

# THE MONTHLY HEIGHTS

Greater Heights Academy

January 2016 Edition

## *About Our Middle School Class:*

Greater Heights Academy is an online public school. However, not all of the curriculum is online. Seventy percent of what the students are graded on is completed purely online. The rest of what students learn is accomplished offline, with the Middle School mentor, Ms. Gibson. The offline part involves mainly Language Arts and Math. The online part includes Social Studies, Science, Math, and Language Arts. The 6th grade students at Greater Heights are Sarah Benton, Hayden Gerbitz, Haylee Gerbitz, and Sydney Fain. Sarah Benton just started Greater Heights this year. She likes to sing, draw, and read. Hayden and Haylee Gerbitz have been at the school off-and-on for two years. Hayden likes to watch Netflix at home. Haylee Gerbitz enjoys playing volleyball. Sydney Fain has been at Greater Heights for two solid years. She loves to make crafts and draw. Tyra Chavez, Skylar Nacke, Angelo Rivera, Alexandra Velasquez, Bella Martinez and Taylor Duel are the 7th grade class at Greater Heights. Tyra has just started attending the school in the beginning January. She has fun playing volleyball and hanging out with friends. Bella also recently joined us after Christmas break. She likes to snowboard when she can. Angelo has been going to Greater Heights since GHA started in 2013 (along with Taylor Duel, Skylar Nacke, and Alex Velasquez). His favorite things to do are snowboard and hang out with friends. Skylar Nacke's favorite things to do are singing, dancing, and hanging out with friends. Alex Velasquez loves to hang out with friends and play volleyball. Taylor Duel enjoys skiing, reading, and hanging out with friends. Allison Collins, also known as Allie, is the only eighth grader in the middle school class. She likes playing the flute and the piano, listening to music, and hanging out with friends. This middle school class is expecting to interview more staff and students here at GHA, and also businesses in Leadville throughout their school year.

**JANUARY STAFF HIGHLIGHT: Mrs. "Ms." Christine Street, Director and Art Instructor. Ms. Street has been involved with Greater Heights since it opened in 2013. She has three adorable kids with her husband Eric (Mia 10, Heidi 8, and Vincent 5). Ms. Street grew up in Washington D.C. and Colorado and has been a Leadville local since 2006. We are so excited to have Ms. Street here at Greater Heights Academy!**

**Greater Heights Academy Board: Greater Heights Academy is overseen by a special board. President: Keisha Massarotti, Vice President: Sage Bertolas, Secretary: Tina Tekanskik, Treasurer: Esther Meakim, Member: Connie Nelson, Member: Dana Greene, and Member: Ethan Greene**

**JANUARY STUDENT HIGHLIGHT:** Each month we would like to highlight a student from each grade. This month we have also included an introduction of our entire middle school class. In favor of the business article about Melanzana this month, Sydney Fain is also highlighted. If you have not met Sydney Fain yet, make sure to take the time introduce yourself and ask her to show you her amazing handmade animal heads!



Sarah Benton aka “Cotton Candy” (left) , Sydney Fain aka “Speckles” (middle), and Skylar Nacke aka “Jingle Bells” (right)

***UPCOMING LEADVILLE COMMUNITY EVENTS:***

Thursday January 28th: \$30.00 Thursdays at Ski Cooper

Saturday January 30th: Colorado Cup SnowShoe Championship @ CMC

FEBRUARY GHA SKI PROGRAM IS COMING! Details to follow...

## Melanzana: Original, Functional, Soulful!



Written By: Taylor Duel, Alexandra Velasquez, Skylar Nacke, Allison Collins, Tyra Chavez, Sydney Fain, Angelo Rivera, Hayden Gerbitz, Haylee Gerbitz, Isabella Martinez and Sarah Benton

### **Thursday, December 3, 2015 students from Ms. Gibson's middle school class interviewed Fritz Howard and Jenny David from Melanzana**

Living in Leadville, it would not take very long to hear about a successful and thriving business that has been around now for over 20 years. Melanzana which the, "Original name back in '94 was "Eggplant", but it turned out to be trademarked" (according to their website), is a must have for the Leadville locals!

