study mathematics and computer science next year at college.
**Karlie Stanford** recently became interested in hazing within Greek organizations on college campuses when she noticed the alarming number of college students in the news due to hazing-related deaths. She wondered why this issue seemed to be so prevalent, yet no one seemed to be doing anything to stop it. In her project, *Hazing in Greek Life on College Campuses*, Karlie hopes to raise awareness about what actually goes on in Greek organizations. Karlie plans on attending a four year university next year to study marketing or sports management.

**Hannah Whitacre** has had an interest in the different ways people learn since she transitioned from homeschool to public school in sixth grade. Throughout the years, several of her classes have required the students to participate in self-assessments for intelligence traits. These tests were immensely helpful in determining what study strategies would work best for her. This led to her project, *Learning Styles and Study Strategies*. She hopes her project will help other students discover the learning styles and study strategies that are beneficial to them. Hannah plans on studying anthropology in college next year.

**Samantha Williams** joined the theatre community five years ago, and it has been part of her life ever since. Through the course of over twenty theatrical productions with various educational and community organizations, she discovered that she wanted to explore the industry further. This summer, Samantha participated in a six week Pre-College program at Carnegie Mellon University, where she took classes in theatre design and production. Her project, *The World Behind the Curtain*, focuses on the importance of design and management in theatre. Samantha hopes to study dramatic design and production at Carnegie Mellon University.

**Mary Yenca** loves going to the beach, but always had a fear of being attacked by a shark. On vacation, she was hesitant to go in the ocean, despite knowing her odds of actually encountering a shark. While trying to find out why she had this irrational fear, she began watching many documentaries on sharks where she discovered that sharks are more endangered than dangerous. In her project, *The Misunderstood Jaws: A Study of the Shark Population Decline*, Mary explores and analyzes the main factors that are causing the rapid depletion in the population of sharks. Next year, she plans to major in chemistry in college.