The middle school class from Greater Heights Academy was excited to have the opportunity to interview Fritz Howard, owner of Melanzana, and Jenny David, (a gem of a seamstress). Fritz started the interview with a tour of the building showing off the enormous rolls of fabric in the back, to the personalized work stations the professional seamstresses each have.

Seventh grader Tyra Chavez, began the interview with a brief introduction, "Hello, my name is Tyra Chavez we are here for the interview. Thanks for having us here today."

"Yep, thanks for being here," said Fritz Howard, the founder and owner of Melanzana.

Another seventh grader, Skylar Nacke was curious when the busiest times of the year is.

“Around Christmas and August.” Fritz quickly pointed out.

Seventh grade student Taylor Duel would point out that we all have our own favorite Melly, but wanted to know what the most popular item is to the customers.

“What you’re wearing now, the microgrid hoodie” Fritz said.

However eighth grader Allie Collins was curious about which item Fritz would pick out as a personal favorite. A smile reached across each face as Fritz replied, “The melanzana dress, it is also our newest so that is probably why it’s my favorite.” Though we probably will never see Fritz in one it was certainly interesting to know that is his favorite melly.



The microgrid hoodie (displayed on the left) is a simple multicolored hoodie (hood and sleeve/ body). It can tighten around the neck and face as much as desired. The melanzana dress (displayed on the right) is a dress with an adjustable hood, and pockets. It can also be multicolored.

“Who comes up with these design ideas?” asked Taylor Duel.

“Um, well it’s kind of a group effort. Everyone works together to make them, but I come up with the original design ideas.” Fritz answered.

Sixth grade student Haylee Gerbitz wanted to know more about Fritz, “What did you see yourself doing when you were a child?”

“I wanted to be a vet” Fritz replied to Haylee.

Though mellys are made and worn for so many activities we, as a class, were curious what they were originally designed for, so Angelo stepped in and asked.

It did not take long for Fritz to respond, “I thought they would be used for kayaking and rafting instructors.”

Then sixth grader Hayden Gerbitz began asking his questions. “Do you sponsor anything?”

“Yes, a lot of things.” Melanzana sponsors the local snowboarding team at Ski Cooper. Another project that really stood out to the middle school class was a program called Rebuild Ghormu, Melanzana donated 150 hats, to the village of Ghormu, where 40 out of 42 homes have been destroyed, along with its

surrounding villages. Tents and sleeping bags have been donated as well. This act of kindness displays the impact that this business has on not only Leadville, but on other communities as well.

Howard was asked about colors and who picks them out. According to him “The seamstresses find colors that they like at the fabric company we use.” Their fabric company (Malden Mills) is located in Lawrence, Massachusetts.

Alex Velasquez, hoping to put Howard on the spot asked, “Where do you find your success?”

Howard replied without hesitation, “I find it in my employees, and having a comfortable, happy workplace.”

Angelo Rivera asked one last question, “If you could change one thing about your business, what would it be and why?”

“I don’t think I would want to change anything except expanding into the building next door.” Fritz responded.

Jenny David, (a professional seamstress at Melanzana and sixth grade student Sydney’s mother) was next to be overwhelmed with our questions.

Skylar started off the questions with, “How do you like your job at Melanzana?”

“I love it, it’s the best job I’ve ever had!” said Jenny. (Of course, Howard was still present)

“Have you always liked sewing?” Allie asked Jenny. “Yes I’ve always enjoyed sewing, I learned how to sew when I was around Sydney’s age.”

“Why did you choose to work here?” asked Haylee.

“Well the pay was good and I’ve always enjoyed sewing.”

Sarah Benton, another 6th grader asked, “Do you wear Melanzana often?”

“Yes, all the time, especially the dress.” she answered.

Sydney asked her mom what the most rewarding part of her job was.

Being able to provide for her kids was Jenny’s quick reply, but Sydney pointed out all of the amazing clothes her mom has made over the years!

Melanzana is a business that anyone could learn about just by going to their website. However, to be able to see the building and talk to the people behind the scenes is what it is all about according to Ms. Gibson’s middle school class!

**Melanzana is located on 716, Harrison Ave. You can contact them at 719-486-3245. For more information, visit them at [melanzana.com](http://melanzana.com).**